

Welcome to Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten!



2017-2018 PARENT HANDBOOK

Thank you for allowing us to love, educate, nurture and support your child! Your trust is important to us. We promise to faithfully teach, love and care for your child and help your child to reach his/her fullest potential. Your child is God's gift not only to *your* family, but to our Preschool & Kindergarten family as well. Your child's safety and well-being are always our first priority.

Mission Statement of Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten (GLPK)

As part of the ministry of Grace Lutheran Church, a weekday preschool and kindergarten program will be offered to the community. Teaching will be approached from a Christian point of view in a climate in which teacher and child may live and learn together in a Christ-like way.

GLPK provides an atmosphere reflective of God's love, enabling children to:

- ♥ develop a positive self-image, feeling of belonging, and sense of security.
- ♥ discover and nurture individual creative expression.
- ♥ cultivate a desire for knowledge and a love of learning.
- ♥ transition from home to school by learning to listen and follow directions, as well as work and play cooperatively.
- ♥ respond to structure outside the home.

Our school staff recognizes the individual abilities of each child and appreciates the varying faith concepts brought to our school by students, parents and staff.

Note: As a Private Academic School licensed by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, our school is focused on the development of the whole child – academic, social, emotional and behavioral, using Christian principles as our guide. Our goal is to ensure students are fully prepared to transition from preschool to kindergarten, within our school or elsewhere, and ultimately on to first grade.

Admission Policy



Admission to GLPK is made without regard to race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, national origin, age, or gender. Programs and services shall be made accessible to eligible special-needs students using the most practical and economically feasible methods available.

Criteria for Preschool Readiness

Our staff recognizes that children develop differently -- emotionally, physically and intellectually. We use the following criteria to determine a child's readiness for our preschool/kindergarten and enrichment programs: language, toilet-training, and behavior.

Language

Children are expected to understand basic spoken English. Some second-language children with minimal English speaking skills adjust to an English-speaking environment more easily than others. English-as-a-second-language children and their families are supported as they develop functional language skills.

Toilet-Training

We prefer children to be toilet trained when they begin school, but recognize that the youngest children may still be in the process of learning. Pull-ups are encouraged for children who are not completely toilet trained. We encourage parents to have their children toilet trained when they begin school, but it is a learning process and we understand some children have accidents. Parents are asked to pack an extra set of clothes in each child's tote bag. If accidents become regular, we will address the issue with the parents/guardians.

Behavior

Our teachers expect children to behave and interact with peers in ways that allow positive classroom learning experiences. GLPK reserves the right to ask a parent to remove a child from the school if that child's behavior is consistently disruptive.

Class placement is determined by the Director and Assistant Director subsequent to reviewing all registrations. The collaborative placement process aims to ensure all placements result in the best educational environment for all children.

Educational Policies and Curriculum

GLPK provides a solid, developmentally sound foundation for life-long learners. We offer diverse educational models to make our programs enjoyable, flexible, and adaptable to each child's needs. Our programs focus on:

Christian Faith Concepts

We incorporate Christian faith concepts into all aspects of our program, teaching children that God loves each of us and encourages us to love one another. Throughout the year children celebrate God's love, including God's gifts of: food (Thanksgiving); Jesus (Christmas); loving neighbors around the world (Valentine's Day); new life (Easter and throughout the spring). In-class songs, prayers and Bible stories are complemented by our monthly chapel program.

Self Esteem

Children are taught to deal with expectations and challenges, feelings of fear, anger, joy and disappointment, and problem solving. Caring relationships with staff and peers show them that they are God's children and are accepted and valued for their uniqueness.

Social Interactions

Children learn about diverse customs through cross-cultural experiences. They also learn to cooperate with and value each other's rights. Teachers help children to establish positive, constructive relationships with adults and other children. They also support budding friendships and help children to learn from each other.

Language and Literacy

Teachers develop children's language and literacy skills daily by listening to and reading stories and poems; dictating their students' stories; discussing classroom charts and items in print; participating in dramatic play; and experimenting with writing by drawing, copying, and using their own "invented" spelling. Children develop print awareness, sense of story, and an understanding of various uses of the written word, as well as learning letter names, letter-sound combinations, and recognizing words they find meaningful.

Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Health

Teachers use varied strategies to help children develop concepts and skills in mathematics, science, social studies, health and other areas. Children learn to seek solutions to concrete problems; construct with blocks; measure water, dirt, etc.; observe and record changes in the environment; classify objects; explore animals, plants, water, wheels and gears; use art media, music, and movement to represent what they see, understand, and feel; and practice routines of healthy living.

Aesthetic Expression

Children explore aesthetic expression and appreciation through art and music, experimenting with dramatic play, music, and dance. A variety of art media and instruments are available.

Gross-Motor Development

Children have many opportunities daily to develop large muscle movement with activities involving balancing, running, jumping, and more that support gross-motor development.

Fine-Motor Development

Children develop fine-motor skills through activities such as pegboards, stringing beads, construction sets, puzzles, drawing, painting, clay/play dough sculpting, cutting, and more.

Free Play

Children need ample time to play every day. Playtime is incorporated into the daily schedule through free-choice centers, indoor/outdoor play, music, imaginative play, and more.

Music

All morning classes attend music. They explore pitch, rhythm, and melody, developing listening skills through musical games, musical expression, music appreciation, performances, and more.

Technology

We believe young children should primarily interact with 3-dimensional materials to develop skills such as spatial visualization and reasoning, problem solving, constructions and fine motor skills. Technology is available in our kindergarten class, but it is not central to our daily curriculum.

Partnerships

State College Area School District

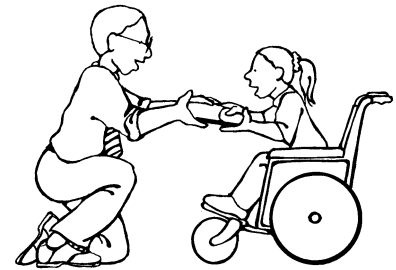
GLPK partners with the State College Area School District to provide special services for our Kindergarten students (children age 5 on/before August 31). Services include bus transportation to and from school as well as health, hearing and vision testing.

Central Intermediate Unit (CIU)

GLPK is a member of the CIU Preschool Partnership Program. As needs are identified, we work with children and their families to provide the most appropriate educational environment for that child and for all children in the class. The CIU offers special services for our non-kindergarten students. These services include speech/language testing and referral; hearing testing and referral; psychological services; and teacher training programs.

Our Director is the main contact person regarding special needs and CIU service providers. CIU specialists are treated as **classroom guests**. Their presence should not disrupt or distract our students.

GLPK staff work in a positive, collaborative way to identify students' special needs and to provide a consistent, structured learning environment. This ensures that the most successful and constructive approach is implemented for each child. Student intervention is planned by each child's teacher and the Director.



Staff members with students who are in need of services from the Partnership Program will receive administrative support and training via the school office to help ensure teacher and student needs are met. GLPK reserves the right to determine admittance of children and classroom placement AFTER the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) meeting with the CIU.

Preschool & Kindergarten Support Services

Students with a TSS (therapeutic support staff) or PCA (personal care aide) are expected to be accompanied by them during the entirety of their stay at school, unless or until such time that it is determined that services are no longer required. Parents of children who are supported by a TSS or PCA need to establish a plan for school on days when the child's assistant is absent. This will be created with the help of the agency supporting your child and our educational director. The plan may be revisited and updated during the school year to ensure the best plan is in place for each child at all times.

Classroom Volunteers

We believe in collaborative teaching of young children and welcome parent and community volunteers who can work with our staff in a positive way, respecting the teacher's leadership and each child's individuality.



Classroom Grandparents

Our Classroom Grandparent program invites senior members of Grace Lutheran Church to come into a classroom and read to children and/or help with special projects and centers. Each "grandparent" receives training materials before entering the classroom. All classroom grandparents have the requisite federal and state clearances.

PSU America Reads

We are pleased to have multiple Penn State students who work here through the America Reads program. All America Reads students have clearances to work with children. Although we value their contributions to our school and children, these students are NOT considered staff and are never left alone with a child at our school. Teachers who supervise an America Reads student make their expectations clear regarding responsibilities and care of the children.

