

BETHLEHEM LUTHERAN CHILDCARE (BLC)—PARENT HANDBOOK



UPDATED FEB. 2025

Welcome

Dear BLC Childcare Families,

We are delighted to have you and your child be a part of our BLC Childcare community. With clean and spacious facilities, we offer a fun and secure learning environment for your child. Our trained and qualified staff aim to provide quality care, education and opportunities for exploration for your child. Our low teacher-to-child ratio is beneficial for children's social-emotional learning, academic achievement and overall development.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with a clear understanding of the Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare mission, core values, expectations and operations. The handbook also includes helpful information regarding important procedures and answers to questions you may have. If there are any additional questions or desire for information on specifics, please do not hesitate to contact BLC Childcare staff for further inquiries and discussion. The BLC Childcare staff are here to support you and your child in every capacity that we can!

Sincerely,
Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare Staff

Our Mission

Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare is a mission of Bethlehem Lutheran Church and therefore ascribes to the mission statement of the Church.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church builds, grows, and nurtures intergenerational disciples to share the message of Christ Jesus with our neighborhood, our city, and our world. (Proverbs 22:6)

Admission and Enrollment

Who We Serve: Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare was established in May 2024 to serve the young children of the Hyde Park Community and beyond. This ministry offers early childhood education for ages 2 years to 5 years old.

Registration priority is determined by the administration.

Tuition and Fees

- Tuition Private Pay rates subject to change from year to year
- State assistance is welcomed (Contact childcare office if assistance is needed)
- Payments made at the beginning of the week
- \$25/week fee for late payments on tuition
- \$10/week for transportation

Enrollment Process

- The opportunity for a tour of the childcare can be given prior to attending. Walk-ins are welcome but appointments can be made beforehand by phone. We encourage you to bring your child on the tour to give them an opportunity to familiarize themselves with their prospective teachers and classrooms.
- At your appointment, all the required paperwork for enrollment will be given to you.
- Once your application is received, you will be given a week to finalize any remaining paperwork (e.g. birth certificates, immunization records, etc.)
- Once all the required paperwork is received, your child may start the following school day.

Communication

BLC uses ProCare as our primary communication platform. Parents can directly message teachers, access updates on their child's progress in the classroom, and receive important announcements.

All official communications should be directed to our email address:

Childcare@Bethlehemstlouis.org.

You are also welcome to call the childcare line at 314-231-9615.

**Please contact to address any of the following:

Absence - No more than 3 unexcused absences will be accepted; further absences may result in expulsion.

Late Drop-Off – Drop off's will not be accepted after 9:00 AM

Early Pick-Up - Early pickup starts at 3 PM

Different Person Picking Up – Any individual picking up a child must be on the emergency contact list or parent/guardian must call the office and provide identification.

Reporting Illness - Illnesses should be communicated through phone calls and emails.

*The wording "Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare" includes all programs (2's, 3's, 4's preschool, and kindergarten) When necessary, the handbook will specify a selected program.

Financial Policies

- Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare is dependent on the prompt payment of tuition and fees to meet its responsibilities.
- Payment is due at the beginning of each week – a \$25 fee will be added for each day the payment is late.
- Parents may pay tuition in one of the following ways:

1. Debit/Credit (ProCare)
 2. Cash
 3. Checks made out to Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare (All return payments will have a \$25 insufficient fee.)
 4. State Assistance
- Please contact the Assistant Center Director, Allana Foster, allana.foster@bethlehemstlouis.org for any financial questions or concerns. Late fees will apply for tuition or fees received after the due date.
 - Parents are responsible for any outstanding tuition or fees, should they unilaterally decide to withdraw their child from the Preschool, once a place is accepted. Requests for consideration of exceptions to this policy, for circumstances such as moving from the city, etc., must be requested in writing to the Director.
 - In case of maternity leave, if a parent decides to keep their older children at home during their maternity leave, they are at risk for losing their preschool position. Payment will be expected for the child's absence unless the child's position can be filled.
 - Late Pick-up Fee: There will be a \$2.00 per minute charge if you are late. You will be notified by email from the Director of your charges.

