**St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool**

**Policy Handbook for Parents**

**2020-21**

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# Program Overview

## St. Matthew Lutheran Church Mission Statement

The mission of St. Matthew Lutheran Church is to be the living evidence of Christ. St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool is an extension of this mission statement. St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool is a private, non-profit (operating under St. Matthew Lutheran Church), faith-based preschool available to children in Clallam County, Washington.

##

## Curriculum

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool has adopted One in Christ, a Christ-focused curriculum published by Concordia Publishing House, which provides hands-on learning for even the youngest of God’s children. From songs to Bible stories to play time, preschoolers will learn about Jesus and grow in their understanding of God and His Word. Created for preschools and based on Early Childhood Standards and Preschool Standards, each level offers curriculum categorized into four program areas: Explore, Relate, Express, and Create. Our teacher(s) will jointly plan and intentionally teach activities based on weekly themes and child interest. Our program also focuses on providing the children with skills necessary for Kindergarten Readiness. The variety of methods and styles will benefit the many different learning styles in the classroom.

## Program Goals

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool’s curriculum, *One in Christ*, uses Early Childhood and Preschool Standards as a guide to intentional teaching. The published monthly calendar will highlight for you each of the four program area’s objectives. The curriculum identifies the following goals in each area of child development:

*Social/emotional/spiritual:*

* + - to become more aware of God’s presence in our world
		- to learn to love God and others
		- to develop a good self-image
		- to develop independence and self-confidence
		- to follow rules and routines
		- to make friends, and learn what it means to be part of a group

*Cognitive:*

* + - to develop thinking skills such as the ability to solve problems
		- to learn how to ask good questions
		- to think through tasks logically

*Math and Science:*

* + - to introduce mathematical concepts such as sorting, classifying, comparing, counting, making patterns, and measurement
		- to develop and use scientific reasoning and problem-solving skills

*Communication, Language, and Literacy:*

* + - to use words to communicate with others, increasing each child’s vocabulary
		- to develop skills in listening and appropriate ways to participate in conversations with others
		- to, recognize letters and words, and begin writing for a purpose

*Physical and Health and Safety:*

* + - to develop large muscle skills - balancing, running, jumping, throwing, and catching
		- to develop small muscle skills to do tasks like buttoning, stringing beads, cutting, drawing, and writing
		- to learn about how to care for the body, including healthy eating habits, the importance of exercise, and daily habits like keeping one’s hands clean, brushing teeth, etc.

*Creative Arts:*

* + - to experience and enjoy art, music, and rhythm and understand how they can use these gifts to glorify God
		- to interact with classmates, developing their social awareness as they participate in dramatic play

## Play

During the preschool years, a child’s work is playing. Play is an important part of your child’s development. Staff will engage children in various forms of play that will develop fine motor skills and gross motor skills.

It is our goal that preschool students will spend time working on gross motor skills in a structured play setting. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for indoor and outdoor play, and field trips.

It is very important that children participate in outdoor play; staff and students will be outside often, weather permitting. Please dress your child accordingly (see Uniform).

# Parent Handbook

## Registration

Each year the leadership of the preschool evaluates the current program and researches ways we can further our mission of providing a Christ-centered community where children and families joyfully receive a comprehensive education in a warm, safe environment.

\*\*Please note that we have made changes to our programming this year. Best practices during this pandemic require smaller classes and adherence to new health and safety rules. At this time, the class ratio is one teacher per 5 children (limit of 10 children ages 3-5). Please note the change in our Little Lambs Prep3 Co-op and call for more detailed information. Additionally, we in the process of becoming a licensed day care. This is a process that takes time. However, we are setting our fees to match state law for licensed preschools. State law requires half day pay unless a child is present more than 6 hours. When daycare is offered, currently enrolled children will have the first opportunity to claim a spot.

* **Little Lambs Pre-3 Co-op** (**child and parent/guardian attend together**) 9:00-11:00 AM
* Because of COVID-19 occupancy restrictions, we are open to a PARENT RUN Pre-3 program that staffs, organizes and cleans following CDC guidelines. Group size is determined by what Phase Clallam County is in when the Co-op begins.
	+ Choose to attend one day each week with the same group. Registration fee is $50. Monthly tuition fee is $25.
	+ Choose to attend two days each week with the same group: Registration fee is $50 Monthly tuition is $50.00
	+ Registration fee includes one uniform polo shirt with the St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool logo.
* **3-5-year-old Preschool Class** (Enrollment limited to 10)
	+ Meets Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 12:00pm. (20 hours)
	+ Registration fee: $150.00
	+ Monthly tuition: $445.00 per month flat rate. A 10% discount will be given for the months of September, October, and November. A 5% discount will be given for prepaid tuition.
	+ Classes will meet September through May. Tuition payments for September through May are paid by automatic deposit. With automatic deposit, the tuition payment will come out of your account on the first business day of the month. Form are included in each registration packet.
	+ You may choose to attend fewer days each week, but the tuition remains the same.

