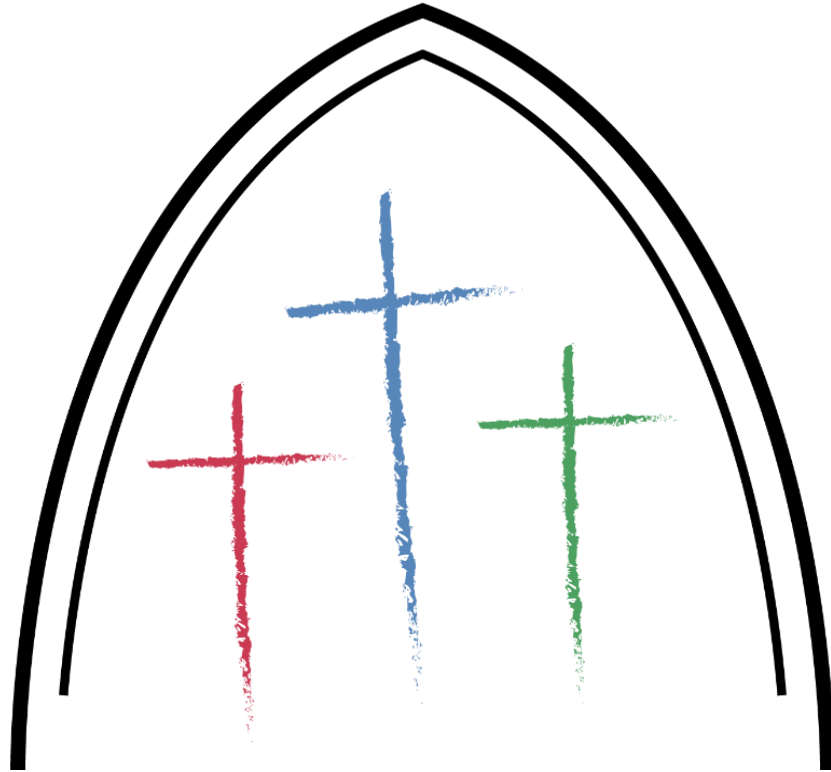


Covenant Preschool & Children's Day Out



Family Handbook 2023-2024

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(706) 733-8102

preschool@covenantaugusta.org

www.covenantpreschoolaugusta.com

Follow us on Social Media



@covenantpreschoolaugusta

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to Covenant Presbyterian Preschool and Children's Day Out! We are so glad that you have chosen us for the education, care, and love of your child this year.

When I was little, I attended preschool at Greenwood Forest Baptist Church in Cary, NC, and my husband Andy (he's also a co-pastor here!) is a graduate of this preschool. We both feel strongly about the ministry of the preschool and its mission in the Augusta community. Covenant's core values are hospitality, inclusiveness, and compassion, and we are grateful for the ways we get to live into those values with you and your family at the preschool.

I know that many of you already have a community of faith. If so, I hope that your time at Covenant Preschool will provide your family with a spiritual home away from home. If you are looking for a place to practice your faith and a community of belonging, I hope you will consider Covenant to be your church home. Please know that you have a standing invitation to join us for worship on Sunday mornings and all of our other events and programs.

We are looking forward to a wonderful school year together, and I'm especially looking forward to getting to know you and your family. It's a blessing to be able to grow together!

Grace and peace,

Katelyn Gordon Cooke
Co-Pastor and Preschool Director
Covenant Presbyterian Church

HISTORY

During the early 1960s, members of Covenant Presbyterian Church recognized a need in the Augusta area for a preschool program that could serve the growing community. After much planning, Covenant began its first Kindergarten in the fall of 1961 with a class of 25 students. The program later expanded to include preschool classes and continued to grow with the addition of a Children's Day Out program to provide morning childcare for families with young children.

ABOUT COVENANT PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S DAY OUT

Covenant Preschool and CDO is a non-profit ministry of Covenant Presbyterian Church. As such, it operates under the guidance and direction of the church session (board of elected congregational leaders).