Daily Operating Policies

School Day Hours

Drop off Time at 6am - 9am

Pick up Time at 3pm - 6pm

****Please notify the childcare if your child will be dropped off or picked up outside of these designated hours – Doctors notes, and/or other official documents may need to be provided. ****

****Any other excuse will not be accepted. ****

Preschool Programs

Preschool 2

-Must be 24 months (about 2 years) to 36months (about 3 years)
Preschool 3
-must be 36 months (about 3 years) to 48 months (about 4 years)
Preschool 4
-must be 48 months (about 4 years) to 60 months (about 5 years)
Kindergarten
-must be 60 months (about 5 years) to 72 months (about 6 years)

Child: Teacher Ratios

CHILD'S AGE	CHILD: TEACHER RATIO
24 months (about 2 years) to 36months (about 3 years)	1:8
36 months (about 3 years) to 48 months (about 4 years)	1:10
48 months (about 4 years) to 60 months (about 5 years)	1:10
60 months (about 5 years) to 72 months (about 6 years)	1:16

Curriculum

ProCare Solutions©

Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare currently utilizes Procare Early Learning curriculum for learning. Procare's educational content aligns with Missouri Learning Standards. Procare's learning lessons are STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) based. This promotes curiosity, dialogue and critical thinking. Procare's lesson plans and activities are developed by education professionals with 150 years of combined experience. Procare is in partnership with Learning Beyond Paper, Inc. (LBP) which is in alignment with National Head Start, NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and all U.S. state standards.

Procare curriculum provides children with the skills needed to succeed in today's world including collaboration, digital literacy, critical thinking and problem-solving. The curriculum includes 52 weeks of lesson plans for five age groups: infant, young toddler, older toddler, preschool and pre-kindergarten.

Procare tracks in-class activities and development milestones that can then be communicated with families while connecting those activities to state standards. Procare supports a wide variety of early childhood learning methodologies and provides the ability to access and report on developmental milestones. Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare seeks to provide the best learning tools for your child. We are aware of the ever-changing needs and standards of learning. Should there be any changes to the curriculum, parents will be updated and informed.

Calendar

Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare follows a yearly calendar. There are no extended breaks surrounding national holidays – Please see the official calendar for closing dates.

June 3rd 2024 (First day for Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare)

Emergency Weather Closings

- Closings for Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare due to emergency weather conditions will follow our own closure policy.
 - Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare will attempt to make the choice for delayed opening rather than total closure whenever possible. All delays and closures will be communicated through our communication networks.
 - Local news outlets will announce emergency closings for Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare. The title that will appear on local news posting will appear as “Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare”
 - There are no reimbursements for days or hours missed due to closure or delays.

****** In the event of an emergency (loss of heat, electricity, or water) parents may be notified to pick up their children promptly.

Health and Safety

Emergency Evacuation: If we need to evacuate the building and cannot return to the Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare facility for an extended period of time, the teachers and children will walk to the parking lot adjacent to the Childcare.

Fire and Tornadoes: The children will be trained and will practice performing fire drills. Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare will have fire drills once a month. In the event of a tornado warning, children will be brought to the lowest level of the building, away from glass. Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare will have several tornado drills.

Immunizations: It is required that we have an up-to-date record of your child's vaccinations on file. You will be expected to submit this before your child is able to start school at Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare and after each updated vaccine. You may provide your doctor's vaccination form.