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* + The child must be three years old by September 1.
	+ The child must be toilet trained.
	+ Registration fee includes one uniform polo shirt with the St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool logo.

\* **Age exceptions may be made at the teacher’s discretion prior to enrollment.**

## Sponsorships may be available to families. Sponsorships may be offered in varying amounts and are available on a limited basis. If interested, parent/guardian(s) may speak with the preschool teacher or office secretary to request an application.

**Payment Policy**

**Tuition is paid each month with Automatic Bank Draft**

* Automatic Bank Draft– Monthly tuition payments are paid through automatic deposit the first business day of each month September through May.

Repeated late tuition payments may result in exclusion from the program until account is made current. Parent(s)/guardian(s) assume the obligation to pay on this schedule or will inform the preschool director if this becomes impossible. Tuition is required regardless of absenteeism.

**Tuition Refund policy**

Payment of preschool tuition during crisis situations such as public health pandemics or similar situations requiring “sheltering at home,” is expected until St. Matthew Preschool officially notifies you of school closure.

Our policy is to adhere to state mandates and Port Angeles school closings. Please note that during “sheltering at home” situations in which physical buildings are closed to students but “virtual classes are still in session, your child’s teacher will continue to provide appropriate learning activities via Internet, podcast, YouTube, email, or snail mail, etc. until such time that we reopen or provide official notification of St. Matthew Preschool closure. At time of closure, all prepaid tuition remaining in students’ accounts will be refunded.

## Admissions

The child must be current with required immunizations or have a completed certificate of exemption. The immunization form must be completed, signed by both health care providers and parent(s)/guardian(s), and on file at the Preschool within 30 days of classes beginning.

If paperwork, including registration form, emergency information form, consent for medical treatment, immunization record, and any others deemed necessary by preschool Board, is not completed the child may be asked to stay home until all paperwork is at the Preschool.

## Uniform

The responsibility for dress and clothing rests with the parent(s)/guardian(s). The following list outlines the expectations that will apply specifically to preschoolers:

* Children will wear a red polo. A school polo is provided as a part of your registration fee. Additional school polos are available for $10, or children may wear a plain red polo.
* Children will be expected to wear khaki bottoms: pants, shorts, or skirts with white tights.
* All removable clothing; i.e. coats, backpacks, etc. should be labeled with your child’s name.
* Expect your child to get messy as “playing” with many different things are all part of development. Aprons will be provided during art activities.
* Please ensure that your child has proper shoes so they can participate safely in outdoor and gym games. Proper shoes include shoes with closed toes and a sturdy back.
* Please be sure to dress your child appropriately for varying weather conditions.
* Also, parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be expected to provide a backpack with one uniform change in it.

## Hours of Service

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool is open from 8:00AM – 12:00PM, Monday-Friday.

Classes are in session from 8:30AM -11:30AM, Monday – Friday.

**What if I am Late Picking up My Child?**

A late pick up fee of $1.00 per minute may be charged after 11:35 am and is due at the time of pick-up. Excessive late pick-ups may result in the student being excluded from the Preschool Program.

Any child not picked up by 12:00pm (after attempts to contact all emergency contacts) may result in the Sheriff’s Department being called to pick up said child.

## Unauthorized Pick-Up Policy

Any adult picking up a child must provide identification. Under no circumstance, will children be released to a person who is unauthorized, under the age of 18, intoxicated or suspected of abuse. Under these circumstances, or if no one comes for a child, staff will make every attempt to notify:

1. Parent(s)/guardian(s)
2. Emergency Contacts
3. Other individuals authorized to pick up the child.
4. In the event that the staff is unable to contact any of these people, and the child has not been picked up within 30 minutes after closing, law enforcement may be contacted.
5. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must give the preschool teacher a copy of any restraining orders that are in effect as well as prepare a family safety plan with the preschool teacher and other applicable parties.