Covenant Preschool has an exemption status from the Department of Family and Children's Services - Bright from the Start which governs programs involving young children. Because we are classified as a Preschool and Children's Day Out Program (and not a licensed childcare facility that provides all day childcare or before and after school care), Georgia state law mandates that our program operate for a maximum of four hours per day.

Admission is open to all families without regard to race, religion, and national or ethnic origin. We observe the state's recommendations for teacher-to-student ratios and age requirements for all classes.

The school year runs from mid-August through mid-May, and the school day is from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. School may be cancelled if Richmond and/or Columbia County School are closed due to inclement weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

Preschool

Our preschool includes two options for PK-3 (3-days and 5-days) and two options for PK-4 (4-days and 5-days).

The preschool classes use the Starfall curriculum, which includes lessons on mathematics, phonetics, reading, colors, numbers, etc. PK students also enjoy playground time every day and participate in weekly chapel services and music and Spanish classes.

Children's Day Out Program (CDO)

The Children's Day Out program serves children ages three months through two years old, and there are four CDO classes: Babies (turn one after September 1), Tiny Tots (turn one before September 1 and will turn two during the school year), Big Tots, and Tater Tots (both of which turn two before September 1).

Parents may choose one or two mornings/weekly for children under two years of age and up to five days for those over two years old. The selected days are reserved for the school year.

Summer Fun Program

Summer Fun is typically offered during June and July from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays for children ages one through six years old. Children under two years of age may attend on Tuesdays and Thursdays only. Each weekly session focuses on a theme, and the days include art, music, games, and playground time.

Staff

The teachers are the heart of Covenant Preschool and CDO, and we are grateful for their love for young children, their creativity and dependability, and their commitment to the Covenant community. They work together as a team, and they also plan lessons and activities for their particular classes. All teachers and staff have completed background checks and CPR/First Aid training prior to beginning employment, and they attend monthly staff meetings as part of their professional development.

We are grateful also to have substitute teachers who fill in when a regular teacher is absent. The substitutes have also completed background checks and CPR/First Aid training as part of our hiring process. It is our intention to let parents/guardians know when a class will have a substitute teacher with as much advanced notice as possible.

Current job openings are listed on the preschool website, and the employment application is available on the website as well.

Communication

We believe that communication is important for our community and for the success of our students and families.

Brightwheel

Our primary means of communication with families is the Brightwheel app, and we request that all parents and guardians download the app and use it regularly.

We use Brightwheel

- to check children in and out at the beginning and end of the school day
- to send tuition bills
- to share monthly newsletters
- to send reminders and updates about specific class and school-wide events
- to share pictures of daily happenings
- to keep your child's health information (including their immunization records) and emergency contacts
- to send messages between parents/guardians and teachers and between the director/assistant director and parents/guardians
- to register new and returning students
- to notify families when there is a school closure, early release, or delayed opening

You are welcome to send messages to teachers and staff through Brightwheel, and we are happy to respond to messages between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. We appreciate your understanding as we work to respect our teachers' time and responsibilities outside of the preschool.

Social Media

Covenant Preschool and CDO is active on Facebook and Instagram, and we'd love for you to follow us! Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/covenantpreschoolaugusta and on Instagram at [@CovenantPreschoolAugusta](https://www.instagram.com/CovenantPreschoolAugusta).

Please note that while your child is enrolled at Covenant Preschool, we ask that you not friend or follow staff or teachers.

Parent/Guardian Involvement

We welcome parents and guardians to become involved helping with classroom activities, parties, field trips, special school-wide events, fundraisers, and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).

The PTO includes preschool parents/guardians and preschool teachers. PTO meets regularly throughout the school year and supports the preschool in a variety of ways including providing fellowship opportunities for parents/guardians, organizing two fundraisers a year (one in the fall and one in the spring), and planning for Teacher Appreciation Week.

Parents or guardians who volunteer regularly in the school or who provide transportation for a field trip are required to complete Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult (CYVA) Protection Policy training and to submit to a background check. CYVA training sessions are provided throughout the year and can be arranged with the preschool director or a pastor as needed.