Unit themes for the 2017-2018 school year

Thematic and Project Approach to Learning

Teachers plan and implement curriculum to help children achieve important developmental and learning goals. Learning is more effective when curriculum responds to children's current interests and ideas. Teachers strive to present developmentally appropriate content within the context of the children's experiences.



Culturally diverse and gender-neutral activities and materials aim to help children develop positive self-identity, understand new concepts by building on prior knowledge, and respectfully accept and appreciate each other's differences and similarities.

Christian Themes

September	"God Made Me Special"
October	"God Gives Us Friends and Family"
November	"We Give God Thanks"
December	"We Celebrate Jesus' Birth"
January	"We Can Talk to God (prayer)"
February	"God Loves Us All"
March	"We Can Be God's Helpers"
April	"God Gives Us New Life!"
May	"Taking Care of God's Creation"
June	"God Be With You"

Science Themes

Building Structures: Open Exploration
Building Structures: Towers
Building Structures: Enclosures
Exploring Water: Flow
<i>Exploring Water: Drops</i>
Exploring Water: Sinking & Floating
Discovering Nature: Open Exploration
Discovering Nature: Plants
Discovering Nature: Animals

Preschool & Kindergarten Hours & Enrollment Information

Morning Classes:	9:00 to 12:00 p.m. – 2yr 7mo, 3&4 yr.old, Jr.K classes 9:00 to 12:45 p.m. – Kindergarten class (includes lunch)
Afternoon Enrichment Classes:	12:00 to 2:30 p.m. (begins with time to eat a home-packed, nut-free lunch.)

* *Refunds are not issued for students who choose to participate in non-GLPK activities on one or more of the days in which they are enrolled. To change your child's schedule, a Request for Change of Enrollment/ Withdrawal Form is required. Forms are also available in the school office.*

Sample Daily Schedule for Preschool & Kindergarten Morning & Afternoon Enrichment Classes

30 minutes	Arrival, greeting, morning classroom rituals, free play, centers
20 minutes	Circle Time/Morning Meeting (songs, stories, discussions, presentations)
45 minutes	Learning Centers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ pre-reading/language readiness activities ▪ math and/or science readiness activities ▪ art projects ▪ imaginative/dramatic play ▪ ongoing theme-oriented projects
20 minutes	Bathroom break and snack
20 minutes	Large-muscle play (playground or Miller Center) and bathroom break
30 minutes	Morning Special (music, chapel, art (Jr. K & K), gym (5 day 4's & K), and library (K))
30 minutes	Clean-up, closing circle time, good-bye prayer and dismissal

Note: The activities and sequence of activities varies from classroom to classroom due to scheduling requirements and children's diverse needs.

Morning "Specials"

- All morning classes have music once per week and attend chapel once per month.
- In addition, the 5 day 4s attends gym class once per week.
- In addition, Jr. Kindergarten attends art class once per week.
- In addition, Kindergarten attends gym class, art class and library once per week.

Snacks

GLPK provides a daily snack to all morning classes (and occasionally for afternoon classes). Parents are asked daily to send reusable bottles filled with fresh water. Children with food allergies must provide their own snack, which is to be brought each day. Your child's teacher may occasionally ask for a certain snack to be brought in. If a class engages in a food-related project, parents of children with allergies MUST bring the same or a similar food or ingredient to ensure it is safe for their child/ren. Occasionally, parents may be asked to bring in cups, napkins, Lysol wipes or tissues. Contributions are voluntary.

Afternoon Classes

Enrichment Classes

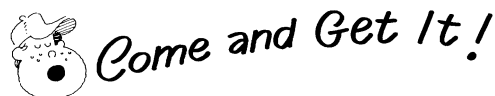
Age requirement: Age 3 or older by August 31, 2017 12:00 to 2:30 p.m.
2, 3 and 5 afternoons/week

Enrichment Program

Enrichment classes approach learning from a liberal arts perspective, introducing students to a wide array of topics. A series of monthly themes will be introduced by the enrichment teachers, complemented by field trips and visiting specialists (including parents of our students) who have expertise related to the theme or area of study.