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## Transportation

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool will not arrange car pools or provide transportation to or from school. A class list will be sent home to assist families who wish to carpool with one another. Preschool will follow recommended guidelines for transporting children to and from field trips

## Field Trip Policy/Non-Center Activities

Field trips are activities that take place outside of the preschool building. They are scheduled to enhance your child’s learning experience and to bring authentic and relevant experiences into your child’s school life. Field trips will be scheduled in advance and will be coordinated with the curriculum. They may include trips to the Pumpkin Patch, Feiro Marine Life Center, or a different local experience. Permission slips will be sent home in advance for you to sign if you want your child to participate in the field trip and will give cost and transportation information. In most cases, preschool will pay for the cost of the field trip.

We welcome your presence on field trips. Volunteers will be required to complete all volunteer forms including a background check.

If you choose NOT to have your child participate in the field trip, you are responsible for the child’s care during the scheduled time.

**Exception:** The children may participate in walking field trips within a three-block radius of the school, such as to the park for outdoor play, library, nature walks, etc. The teacher will notify parents when such walking field trips are planned.

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## Special Guests/Volunteers

Children who attend St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool will experience personal attention from trained teachers and assistant teachers as well as Peninsula College students, when available, who are preparing to become professional early childhood educators. This creates an opportunity for the children to be involved in many innovative and creative learning experiences and be guided by individuals who are knowledgeable in child growth and development.

These college students, as well as other people from the community who may be invited into the preschool for a day, are considered ‘special guests’ and will not be given unrestricted access to preschool children. All ‘special guests’ will be closely monitored and supervised by staff members. In addition, all ‘special guests will have on file a background check and will have completed an orientation.

## Unauthorized Access

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool will be responsible for ensuring the safety of children at the church and preventing harm by being proactive and diligent in supervising not only the children, but other people present at the facility. All preschool interior access doors have electronic keyed entry locks on the exterior of each door. Preschool staff and limited church workers have been given the passwords to the locks. The doors are to be locked during the school day while children are present. Egress from within the classroom does not require a passcode.

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool will not allow people who have not had a background check to assume child care responsibilities or to be alone with the children. This directly relates both to child safety and liability to the center. Therefore, any visitor, invited guest or non-school staff *will be* supervised and *not allowed* to assume any child care responsibilities.

**Children Requiring Special Accommodations/Children with Disabilities** St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool promotes inclusive practice when enrolling children with special needs. Within the St. Matthew Preschool facilities, we strive to provide appropriate learning opportunities in the most appropriate environment for all children regardless of disability. St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool Board will evaluate student needs and assess if St. Matthew is able to benefit the child without compromising the education and safety of the child and other classmates.

Staff members working with special needs children will concentrate on the following five areas: early identification and early intervention, inclusive education, physical environment, partnerships with parent(s)/guardian(s) and multi-agency collaboration.

##

## Parental/School Partnerships

We recognize the importance of the church, home, and school relationship. We encourage parent participation and support within the classroom, at home, and in special events. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be entitled to unlimited access to their children when at St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool unless parental contact is prohibited by court order. *Please coordinate your visit with the teacher to ensure appropriate timing during the daily schedule.* St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool must be given a copy of any restraining orders that may be in effect and family safety plans. If a family safety plan is not in place, please schedule a time with the preschool teacher and other applicable parties to establish a plan.

## Parent/School Communication

Communication between parent(s)/guardian(s) and staff is a vital part of how well your child does in school. We encourage you to be involved in your child’s education and meet with our preschool staff regularly. To initiate this valuable relationship, your child’s teacher will ask to schedule a “Teacher & Me Time,” e.g., a child and teacher play date, at your home one time within the first 60 days of the school year. Please visit <https://www.springsmontessori.com/home-visits-what-are-they-and-why-do-we-do-them/> for an excellent explanation of home visit benefits. Parent-teacher conferences will be scheduled as needed but at least once before the school year ends

Correspondence will be emailed or sent home with your child. Classroom information or updates emailed home will also be posted on our “Parent Board.” Additionally, your child’s teacher can add you to the Class Dojo app.

Please contact your child's teacher or the pastor if communication with the teacher is difficult for any reason.

## Special Events

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to participate in special events, some of which are during class time, and others may be evening or weekend events. Some of these include the beginning of the year Open House, field trips, special programs, and the end of the year Preschool Graduation. Notification of these events will be sent home with children, emailed, included in our yearly calendar and posted on the “Parent Board.”

**Policies**

## Photo/Video Use Policy

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool will use photos and/or videos of children for many purposes. They may be used for a special project/craft, identification of personal belongings, classroom/hallway decorations or St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool publicity. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be asked to sign a photo release form along with their registration packets.

**Security Cameras**

The Preschool room and surrounding areas are equipped with closed circuit security cameras. These cameras are in place for the security of the children as well as the liability protection of St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool staff. If at any time a parent/guardian has a question or concern about an occurrence during preschool hours, please bring this concern to the preschool teacher or pastor. A confidential conference will be scheduled to review the occurrence and address any concerns.