ENROLLMENT

Registration

Registration begins each year at the end of January for the upcoming school year and continues until all classes are filled and/or the end of July.

We conduct registration online, and the link is available on the preschool website and through Brightwheel. An annual registration fee equal to one month tuition is due as part of your child's registration. This fee is non-refundable and is not considered a tuition payment.

Tuition and Curriculum Fee

There are nine monthly tuition payments during the school year. The first payment is due in August, and the last payment is due in April. Tuition payments are due by the first of the month, and there is a two-week grace period for late payments. Tuition is not reduced or refunded due to absences or school closures. Families who enroll at the school mid-year are required to pay a half-month of tuition for May. All families are asked to sign a tuition agreement as part of the registration process.

Payments may be made through Brightwheel or with cash or check in the preschool office. Families may make arrangements for automatic payments through Brightwheel if desired. Checks should be made out to Covenant Preschool and can be sent to school in your child's lunch box, folder, or diaper bag or placed in the drop box outside the preschool office. Cash payments should be made in person in the preschool office.

Monthly tuition statements are provided through Brightwheel.

Preschool Class	Registration Fee	Monthly Tuition	Curriculum Fee
PK-4 (M-F)	\$230	\$230	\$60
PK-4 (M-Th)	\$210	\$210	\$60
PK-3 (M-F)	\$230	\$230	\$50
PK-3 (M-Th)	\$195	\$195	\$50
CDO			
# of days/week			
1 day	\$90	\$90	-

2 days	\$145	\$145	-
3 days	\$190	\$190	-
4 days	\$205	\$205	-
5 days	\$225	\$225	-

A one-time curriculum fee is due for all PK students at the start of the school year and can be paid through Brightwheel.

Tuition Discounts and Scholarships

Families with more than one child enrolled at the preschool will receive a \$5/monthly discount on the younger sibling(s)'s tuition.

There is a 5% tuition discount for families who would like to pay the full year's tuition at once. This discount is applicable only if the full payment is made by the first week of September.

Limited scholarships are available for preschool families with short-term and long-term financial needs. For a scholarship application or more information, please contact the preschool director.

Withdrawals and Late Fees

Please provide 30-days advanced written notice to withdraw your child(ren) from the preschool. Tuition will not be refunded for the final month of a withdrawn student's attendance.

There is a \$5.00 late fee per business day for tuition received after the 15th of the month and a \$20 service fee for any check returned by the bank. Failure to pay tuition for two months will result in a student's withdrawal from the program. The student may be re-enrolled when the account balance is paid in full. Late payments for three consecutive months may also result in a student's withdrawal from the program. Please contact the preschool director regarding extenuating circumstances.

If a student is not picked up by 1:05 p.m., a late pick-up fee of \$20 will be automatically added to their account.

Immunization Records

The office must have a copy of your child's immunization record (Form 3231) on file before the first day of school. Your child's doctor can provide a copy of this form, or it can be ordered from the local health department.

Please upload the necessary form(s) to your child's profile on Brightwheel before the first day of school.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Illness Policy

Please keep your child home from school if he/she exhibits any of the following symptoms:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Fever* | Sore throat | Nausea |
| Open sores | Diarrhea | Productive cough |
| Vomiting | Earache | Cloudy/discolored nasal discharge |
| Enlarged glands | Rash | |

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (HFM) is a very contagious virus that is common among children under age 5. Symptoms of HFM include fever, mouth sores, and skin rash with blisters. Children who have HFM (and any siblings also enrolled at the school) will be asked to stay home for five days to help minimize the transmission of the virus. If a student in your child's class has HFM, the school will contact you to let you know to be on the lookout for symptoms.

The school will also let you know if a student in your child's class has lice.

We ask that your child be symptom-free and fever-free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school. Preschool teachers and staff cannot administer medication to students.

If your child gets sick at school, we will contact you. Please make sure the office has current and preferred phone numbers in Brightwheel.