Enrichment Lunch

Students who enroll for afternoon enrichment classes begin the afternoons with time to eat a home-packed lunch. Parents are asked to provide a nutritious, nut-free lunch for their child. *Peanut butter and other nut products are not permitted in lunches or on school premises.*





Learning and playing are WORK for children – they need nutritious food to fuel their bodies and minds. Please do not include soda or candy; also note that we cannot refrigerate or heat lunches. Our staff exercises every possible caution in supervising children with food allergies.

Be Ready for Class Each Day

Please drop off your child promptly at 9 am for preschool and/or kindergarten. When children arrive late, they miss greetings and hugs from friends and teachers as well as instructions for morning activities. **Before leaving your child, we require you to take your child to use the bathroom and then wash his/her hands.** Good hand-washing techniques keep our school healthier and help keep our children with allergies safe. Parents are responsible for walking their child to the classroom door and waiting with him/her until the door is opened by the teacher.

Before each session, teachers and their assistants prepare that day's activities. Therefore, while promptness is urged, please be considerate as teachers finish their preparations.

Kindergartners who ride the school bus to school will be met at the door of the school bus and escorted to their classroom by a member of the Kindergarten staff.

At the End of Each Class (Please be on time!)

We urge parents to be prompt in picking up their child at the end of each class session (12:00 and 2:30). Please meet your child at his/her classroom door, then stay with him/her as you walk through the building and into the parking lot. When you arrive, your child will be released to you. Promptness is vital, as teachers may need to get to their next class assignment and are no longer able to be responsible for your child's care. Please pick up your youngest children first, as they get concerned more easily when their parents have not arrived to pick them up.

At the end of each class session, children will be dismissed only to:

- their parent(s) and/or authorized caregivers (please carry a driver's license or photo ID);
- a GLPK staff person who will accompany them either to their next class (e.g., Enrichment class); the school bus; or to the school office.

Exceptions regarding who will pick up a child must be received *in writing* prior to the beginning of the class session and that person must also have a photo ID. Children who have not been picked up at the end of a class session will be taken to the school office to await their parent's arrival. This ensures they are safe and do not feel abandoned or "left behind" due to the late arrival of their parent(s).

Children whose parents have not arrived by 12:10/2:40 p.m. will be taken to the preschool & kindergarten office to wait until they are picked up.

Note: Late fees of \$15.00/15-minutes will be added to monthly tuition bills to offset staff expenses related to chronic tardiness.





Health and Safety

Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten is licensed by and operates under the rules established by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form and Medical Procedures

It is vital for us to have a current "Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form" in your child's school file. Classroom teachers also keep a copy of this form in your child's classroom. Should a child have any type of accident, all attempts will be made to notify the parents. If they cannot be reached, school staff will contact any of the persons listed on the emergency contact/parental consent form. **Please keep this list up to date.** Persons listed must be located in the State College area. Should an emergency arise which requires immediate medical action and treatment (i.e. calling the physician and/or Centre Life Link Emergency Medical Services), such action will be taken and parents will be notified as soon as possible. Mount Nittany Medical Center is designated as our emergency treatment center.

Accident / Incident report forms must be completed by the school in the event of injury to a child while under school care; they are also completed in the case of toileting accidents. The original report is sent home to the parents; a copy is placed in the child's school file and a second copy is kept by the Director.

Should any information on your child's "Emergency Contact/Parental Consent" form change during the school year, please notify us *immediately* at 238-8110 or glpk@glcpa.org.

When Children are Ill

Please do not send a child to school who is ill. Any child showing visible signs of illness (i.e. rash, open chicken pox) will not be permitted to attend. Should a child become ill while at school, parents or an emergency contact person will be contacted to remove the child from the premises.

Preschool & Kindergarten checklist for sending an ill child home:

- * The child has a temperature of 100 degrees or more. (Note: If a child has a fever, they must be fever free (without Medication) for 24 hours, before returning to school.
- * The child shows symptoms of a possible communicable disease (any of the following: runny nose, reddened eyes, rash, sore throat, headache, abdominal pains, vomiting, and/or fever).
- * The child is unable to fully participate in regular program activities due to extreme fatigue or lethargy.
- * The child has a constant cough.

If your child shows sign of illness at home – including but not limited to a fever, vomiting, cough or diarrhea – please keep your child home to avoid the spread of illness to other students and staff. (Note: Children should be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.) When in doubt, please err on the side of caution to ensure we all have a happy, healthy school year!

