

# PARENT HANDBOOK

2021-2022



Children's Garden Preschool

5200 Grove Avenue

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*A Ministry of St. Giles Presbyterian Church*



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# Children's Garden Preschool

## 2021-2022 Preschool and MMO Calendar

MONTH	DAY	ACTIVITY OR EVENT	TIME
September	9	Parents Only Orientation/Teacher Meet and Greet– Bring your school supplies!	7:00 PM
	10	Student Orientation	TBA
	13	First Day of School	9:00 AM
	21	Marvelous Mornings/Lunch Bunch	8:00/Noon
October	8	Fall Break and Teacher Workday—NO SCHOOL	ALL DAY
	11	Columbus Day—NO SCHOOL	ALL DAY
	28/29	Fall School Party and Dress Up Day (does not apply to MMO)	11:15 AM
November	3	Election Day—NO SCHOOL	ALL DAY
	24	Thanksgiving School Feast with Parents (performances are preschool only, but all MMO parents and children are invited to attend)	11:00 AM
	24-28	Thanksgiving Break—NO SCHOOL	ALL DAY
December	16	School Christmas Program and Party (does not apply to MMO)	11:00 AM
	17-Jan 3	Christmas and New Year's Break—NO SCHOOL	ALL DAY
January	4	SCHOOL RESUMES	
	20/21	Donuts for Dads (Does not apply to MMO)	9:00 AM
	17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—NO SCHOOL	ALL DAY
February	4	Staff Development Day—NO SCHOOL	ALL DAY
	14	Valentine's Day School Parties (Does not apply to MMO)	11:15 AM
	21	President's Day—NO SCHOOL (Possible Snow Make Up Day)	ALL DAY
March	10	Parent-Teacher Conferences (all classes) MMO still in Session	By appt.
	11	Teacher Work Day—NO SCHOOL	ALL DAY
April	4-8	Spring Break	TBA
	15	Good Friday—NO SCHOOL	
	18	Easter Monday—NO SCHOOL	ALL DAY
May	5/6	Mother's Day Muffins	9:00 AM
	20	Last Day of Marvelous Mornings Out and Lunch Bunch	
	26	Last Day of School—School Picnic	11:00 AM



## **Mission**

Children's Garden Preschool is a ministry of St. Giles Presbyterian Church. Our mission is to provide a developmentally appropriate experience for each child in a Christ-centered, positive, nurturing environment. We intend to assist families to help their children grow spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically, and academically. Our program serves children 2 years old through 5 years old. We also offer a Mother's Morning Out for ages 1 to 2.5 years old. We follow a Christian-based curriculum.

## **Philosophy of Education**

The family has the primary role in the development of children. We seek to enhance this role by welcoming family involvement in the Children's Garden Preschool program.

Children's Garden Preschool staff and faculty view children as competent and strong individuals created in God's image. Our environment is safe, nurturing, warm and encouraging. Our program enables age appropriate problem solving, wise choice making, and developmentally and age appropriate experiences.

It is our belief that children learn through play, concrete experiences, and active exploration. Thus, we do not focus on drills, rote memorization or workbooks.

We believe that learning never ends. Our staff and faculty participate in continuing education workshops, training, and childhood education classes.

## **Goals**

All children's Garden Preschool activities integrate learning that meets the spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical needs of the children. Our goals include the following areas of development:

- ❖ Awareness of God's love and grace
- ❖ Strong basic language and literacy skills
- ❖ Communication skills with peers and adults
- ❖ Social skills including empathy, sharing, cooperation, and generosity
- ❖ Cognitive problem solving

- ❖ Creative expression, and
- ❖ Large and fine motor skills.