**According to the Center for Disease Control, a fever for a young child is 100 degrees or higher.*

Allergies

For safety reasons, student(s)'s names and allergies are posted in each classroom. Teachers may keep a prescription Epi Pen in cases of severe allergies. If your child(ren) has an allergy, please talk with his/her teacher about the severity of the allergy and the best ways to keep your child safe.

Transportation

Parents and guardians are responsible for their child's transportation to and from school. Children must have a properly installed car seat, and students will not be released to a car without a car seat.

PK-3 and PK-4 families may participate in carline at the beginning and end of the school day. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to fasten a child in their car seat. Preschool teachers or staff cannot secure children in car seats.

CDO children are to be dropped off and picked up in their classroom by their parents/guardians.

Morning drop-off time is 8:50 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., and afternoon pick-up time is 12:50 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. If a student is not picked up by 1:05 p.m., a late pick-up fee of \$20 will be automatically added to their account.

In Case of Emergency

Staff and teachers are trained in emergency first aid and CPR procedures. When minor incidents (bumps, scrapes, and scratches) happen, we will treat the injury. An incident report will be documented and available through Brightwheel.

If a child is involved in an accident and requires medical attention, parents/guardians will be notified immediately.

In the event of an emergency (fire, tornado, or lockdown), teachers will lead their classes to a designated safe space, and the school will notify parents/guardians through Brightwheel as soon as possible.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Carline

Carline happens at the beginning and the ending of every school day, and we appreciate your help in making carline run smoothly. Staff members will be present at carline to help every day. Please read through the following information carefully. Carline diagrams are included below.

General Carline Information

- Whenever you are in carline or the church parking lot, please drive slowly and carefully and refrain from using your cell phone.
- The school will provide a name plate with your child(ren)'s name(s) for you to display on your car visor or dashboard to help the teachers know whom you are dropping off or picking up. For safety reasons, we recommend that you remove the name plate when you are away from the school.
- When you are dropping off or picking up your child(ren) in carline,
 - Please put your car in park.
 - Stay in your car. A staff person will help escort your child(ren) to or from the building.

Morning Drop-Off (8:50-9:00 a.m.)

In the morning, Babies, Tiny Tots, Tater Tots, and Big Tots (and their older siblings) must be walked in and signed into their classrooms by a parent/guardian. Please park by the church office (on the playground side of campus) and enter the building through the double glass doors near the ramp. For safety reasons, parents will not be allowed to enter the building through the carline door.

PK students are dropped off through the carline by the covered walkway.