Please notify us immediately if your child has a communicable disease so that we may notify other parents for the safety and well-being of their families on a timely basis. In such cases, confidentiality will be maintained.

Child's Medication, Allergies, and Special Diets

We take precautionary measures to ensure our children's health and safety. Since the number of severely allergic children in our school has increased, we require the following:

1. Before leaving home, parents should check their child for residue on their child's face or clothing that could create an allergy threat to another child. (Examples: peanut butter or eggs).
2. Upon arrival, parents must take their children to the bathroom and have them wash their hands.
3. Before and after snack and lunch, children will wash their hands.
4. Children who have a chronic illness, allergies, or require a special diet must fill out the F.A.R.E form and have it signed by their pediatrician.

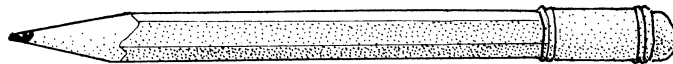
GLPK does not give medication on a daily basis for illnesses such as a cold or cough. However, if a child requires medication for an allergy GLPK will follow the guidelines outlined on the child's FARE form (Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan). If a child requires medication for a chronic illness such as asthma, GLPK will follow guidelines outlined on the child's Parental Request and Physician's Order for Medication. In addition the rules and regulations set by the Department of Human Services regarding medication, allergies, and special diets are always followed. If medication is administered to the child it needs to be registered on the Medication Log, and a copy given to the Director.

Copies of all forms will be kept in a classroom emergency folder as well as the child's file in our school office.

Excerpted from the Pennsylvania Bulletin, volume 22, number 14; Saturday, April 4, 1992, Rules and Regulations:

1. Prescription or non-prescription medication must be in its original container.
2. A staff member shall administer a prescription medication only in accordance with the instructions on the label.
3. The label must include the name of the child and also the name of the medication.
4. If a special diet is prescribed for a child and if the diet is administered to the child, written instructions and the parent's written consent shall be retained in the child's file.
5. Parent must provide written consent for administration of medication or diet.

6. If precautions must be taken for allergic reactions to foods, animals, fabrics, etc., the parent's written instructions must be kept in the child's file, along with signatures from a medical practitioner when appropriate.



Safety is important!
DO NOT leave your child unattended in our school at any time.

Please do not allow your preschool/kindergarten-aged child (and/or younger siblings!!) to remain unattended at any time in our building or in the parking lot. Our building is large, and it is easy to get confused and uncomfortable. From a child's vantage point, hallways can be intimidating. For your child's emotional and physical safety, please remain with him/her until he/she is admitted to his/her classroom or transferred directly to the care of a GLPK staff person.

We promise that we will never leave your child unattended in the building or on church/school grounds.

Security

During school hours security doors are locked to ensure maximum safety of our children and staff. Classroom doors are also locked. Security doors are briefly open during peak times as noted below. If the doors are locked and you desire admittance, please use the security phone in the school entrance hall to announce your presence by calling the posted telephone number. If the administrative staff in conducting business elsewhere in the building, you can call them on the school cell phone (574-2629.) This number is posted in the main entry wall by the wall phone.

Secured Zone Schedule:

7:00am	School doors remain locked when the building is opened by the sextons.
8:45am	School entrance door is unlocked. Two bathrooms are located upstairs within the secured zone in rooms 202 and 203.
8:45am	Security doors leading to the lower level church bathrooms are unlocked. The lower level security door near room 106 and the upstairs security door remains locked.
9:15am	All school security doors are locked.
12-12:15pm	School entrance door and first floor doors to the church bathrooms are unlocked.
12:15pm	All school security doors are locked.
2:25pm unlocked.	School entrance and lower level bathroom security doors are
4:00 pm	All school security doors are locked.

Unauthorized and/or unknown persons will be admitted to the school via the school entrance security door (1st floor) contingent on appropriate identification by a member of our administrative staff during school hours, when doors are locked. Please use the directions above the school telephone in the hallway to notify staff if no one is in the school office to let you in.

If you plan to use the elevator and will require re-admittance to the school, please see someone in the school office before leaving the secured zone, or you will have to exit the building and re-enter via the main school entrance.