## **The Christian Faith**

Children's Garden Preschool is a vibrant Christian community. Our teachers actively look for ways to reflect God's love throughout the day. Teachers will speak naturally and lovingly with the children about their own faith and love for God in both formal and informal teaching times. Each snack and meal will begin with a prayer of thanks. Weekly chapel services include biblical stories, prayers, and songs during which the children learn about people from Bible times and about God's faithfulness and love. Throughout the year, families will be offered opportunities to serve others in the community through food drives, hat/mitten drives, and special offerings.

## **Parent Volunteers at Children's Garden Preschool**

*At CGP we value our parents and encourage them to assist in the classroom. There are a number of opportunities for families to help in the school and in the classroom.*

### **Room Parents**

Every class at CGP has a room parent. Room Parents are responsible for helping plan and implement the variety of parties and special events the class may have throughout the school year. These parties include the Fall Celebration Party, the Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas Party, Valentine's Day Party, Easter Celebration and the End of the Year Celebration in individual classrooms, as well as any other items listed on the school calendar. It is at your discretion, along with the teacher's, if you would like to do an additional activity, such as a craft, with the class.

- Sign-up sheets for parents willing to help you in this effort are provided at the beginning of the school year at orientation. You can use these as a guide for planning the events along with your child's teacher. Feel free as a Room Parent to call all the parents in the child's class to arrange for this to take place.
- If you were unable to attend Orientation and would like to sign up, please let the teacher know and we will make the opportunities available to you!

- Room Parents may also be contacted for other items that would be helpful in the school or classroom throughout the year by either the director or the teacher. Your time and efforts are valued! We are grateful for your help!
- The Caterpillar Class will have a special snack on party days. Please sign up at Registration if you would like to help.

### **Volunteer Opportunities (not available fall 2021)**

If you are interested in helping in a variety of different ways, we would love to have you come in and read a favorite story to the children in the class, help facilitate our woodworking class, help with class projects, hang a bulletin board display, or even create a scrapbook for the school.

### **Birthdays**

We love birthdays at CGP! We ask that parents who are interested in celebrating their child's birthday in the class provide store-bought cupcakes or cookies for the whole class to share, as well as any paper products that may be needed. This year we are unable to welcome parents into the classroom to celebrate. You may contact the teacher ahead of time to arrange a time for this celebration.

### **School Hours and Carpool Line**

Children's Garden Preschool hours are 9 AM to 12 PM.

Children's Garden Preschool offers a Carpool Line in the morning before school and in the afternoon after school. Please pull up to the last orange cone in the line before stopping to pick up or drop off. Parents are asked to strap their own children in as teachers are not allowed to do so. The times for Carpool Line are 8:55 AM to 9:05 AM and 11:55 AM to 12:05 PM. A child who arrives at school later than 9:05 AM must call the school office at (804)282-0511 and have a teacher meet the child. Parents are asked to park on Tuckahoe Blvd. or the playground parking lot for this purpose. Carpool Line will move through the parking lot, down the alley, and around to the side of the building where children will be received by teachers. Teachers will help the children enter the building and go to their classrooms.

## **Mother's Morning Out (MMO)**

Mother's Morning Out is our program for younger children ages 12 months to 30 months. Children are placed in a small, loving and nurturing environment designed to meet the unique needs of the young child. Your little ones will explore freely in their classroom, read a story, sing songs, blow bubbles and play outside every day. We have a monthly themed schedule which we loosely follow and a daily report we send home to tell you about your child's day.

You will need to provide **daily ONE NUT-FREE, LABELED snack and a sealed drink** in the tote bag. Please provide a folder labeled with your child's name. This is used for a daily report.

We do most of our communication through email, so be sure to check it on a regular basis.

### ***MMO does not participate in:***

- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Thanksgiving or Christmas performances
- Field Trips

*Please note on the school calendar the dates MMO is in session, even if the regular preschool classes do not meet.*

## **School Supplies**

To keep our costs and your tuition down, we ask that every family provide a bag of school supplies. Please refer to the list in your Registration Packet.

Please place all supplies in a paper grocery bag with your child's name on it and bring to school on Orientation Night.