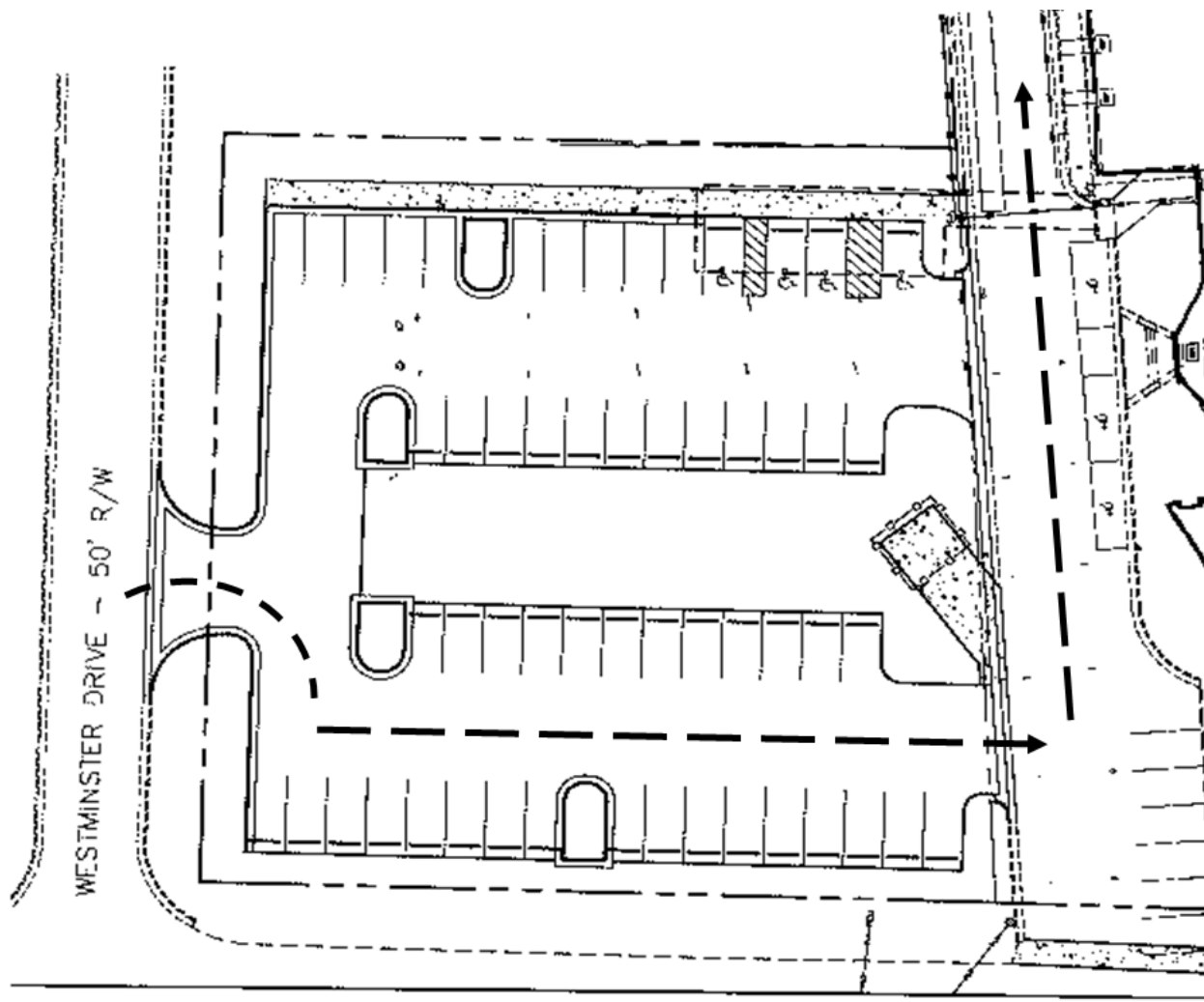
- Please enter the parking lot from Aumond Road.
- If you arrive after 9:00 a.m., you will need to park near the church office and walk your child(ren) to their classroom. The carline door will be locked at 9:00 a.m.

Afternoon Pick-Up (12:50-1:00 p.m.)

Babies, Tiny Tots, Tater Tots, and Big Tots (and their older siblings) are picked up in their classrooms. If you have children in a CDO class and a PK class, please pick up your preschooler near the glass doors by the sanctuary.

PK students are picked up through the carline.

- To avoid traffic jams on Aumond Road, please enter the parking lot via Westminster Drive and then stay to the right of the parking lot.
- Teachers will help students get into their cars, and parents/guardians are responsible for buckling their child(ren) once they are in the car. Legally, teachers and staff are not allowed to buckle in children or put them in their carseats.
- If you arrive after 1:00 p.m., you are considered late and will need to pick up your child inside at the preschool office. A late fee of \$20 will automatically be added to the account of child(ren) not picked up by 1:05 p.m.



Playground

Playground time is part of every class's daily schedule. Please dress your child in clothing that can get dirty and is weather-appropriate. If it is raining, the classes will play in the church gym during their playground time.

The playground is open to the general public during non-school hours (after 1 p.m., weekends, and school holidays). For safety reasons, please do not use the playground during school hours even if your child is enrolled in the preschool.

We ask for your help in keeping our playground clean. Sand should stay in the sand boxes and mulch should stay in the mulched areas. Please discourage children from playing behind fenced areas where there might be snakes, poison ivy, etc.