We reserve the right to ask for photo identification for people whom we do not know. Please understand that this is for the safety of our students.

Safety Guidelines

While many safety guidelines have been established to ensure the safety and well being of each student, we would like to draw attention to the following guidelines:

Fire and Safety Drills

Fire/Safety evacuation drills will be practiced on a regular basis, as required by our licensing agencies and to ensure that in the event of a real emergency, every child is safe and accounted for. Fire drills can be scary for some children, but the teachers prepare the children well to help reduce their fears. We encourage each Preschool & Kindergarten family to develop and practice safety/evacuation plans at home. *[Parents: Please note that the ten-story apartment building on the Miller Center side of our building has a large lobby that we are permitted to use as a gathering point if an emergency causes us to leave our building and grounds.]* GLPK staff is also trained how to respond in the case of weather-related emergencies such as tornadoes. We have also participated in safety training provided by the State College police.



School Bus Warning

According to the Pennsylvania Motor Vehicle Code, when school busses are in our parking lot they must flash their red signals for the purpose of receiving or discharging our kindergarten children. Please remember: **IT IS AGAINST THE LAW** to pass a school bus when red lights are flashing. School bus drivers must report the license plate numbers of any vehicles that violate this law.

Parking Lot

Our church and parking lot are busy places, with many people coming and going throughout the day, especially at drop-off and pickup times. Please take the following measures to ensure safety for ALL children:

1. Make sure your child remains **WITH** you at all times and does **NOT** run ahead of you in the hallways or outdoors.
2. Explain to your child that s/he should not open and go through any closed door without you --- not to the restrooms or through a closed security door, and definitely not through a door that exits the building unless you are standing with them.
3. Make sure your child is very close to you and that your eyes are on your child at **ALL** times, **ESPECIALLY** when you are talking with adults in the parking area. Accidents can occur within seconds.
4. Ask your child to keep his or her feet on the ground and not on the fence supports of the playground. The rails are slippery, especially when they are wet.
5. When you cross the parking lot, please make sure your child has your hand or, if your arms are full, that they are grasping your arm.
6. A chain is used in the parking lot on weekdays during school hours to avoid people using our lot as a cut-through from Foster to Beaver Avenue. Please do not move or remove the chain while it is in use, as it is for the protection and safety of our students.

Building

Physical analysis has determined that the ceilings of our hallways and classrooms contain asbestos fibers. Because the asbestos is sealed in plaster, it is not a problem per se. Grace is in full voluntary compliance with all EPA regulations regarding asbestos.

Behavior and Discipline in a Loving Christian Environment

GLPK staff members strive to provide a consistent, loving environment so children can learn to trust the adults in their world.

Through positive social interactions, interventions, and modeling, we help children learn to:

- express emotions in positive, non-violent ways;
- use words to express feelings and desires;
- respect others' feelings by developing empathy and compassion;
- take responsibility for their choices and resulting consequences;
- learn forgiveness and understand that God loves us no matter what we do.



Behavior concerns are dealt with confidentially and in collaboration with parents, staff, the Director and/or the Assistant Director or pastoral supervisor. If you have questions regarding behavior issues, please address your child's teacher immediately *in a private setting*. Your child's teacher should always be the **first person** with whom you discuss any concerns about your child.

Aggressive and/or Unsafe Behavior

Young children have periodic "temper tantrums" or "melt-downs" as they struggle to deal with a world they can not yet understand and cannot control. We believe behavior difficulties are as much an adult issue as a child issue and that both must be considered to develop a holistic understanding. If staff unsuccessfully attempts to remedy in-class behavior difficulties, then:

- The teacher or teacher's aide may take the child to the office to ensure a safe environment for the other children and to give the child an opportunity to regain composure. Our goal is always to have a child return to the classroom in a manner that is positive, respectful and dignified for all children and staff.
- The parent will be notified by the classroom teacher of the child's removal and the circumstances that led to it. The parents and teacher, along with the Directors and other available resources, will discuss the situation and develop intervention strategies.