## **School Closures/Inclement Weather Policy**

In the event of severe weather CGP may close. We will follow Richmond City Schools for school closure.

- If there is a two-hour delay in Richmond City Schools, CGP will open one hour late.
- If there is a one-hour delay in Richmond City Schools, CGP will also have a one-hour delay and will open at 10 AM.

- If school is cancelled, so are Lunch Bunch and Marvelous Mornings.
- If snow begins to fall during the school day with accumulation on sidewalks and streets, CGP **will not hold Lunch Bunch**. Parents who have signed up for Lunch Bunch will be notified ASAP to pick up their children by 12 PM. This is also so that staff may also leave before the roads become hazardous. Children will be cared for until their parents pick them up.
- In the case of serious emergencies such as earthquakes, fire, storms, loss of power/water, parents will be notified and children will be cared for until parents or emergency contacts arrive.

### **Updated Health/Illness Guidelines**

We would like to avoid the spread of illness as best we can. If a child becomes ill at Children's Garden Preschool, the director or teacher will immediately notify the parents to come pick up the child. The child will be kept separated from the group until taken home.

Children will not be permitted at school with any of the following conditions:

- Fever of 100.4° degrees or higher. The child must have a doctor's note to return following a fever illness. If you do not have a doctor's note, your child may not return for 10 days or until they are fever-free for 72 hours without the use of a fever reducer, whichever is longer.
- Vomiting within the past 24 hours.
- Diarrhea – two or more watery stools in a 24-hour period.
- Undiagnosed rash lasting over a 24-hour period.
- Eye discharge or pink eye. Children can be readmitted after medical diagnosis to rule out bacterial or viral infection, or 24 hours on antibiotic treatment.
- Fatigue that prevents participation in regular activities.
- Head lice, until treatment is effective, and a follow-up check has been made by school personnel.

In the case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.

Children's Garden Preschool staff cannot transport children to a hospital or doctor's office. Injured children shall be transported for medical aid by parents or by calling 911 for an ambulance.

In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, trained staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency.

All children that attend CGP must have a copy of their immunizations signed and dated by the pediatrician and a statement that they are adequately immunized.

**PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO RETURN TO SCHOOL UNTIL HE/SHE HAS BEEN FEVER-FREE FOR 72 HOURS.**

**Marvelous Mornings (TBD fall 2021)**

Marvelous Mornings is our early morning drop off program available by appointment only. It is available from 8 AM until 8:55 AM when we begin Carpool Line. The cost for this service is \$10 per morning. If you are interested in making an appointment, please email Susan Chester at [childrensgardenpreschool1@gmail.com](mailto:childrensgardenpreschool1@gmail.com) at least one day in advance.

**Lunch Bunch (TBD fall 2021)**

Lunch Bunch is our afternoon enrichment program. It is held from 12 Noon until 2 PM for \$20 per day. Your child must be enrolled in the preschool to attend the enrichment program. Children will use their time to explore a different activity each day based on the theme of the day. Themes will vary between cooking, sports, science, crafts and other interesting opportunities. Children will play outside on these days, whenever possible. Each child should bring a packed lunch that does not require refrigeration or heating up, as well as a drink.

## Snacks and Meals

**WE ARE A NUT-FREE SCHOOL. PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY NUT PRODUCTS, FOR THE SAFETY OF ANYONE IN THE CLASSROOM WHO MAY HAVE ALLERGIES.**

We ask that parents provide a **healthy snack** for their child on the days that he/she attends. Please label all snacks. Examples of healthy snacks include: fresh fruit or vegetables, cheese, crackers, bagels, applesauce, granola bars, etc. Please place the snack **separate** from your child's lunch if he/she will be joining us for Lunch Bunch.

Water will be provided for each child, so we ask that drinks not be included with snacks.