# **Program Policies**

## School Calendar

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool will follow the school calendar of Port Angeles School District with the following exceptions: Classes will end the last day of May and snow days will NOT be made up. Please note that during “sheltering at home” situations in which physical buildings are closed to students, your child’s teacher will continue to provide appropriate learning activities via Internet, podcast, YouTube, email Class Dojo, email, or snail mail, etc. until such time that we reopen or provide you official notification of St. Matthew Preschool closure.

 A Preschool calendar will be provided during each year’s Welcome Day activities..

## Drop Off & Pick Up

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are required to sign in children upon arriving at the preschool. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are also required to sign children out at the time of pick up at the conclusion of preschool for the day.

## Absentee Policy

If students will be absent from preschool, parent(s)/guardian(s) must let the teacher know. Please email or call to let the staff know why your child will be absent. Please note, there will be no change in tuition for missed days, including those for family vacation or sickness.

## Discipline Policy

The preschool discipline policy includes positive reinforcement, redirection, and clearly stated expectations. If a child misbehaves in preschool:

1. He/she is given verbal instruction to assist the child towards appropriate behavior. The teacher may redirect play or separate two children and have them play in different areas if necessary.
2. If verbal correction and play redirection are not effective, the child may be given a time out. Time outs will consist of a child sitting quietly for a short period of time.
3. If misbehavior continues, a parent may be notified to pick up their child.

Parents will be notified at the time of pick-up if their child had any such struggles during class time.

Teachers will supervise play and may join in to encourage appropriate play. Any inappropriate behaviors such as shouting, fighting, playing roughly with toys, throwing toys or hurting others will be redirected. Teachers will also suggest activities for children who are not playing.

Corporal punishment, humiliation, mechanical restraints, verbal abuse, threats, or derogatory remarks are not acceptable forms of discipline at preschool. *Our goal is to teach children how to make wise decisions that honor God, love others, and develop self-discipline* *within each student.*

## Discharge Policy

A student may be discharged from preschool if preschool policies are not being followed, tuition is not being paid, or if the child is not ready for a group learning experience. Disruptive behavior or physical aggression cannot be tolerated. Teachers will document any incidents of unacceptable behavior, reporting to the preschool board and to the child’s parent(s)/guardian(s). The parent(s)/guardian(s) may be notified that the student may not return to the preschool until a plan has been formed.

If the child has continuous disruptive behavior, or his/her needs are not best met in the group setting, the teacher may ask for the removal of the child in a confidential conference with the parent(s)/guardian(s). Re-admittance to the preschool at a later date may be considered.

**Please note:** everything possible will be attempted prior to a discharge from the program. If a parent/guardian has concerns regarding their child, please request a conference with the teacher to address such concerns. If a parent/guardian has concerns or questions regarding the teacher, please direct your concerns to the pastor, and he will contact you to schedule a meeting with a preschool board member present.

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## Nutrition Policy

**Snacks and birthday treats**: Each day please send a healthy snack for your child and also a water bottle with his/her name on it. On those occasions when you forget, we will hit up our emergency stash of snacks for your child. However, in light of food allergies and dietary restrictions, a snack from home is always best. Hands will be washed before and after snack time.

Birthdays are special times for children and will be celebrated with his or her classmates. Your child may bring a treat to give his/her classmates. The birthday treats will be enjoyed during snack time. *Birthday treats may not be homemade; they must come from a bakery with the label attached.*

**Allergies: Please make the teacher aware of any allergies your child may have. When choosing a birthday treat, please consult with the teacher beforehand so you are aware of any food allergies a child in the class may have.**

# **Program Health and Safety Policies**

## Medical Information Required

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to fill in and return all documentation enclosed in the registration packet to St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool prior to the student’s first day of class. These will be kept on file.

* Parent(s)/guardian(s) must identify student’s dental and medical provider and written consent for emergency care.
* Parent(s)/guardian(s) must update immunization, physical and health records regularly and be in compliance with Washington State immunization laws.

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool must be notified in writing of any allergy a child has and what medication is being taken.

The entire indoor and outdoor campus is nonsmoking, and signs to that effect are posted at each entrance and exit.