The playground is available for birthday parties, and we ask that parties are scheduled in advance with the church secretary (706.733.0513). Please note that the playground will remain open to the public during birthday parties. Trash from parties on the playground should be taken to the dumpster (located in the fenced-in area near the sanctuary) or removed from the premises. Please do not leave trash in the playground trash cans.

Birthday Celebrations

We love to celebrate birthdays! Parents/guardians should plan birthday celebrations ahead of time with their child's teacher. The school provides a birthday crown for students, and parents/guardians are welcome to send in a snack or dessert on the scheduled day.

Recommended birthday treats include donut holes, small cupcakes, mini muffins, and cookies.

We ask that birthday parties be planned outside of the school day. Invitations may be sent through the school if the entire class is invited.

School Pictures & Fundraisers

Individual school pictures are taken in the fall. These photos are available for purchase in a digital format. Class pictures are taken in the spring. These photos are available for purchase as prints.

There are two fundraisers during the school year (one in the fall and one in the spring). The PTO is responsible for choosing the fundraisers as well as organizing them.

Manners

Good manners are emphasized for all students, and we appreciate parents' help in reinforcing good manners at home. Throughout the school year, we talk with students about showing respect for adults and other students, being honest, using polite language, waiting one's turn, developing good sportsmanship, being responsible for one's actions, developing a sharing spirit, and using good table manners.

Discipline

Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management with young children. When children have positive and understanding interactions with adults and others, they develop self-esteem, problem-solving abilities, and self-discipline. Covenant Preschool and CDO uses a positive approach to discipline and practices the following discipline techniques:

We do

- Communicate with children on their level and with positive statements.
- Talk with children in a calm manner.
- Explain unacceptable behavior to children.
- Apply rules consistently.
- Model appropriate behavior.
- Provide alternatives and redirect children to acceptable activities.
- Listen to children and give them opportunities to make choices and solve problems.

We do not

- Use corporal punishment in any manner with children.
- Hurt, shame, belittle, threaten, or intimidate children.
- Leave a child alone, unattended, or without supervision.

If particular disciplinary problems occur, the director will schedule a conference with the child's parent(s)/guardian(s). If the child's behavior consistently endangers the safety of other children, the director has the right, after meeting with the parents/guardians and after documenting the behavior problems and attempted interventions, to dismiss the child from the school.

CHILDREN'S DAY OUT (CDO) GENERAL INFORMATION

We believe each child has unique gifts and qualities that can be celebrated and nurtured to better the world.

In our CDO classes, we emphasize learning through play. Using art, blocks, books, puzzles, games, music, and outdoor play, our youngest students develop physical, cognitive, social/emotional, and language skills. CDO teachers plan and adapt activities to match children's developmental stages.

Activities

Babies and Tiny Tots enjoy playtime each day with a variety of age-appropriate toys, musical tapes, stories, and books.

Big Tots and Tater Tots enjoy large blocks of playtime and participate in Wednesday chapel and a music class. If your Big Tot or Tater Tot doesn't attend school on Wednesdays, there are still many opportunities for singing, story time, art, and science activities.

Diapers and Clothing

Each child should bring a backpack or diaper bag with the following items labeled with their name:

- Three disposable diapers (or disposable training pants if actively potty training)
 - Please note that cloth diapers/training pants are not allowed.
- A complete change of clothes
- Pacifier and/or security blanket, if needed
- Lunch in a lunch box
- Water bottle

Lunch

Each child should bring a lunch with a beverage, finger foods, and a napkin. Please no popcorn, nuts, hard candy, lollipops, hotdogs, whole grapes, or hard-boiled eggs.

Other

Please put your child's name on all items they bring to school including coats, lunch boxes, and diaper bags.

PRESCHOOL GENERAL INFORMATION
PK-3 AND PK-4

Preschool classes focus on all aspects of a child's development and education. Classroom activities develop physical, cognitive, and language skills. The development of social skills is an equally important part of our preschool curriculum, and we encourage children to play and work cooperatively as well as to develop a sense of concern and care for others beyond themselves.