HEALTH

****We do understand how difficult and frustrating it can be when your child is ill, but it is EXTREMELY important that children do not come to school when they are sick.**

- If your child experiences any of the following symptoms within the last 24 hours, please keep them at home until they recover: Fever, vomiting, sore throat, earache, cough, flu, serious cold, eye infection, heavy green nasal discharge, consistent runny nose, skin rash, diarrhea, or other possible contagious illnesses.
- If your child becomes ill at Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare (fever of 100 degrees or higher), you will be contacted to pick them up. The child must be fever-free for 24 hours WITHOUT medication before returning to school.
- If your child goes to a physician to be treated for a contagious illness (diarrhea, vomiting, flu, etc.), we must receive a note from the physician stating that the child has been seen in a doctor's office, is not contagious, and may return to school.
- Diarrhea: If your child has diarrhea, please keep him/her home. If your child has 2 or more diarrhea episodes while at school, you will be called to pick him/her up. Your child may not return to school until he/she has a normal bowel movement. Diarrhea due to illness is very contagious.
- Vomiting: If your child vomits while at school, you will be called immediately to pick him/her up. Please keep your child at home until 24 hours after the vomiting has stopped.
- Parents will be informed of any significant injuries and communicable diseases that occur at school through email.

Parents will be updated through email when/if Covid protocols are put into place.

Emergencies: In case of a medical emergency, staff will take the appropriate medical action first and parents will be notified immediately. If necessary, staff will also call the child's pediatrician and the local hospital.

Medications: Children who are under a doctor's prescribed medication should remain home for 48 hours (about 2 days) or until they are well enough to come back to school. If your child requires taking medication while at school, please let the Director know. Instructions MUST be given to the Director.

- Prescription medications will not be stored overnight at school.
- All prescriptions need an authorization form if given at Childcare.
- Medication must be in the original container and have the following

information:

-Child's name

-Name of medication

-Reason for giving the medication

-How often to give the medication

-The dosage to be given

-Any refrigeration need

Allergies: please alert the director if your child has a serious food, bee sting, or other potentially life-threatening allergy.

Head Lice: While head lice do not pose a health hazard, it is highly contagious, especially with young children. Children who have a live louse and/or 2 or more eggs/nits within 1 inch of the scalp will be temporarily excluded from school until treated with the appropriate medication.

Injuries: All injuries will be reported as soon as possible to the Director. A written record of the injury will be kept. Serious injuries require a complete incident report to be filed. Normal accidents are not covered by the school's insurance. All accidents or injuries will be reported to the parents. If necessary, a child will be given first aid or CPR by trained staff. If the injury poses an emergency, 911 will be called. Parents will be contacted immediately to be informed of injury, the care provided, and any follow-up actions.

Medical Conditions: Please alert the Director of any significant medical condition, such as diabetes, seizure disorders, neuromuscular conditions, cancer, etc. impacting your child's health.

Universal Precautions: Always avoid direct contact with various human bodily fluids, such as blood. Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare has universal precaution kits with gloves and first aid kits. All staff members at Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare have received Universal Precautions, CPR and First Aid training.

Toileting Accidents: In the event of a urinary accident, our staff will promptly assist the child in changing into clean clothing. We ask that parents provide an extra set of clothes, including socks and underwear, to ensure that any accidents are managed quickly and comfortably. Once the spare set of clothes has been used, we kindly request that parents return them washed within two days to ensure we are prepared for any future accidents.

Safety

Protecting God's Children: Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare is dedicated to the protection of all God's children from harm, especially from sexual or other abuse. All staff and volunteers are required to undergo a background check and successfully complete it.

Child Abuse and Neglect: We are required by Missouri law to report any suspected signs of child abuse or neglect.

Childcare Sign-In and Sign-Out: Parents are required to sign-in and sign-out each child each day. Please make sure your child is supervised by a teacher before you leave.

Drop-off + Pick-up: New drop-off and pick-up procedures will be communicated through email before the beginning of the school year. Please call the Preschool (314-231-9615) if you have any adjustments to your child's day.

Please Note: If an unauthorized person attempts to pick up your child, the child will not be allowed to leave. If an unidentified, but authorized person attempts to pick up a child, identification will be required. The school cannot legally deny release of any child to a natural parent unless there is a written court order. The school cannot allow a child to leave with any inebriated person, even a parent. If, on a given day, your child has permission to leave school with someone other than those authorized individuals listed on the enrollment forms, please direct the person to the Director. If you wish to change the names of people who are authorized to pick up your child at any time, you must do so by written notice.