If a child is staying for Lunch Bunch, children must be provided with a healthy lunch and drink. We do not allow sharing of food due to the possibility of allergies. Water will be available to the children in each classroom throughout the day.

## Dress Code/Clothing

We ask that parents provide a *complete* change of clothes for their children. These clothes should be clearly marked with the child's name and stored in a clear Ziploc bag in the child's classroom. Do not send summer clothing. **It is better to send fall/winter clothing.** Accidents can happen even with older preschoolers when they wait too long before going to the bathroom, or if they get wet on the playground or in the classroom. If an item of clothing is used during the day, a note will be sent home, so the parent can replace it the next school day.

Children should wear play clothes to school that they can get dirty. The children will participate in messy activities, such as coloring, painting, water/mud play, etc. Children should also wear closed-toe shoes to school, if possible.

**Please – no wooden clogs, crocs, flip-flops or rain boots. The children DO NOT LIKE getting mulch from the playground in their shoes.**

Bathrooms are provided in each classroom or in the hall. The following is the bathroom procedure used by preschool staff:

- Preschool children will be accompanied by a teacher/assistant when they need help to use the bathroom.
- The teacher/assistant will assist the child, if needed, but will encourage the child to learn to take care of bathroom needs himself/herself.
- When a child has a bathroom accident, the teacher/assistant will assist the child in changing his/her clothes in the bathroom. The teacher/assistant will put on rubber gloves, help remove the clothing, clean the child, and help put on dry/clean clothes. The soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and put with the child's other belongings. The parents will be informed of the soiled clothing.
- The teacher/assistant will teach the children how to wash their hands according to the directions on the bathroom wall.

### **Potty Training**

When you begin to work on potty training at home, we are happy to assist at school. Please send your child in with a pull-up diaper until he/she has been successful at home.

### **Behavior Management Policy**

Since we understand that each child is loved by God, made in His image, and redeemed for His service, Children's Garden Preschool views guidance and discipline as a process of developing appropriate behaviors. We begin our behavior management by providing an interesting learning environment for our students, with plenty of opportunities for the child to choose what he/she would like to do. A challenging environment that allows experimenting, learning, physical activity and quiet times prevents boredom and promotes good behavior.

**Children's Garden Preschool teachers** use indirect guidance techniques such as these:

- We give advance warnings: "You have five or more minutes to play before it's time to clean up."
- We give choices: "You may paint with the other children or you may read a book in a quiet corner."
- We have a regular routine. We always use the potty and wash our hands before lunch. After lunch there is story time.

Children should be appropriately dressed for the weather. Caps, Mittens, and warm clothing must be worn during the cooler seasons for daily outdoor play. Please label all items.

### **Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine at Children’s Garden Preschool. Children should be prepared to play outside some part of every day. We provide varied safe outdoor activities as well as playground play each day. Children should be dressed appropriately for the weather. If you wish for your child to use sunscreen, please apply before school. We are not permitted to apply sunscreen to the children.

### **Special Programs**

The children attending Children’s Garden Preschool will perform several programs for their families during the year. There will be a Thanksgiving Feast and a Christmas program. All family members and special friends are invited to share in these wonderful celebrations. If the day of the celebration is not your child’s regular school day, you may bring him/her to join the celebration. Siblings are welcome, except for “Donuts for Dads” and “Mother’s Day Muffins”.

### **Field Trip Policy**

Mother’s Morning Out children do not attend field trips.

On most field trips, siblings are welcome. There are a few field trips that we ask siblings to not attend. This is determined on a trip-by-trip basis.

Some field trips will have a minimal cost associated with them. This is also determined on a trip-by-trip basis.

In order for your child to participate in a field trip, a parent is required to attend. If this is not possible, you may make arrangements with another adult to be responsible for your child during that time and for that adult to drive the child to the location. Teachers are not permitted to drive children in their cars and will need to ride with another parent.