*Please note: PK-3 students must be fully potty-trained by the start of the school year.

Attendance

We encourage regular attendance. Children thrive with routine, and students who arrive late or are absent frequently miss out on the full educational preschool experience.

Classroom activities begin promptly at 9 am. Please use Brightwheel to notify the school if your child is going to be late or absent.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Preschool parent/teacher conferences happen twice a year (in the fall and in the spring) during the school day. Conferences are opportunities for parents/guardians and teachers to discuss the student's progress and to talk about any concerns or celebrations. We ask that you not bring children to scheduled conferences.

Additional conferences may be arranged anytime upon request. Please contact your child's teacher if you would like to schedule a conference.

Chapel and Christian Education

As a Christian school, we share the teachings of Christ's love for all people, read Bible stories, sing Christian songs, pray, and celebrate traditional Christian holidays. Students in Big Tots through PK-4 attend Wednesday chapel in the sanctuary. Chapel is led by the church pastors, and the preschool music teacher also leads songs during the service.

Art

Art is a wonderful medium for self-expression, and age-appropriate art activities are incorporated in all of our classes. While every effort is made to keep children and their clothing clean, please consider if you would be upset if your child's outfit were to get messy.

Teachers keep some of each student's artwork throughout the school year to send home in a binder at the end of the year.

Music

Music is an important learning tool in a young child's life, and preschool students sing and listen to music in the classroom on a daily basis. All classes have a weekly music class or music time, and school programs during the year often include music as well.

Spanish

PK-3 and PK-4 students participate in a weekly Spanish class where they learn basic vocabulary for colors, numbers, days of the week, and more.

Library

Preschoolers may make weekly visits to the preschool library where the teacher will read a book

and the class will learn how to select and check out books to read in their classrooms. Please note that library books stay at the school.

Field Trips

PK-3 and PK-4 classes may take field trips during the school year. Details about field trips are shared with parents/guardians through Brightwheel, and we ask for parent/guardian permission for all students before a field trip. Parents/guardians may be asked to help with transportation for field trips. We also invite resource people to visit the school, as well as parents who can share their professions, hobbies, or special talents.

RESOURCES

2023-2024 School Calendar

August 7	Teachers Return / Pre-Planning
August 11	Meet Your Teacher (morning)
August 13	Preschool Sunday at Covenant
August 14	First Day of School
August 14-18	Class T-shirt Orders
August 21	Carline begins
September 4	Labor Day – No school
September 6	Chapel & Music begin
September 11	Grandfriends Day
September 19 & 20	Individual school photos
October 9 & 10	Fall Break – No school
October 31	Halloween Fun
November 7 & 9	Parent Teacher Conferences for PK3 and PK4
November 10	Veterans Day – No school
November 13-17	Spirit Week
November 20-24	Thanksgiving Holiday – No school
December 2	Parents Day Out Fundraiser
December 14	Christmas Program (evening)
Dec 15-Jan 8	Christmas Break – No school
January 5	Teacher Workday
January 8	Students return
January 15	MLK, Jr. Day – No school
	Dental Hygiene Month
February 14	Valentine's Day
February 16, 19	No school
Feb 26-March 1	Read Across America Week/Spirit Week
March 4	No school
March 29	Good Friday – No School
April 4	Class Egg Hunts
April 8-15	Spring Break – No school
April 22-25	Class Pictures
April 30	Parent/Teacher Conferences
May 2	Parent/Teacher Conferences for PK3 and PK4
May 6-10	Teacher Appreciation Week
May 16	Last Day of School & Graduation

Staff List (as of August 1, 2023)

Class

Babies

Tiny Tots

Tater Tots

Big Tots

PK-3

PK-4

Class Floaters

Music & Spanish

Assistant Director

Director

Teacher(s)

Natalie Ackley and Sarah Rosier

Sherry Nash

Jill Reeves

Celina Alexander

Suzanne Hobby-Shippen

Kim Ball

Alex Krumme and Missy Woolever

Kristen Kasarjian

Vickie Terry

Katelyn Gordon Cooke