Supplies

- Preschool 2 children must have a change of clothing, (8) diapers and wipes if not potty trained and a sheet for the cot.
- Preschool 3 children must have a change of clothing and a sheet for the cot.
- Preschool 4 children must have a change of clothing and a sheet for the cot.

Birthdays: We celebrate birthdays on the last day of every month during snack time. Please do not send cupcakes or other treats to share in order to avoid food allergies. Your child may choose a book from home for a class read aloud or donate a book to the classroom library. If you wish to send birthday invitations through the school, the entire group must be invited to

prevent hurt feelings.

Personal Belongings: Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare is not responsible for the damage, loss, or theft of personal property. All personal belongings that might become separated from a child should be labeled with the child's name. All outer garments, including coats, mittens, hats, etc. should be labeled with your child's name. Children should not bring personal items such as money, toys, etc. unless requested by the teacher. No cell phones are allowed to enter the classrooms.

Behavior: The primary goal of Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare is to develop a Christian child whose habits are consistent with good moral principles and Lutheran values. We strive to create a loving environment in which all children, their rights, and belongings are respected. Positive reinforcement builds a child's self-worth and encourages the formation of the whole child. The limits for children at Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare are set for their safety.

We encourage children to find alternatives to confrontation in stressful situations. Techniques include: giving choices, problem solving, natural and logical consequences, redirecting, and thinking time. Our goal is to create a positive learning atmosphere.

Physical Contact Hitting, pushing, shoving, or any other physical contact by a child will not be tolerated by Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare. In addition, biting is a typical behavior for toddlers to seek attention or express their feelings. It will always be discouraged, and the child will be helped to find other solutions. If biting becomes a problem, the Director/Lead Teachers will meet with the parents to find a solution. Our policy is to provide first aid if needed and the incident will be documented, and both sets of parents will be informed. If the child bites two times in one day, parents will be called to take the child home. The children's safety is our priority. Names of the children will not be disclosed to ensure each family's privacy. Information about the child and family will always remain confidential.

Learning: Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare staff are dedicated to meeting each child where they are in their development, while also setting clear milestones to encourage growth. Our trained staff are vigilant in identifying potential developmental delays. If we observe any learning needs, we will contact you to discuss our observations and collaborate on a plan to support your child's development. If necessary, we will assist in finding appropriate resources and guidance tailored to your child's specific learning needs. Our goal is to work together to ensure your child receives the support they need to thrive.

Divorce and Legal Separation Parents who are divorced or legally separated must provide legal (court) documents regarding custody, financial responsibility and other information related to the educational well-being of the children involved. Both parents have access to school and academic information unless restricted by a court order. Parents are responsible for keeping

the school informed in writing of any changes. Contact the Director if you have any questions.

Parental Involvement

Parent and staff collaboration is essential for children's development. At Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare, we value the opportunity to support your child's learning and maintain open communication with you about their progress. Learning extends beyond the classroom, especially at home. We encourage parents to stay informed through flyers, announcements, and events from our center to stay updated on your child's development.

We also recommend reinforcing skills learned at school by encouraging exploration at home. Regular communication with your child's teacher is encouraged, and parent-teacher meetings can be requested at any time.

Accessibility to Important Files

Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare provides access to state licensing compliance reports, the licensing regulation handbook, and your child's personal file. These can be reviewed by contacting the childcare office.

Our Faith

We are a Lutheran preschool, and Jesus' teachings are the foundation of our school. Students and staff at Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare make prayer, the Gospel and Lutheran traditions a key part of daily life. The teachers encourage respectful behavior during devotions, chapel, and prayer time. Families that regularly pray and make Sunday mass a priority are essential to our Lutheran faith.

Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare is a License Exempt center in the state of Missouri. We follow DESE standards for all our procedures.

**Receipt for Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare Handbook**

I have received my copy of the Bethlehem Lutheran Childcare Handbook. I agree to read it and keep it for future reference. I agree to abide by all the procedures and policies as stated in the handbook.

Full Name (print)

Signature

Child's Name

Date