### **Bathroom Policy**

- We avoid nagging: We tell the child what we expect just once, follow it by asking the child if he/she remembers what we asked, and then offer to help the child do what was asked.
- We're consistent: We do things the same way each day, so the children know what to expect and learn to trust and feel safe in their environment.
- We avoid arguments by following through with solutions that address the problem, but also offer the child a to exit gracefully from the problem: "You may choose a quiet place to calm down or I can choose one for you."

At Children's Garden Preschool, the goal of guidance and discipline is education and redirecting children. If a child is unable to demonstrate self-controlled behavior, a brief time-out will result for the child to regain control. Time-out occurs only when other measures fail and is used as an opportunity for the child to "regroup" and not as punishment. Parents will be notified if a child goes to time-out.

If a child is consistently unable to gain control over a period of time and requires more individual attention that can be given within child-to-staff ratios, we will contact a parent. An aid (possibly at the cost to the parents) may have to be placed with the child who consistently requires one-to-one attention. If this does not result in the desired outcome, the child may have to take a leave of absence from the program temporarily for safety's sake. Repeated uncontrollable behavior can lead to discontinuation of preschool services.

### **Conflict Resolution**

When differences occur within our Christian family, God expects us to act and react in a manner which is pleasing to Him. The school has adopted the directions of Christ as outlined in Matthew 18 as a method for dealing with the differences:

**First**, one should go directly to the person with whom he/she has a difference, whether it is a teacher, the administrator, another parent, board member, or pastor. The issue should be clarified in a non-accusatory manner and an attempt made to reach a resolution. It is not proper or acceptable to discuss the issue with persons not directly involved.

**Second**, if conversation with the person directly does not bring resolution, the concern should be discussed with the director.

**Third**, if conversation with the director does not bring resolution, the concern should be discussed with the president of the preschool board who may arrange a meeting of all persons involved to discuss the issue. He/she may also ask one of the church pastors to provide counsel at such a meeting.

**Fourth**, any unresolved issues may be requested to be brought before the preschool board at the monthly preschool board meetings. A church pastor will be present at this meeting to offer advice and counsel.

### Payment

Tuition can be paid in monthly payments, three payments, or one payment. The first payment for each payment plan is due no later than September 9, 2021. Tuition payments are due on the first of each month. A late fee of \$20 will be charged after the fifth of the month. Since the tuition contract is a legally binding document, once it has been signed, the family is responsible for payment of tuition. All tuition payments must be made by check or cash. PayPal will no longer be available for tuition.

### Additional Fees

An activity fee of \$100 is required by Orientation Night. This fee covers a tote bag for each child, any special activities or guest program hosts throughout the year, and perishable supplies.

### Late Fee

A late fee will be assessed if a child is picked up after 12:05 PM. The late fee will be \$10 for each 15 minutes that child is not picked up. Children that are not picked up on time will be taken to Lunch Bunch until you arrive.

### Parent Responsibilities

There are several ways in which you can help us maintain the best possible teaching atmosphere for your child:

- Communicate any concerns regarding our program or your child immediately to staff.
- Pick up and read the notices and information left for you in your child's bag.
- Check your child's bag daily for papers and projects. Their work is very important to them and provides another means of communication between parent and child, thus helping the parent share in the child's day.
- Periodically check on your child's supply of extra clothing. Please take home soiled clothing promptly and replace by the next school day.

***In order not to confuse school toys with a child's personal property, we ask that children not bring playthings from home unless requested by the teacher (share day, etc.).***

Children's Garden staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys.

Please do not allow your child to bring any gum or candy to school. We ask that all snacks be nutritious.

### **A Closing Word**

Thank you for choosing Children's Garden Preschool! We are so glad you are here! We promise to care for and love your child as though he/she is our own. We promise to offer a positive learning environment for your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please call Susan Chester, Preschool Director, at 804-282-0511, or contact her at: [childrensgarden-preschool1@gmail.com](mailto:childrensgarden-preschool1@gmail.com).