## CPR/First Aid

## St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool staff will be current on CPR and First Aid training prior to the first day of classes in September. In addition, the staff will be trained on the usage of the facility AED machine. All procedures outlined in the training protocol will be followed by St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool staff and volunteers. A First Aid kit will be kept and maintained in the classroom. This will be taken on field trips away from school

## Hand Washing Requirements and Cleanliness

Students, staff and visitors will be required to wash their hands upon arrival, before and after snacks, and also as needed throughout the session. Staff will show children how to wash their hands. Tables and bathrooms will be cleaned daily. Universal precautions will be followed when dealing with any blood or bodily fluid. If a child has an accident of either wetting or soiling their clothing the preschool staff will assist the child is the changing of their clothes in the restroom. Staff will put gloves on to help remove the clothing, clean the child, and assist them in putting on clean clothes. The soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified about the soiled clothing at the time of pick-up.

## Illnesses and Injuries

Children showing any signs of illness should be kept home until a proper diagnosis is made and treatment of health condition is completed. A child must be free from vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool must be informed if a child develops a communicable disease (Examples: pink eye, ring worm, chicken pox, lice, etc.). Please notify your child's teacher if your child is infected with a communicable disease.

## Infectious Disease Control

If a child becomes ill while at preschool, staff will attempt to make the child comfortable but separate them from the rest of the children. The teacher will then call contacts as listed on the Student Profile Sheet. Notes will be posted on the board and information emailed home if children are exposed to communicable diseases.

## Medicine

If a child requires medicine while at preschool, the teacher may administer this medicine if the parent has filled out and signed a notice form giving permission and specific instructions. The medicine must be brought to preschool in the original prescription bottle, not in a plastic bag or container from home.

## Dental Policy

If a dental emergency arises (such as a chipped or knocked out tooth), the teacher will rinse the area and apply a cold compress on the face to minimize swelling. The parent is notified of the incident and will pick up the child if the incident warrants. The teacher will also suggest the parent contact the child’s dentist if the incident requires treatment. An *incident report* will be filed. \*

## Injury and Medical Emergency Procedures

If an injury occurs at school, an *incident report* will be filed. \* Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of the injury as soon as possible by phone or e-mail. In the case of an emergency, St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool will contact the parent/guardian or any authorized emergency contact provided. If immediate hospital attention is needed, staff will call 911 and accompany student if necessary.

\*An *incident report* must be filled out by the person who witnessed the accident and given to the parent(s)/guardian(s), or the person who picks up the child that day. A copy of the report must also be kept on file.

## Poison

If a child swallows poison or gets a poisonous substance in his mouth or eyes, staff will call the Poison Control number immediately. Staff will tell them what substance was taken and how much was used and will give age and size of child. Staff will do exactly what they advise and then will call the child’s parent(s)/guardian(s). Poison Control phone number is by the telephone. For Poison Control call: 1-800-222-1222.

## Daily Inspection for Health and Accident/Injury Prevention

The playground equipment, classroom environment, and classroom materials will be monitored and surveyed regularly. Materials posing a hazard will be disposed of or repaired.

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## Health/Temperature Check

## During pandemic conditions, each child’s temperature will be taken before entering the classroom. Evidence of fever will (temperature above 98.6) mean that your child will not be able to attend class.

## Child Safety Policy

All employees of St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool are required to complete the Mandatory Reporting Class which provides information concerning child abuse. If the teacher or teacher assistant feels there is evidence of abuse, they are required by the state to contact the Children’s Administration of Children Protective Services (CPS) at 1-866-363-4276.

# **Emergency Policies**

## Missing Children

If a teacher cannot find a child, the teacher will confer with other children and teacher’s assistant as to exact time and location the child was last seen. The teacher will call 911 to report the missing child, giving pertinent information (what child was wearing, last time seen and by whom, etc.) and call the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the missing child. The teacher’s assistant will stay with the other children, so the teacher can aid in a search until the search is taken over by the police and until parent(s)/guardian(s) arrive. Then the teacher will then call the other parent(s)/guardian(s) to pick up their child immediately.

## Fire Drills

These drills will be held periodically. Please discuss this with your child prior to starting preschool. Staff will teach children the proper procedures to follow and be with them throughout the drill. It is important that children are given several opportunities to practice these drills so that they will not panic and will know what is expected of them in the event of a real emergency.

**Tsunami/Earthquake**

St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool will educate children on Tsunamis and Earthquakes as well as what the City of Port Angeles guidelines are in such emergencies.

## Severe Weather Policy/Snow Days

In the event of inclement weather, please listen to KONP (101.7 FM & 1450 AM) for cancellations. Cancellation of classes will follow that of the Port Angeles School District. If the Port Angeles School District starts one hour late, preschool will be cancelled for the day and not made up at the end of the school year.

There is an allowance of five days in a calendar year for cancellation due to inclement weather conditions without refund.