Every situation will be handled on an individual basis. Resources such as counselors and intervention programs or strategies will be willingly explored by the GLPK staff if deemed appropriate and necessary. If such behavior patterns continue and/or if the safety of the children in the classroom is in jeopardy the child will be removed temporarily or permanently.

Helpful Information for Children Attending GLPK



What to Wear

(Children will get dirty – count on it!)

Choosing clothing is a form of self-expression!

Please allow your child to feel free and creative by dressing him/herself in comfortable play clothes that are easily managed for bathroom breaks. Teachers will provide smocks for children when painting, but **paint** does occasionally get on clothing and **doesn't always wash out**.

We ask children to wear **rubber-soled shoes to school**. Sandals or slippery-soled dress shoes are not safe on indoor or outdoor play equipment. Outer clothing and boots should be large enough for your child to put them on and remove them by him/herself.

Play-Date Notices

Socialization is important for preschool & kindergarten students. We are delighted when friends share time together outside of school. If your child will be going home with another adult, we require **WRITTEN NOTIFICATION to the school office**. We will not release your child to someone other than you without your consent.



Identification of Personal Items

Please write your child's name clearly on EVERYTHING that comes to school (jackets, hats, mittens, boots, toys, backpacks, lunch bags, etc.). While show-and-tell items are part of class time, please do not send small toys such as matchbox cars, Happy Meal toys, plastic figures, etc., as they are easily broken or lost.

No Toys of Aggression

GLPK staff members are committed to non-violent solutions to classroom challenges. Playtime reinforces this model. Therefore, we ask you not to send guns, bows and arrows, war toys or toys of destruction to school. Any toys of aggression will be taken from the children and returned to the parent/guardian at the end of class. Thank you for your support in this matter.

Grace Preschool & Kindergarten Chapel

Each month GLPK children and staff attend our school's Chapel in the church sanctuary. Coordinated by our pastoral staff, our Chapel program is an intentional time to:

- * give praise and thanks to God;
- * celebrate God's love for us and the seasons of the year;
- * experience God's love in a tangible way through the sign of the cross;
- * speak with God in songs and prayers.

We ask parents to discuss "worship behavior" with their children. We encourage the children to:

- * use good listening skills while in worship;
- * respect one another, the worship leaders, and God;
- * love worship and the opportunity to praise and thank God!

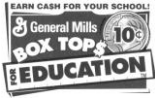
Monthly chapel themes are included in the calendar. Each member of the GLPK family, regardless of faith tradition and/or denomination, should feel comfortable and welcome during Chapel.

What is the "sign of the cross"?

In chapel, we teach that the cross means "God loves you." When the shape of the cross is traced on the head of a child and the words "Receive the sign of the cross, and know that God loves you" are spoken, God's gift of love is experienced in a new and real way.

Fundraising: Helping a LITTLE can make a BIG difference!

The purpose of our fundraisers is foremost to earn money our tuition assistance fund, which helps families attend our school who currently may not be able to afford the full cost of tuition. Fundraisers also boost our general needs funds which helps purchase unexpected items for classrooms, the library, the playground, etc.



Collect BOX TOPS for EDUCATION coupons found on many companies' products, including General Mills, Kleenex, Betty Crocker and more. Our school redeems these for cash which pays for great pieces of play equipment!

Purchase Red Line Speed Shine, GIANT, WEIS and SHEETZ Cash/Gift cards. GLPK receives a 3% to 5% rebate for the face value of each card sold. At Giant, register your shopper's club card. More information will be forthcoming.



Participation in fundraising activities is completely optional. Some families choose to contribute lump sum donations (tax deductible) instead. We invite everyone to participate so you are informed, but we respect your decision regarding whether to participate. A few of our fundraisers include the Scholastic Book Fair, silent auction, Gardners candy and a golf outing. You will receive details as each event draws near. If you can help with some of our fund raising activities, please e-mail our school office at glpk@glcpa.org.

Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten Cares about Our Community!

Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten promotes community caring by:

- ♥ A trip to THE OAKS retirement community in Pleasant Gap to sing to elderly residents.
- ♥ Singing at the "Old Friends Services" for homebound members, which are held in the Grace Lutheran Church sanctuary in October and May.
- ♥ Participating in several programs to help others:
 - Disability Awareness Days and ancillary activities.
 - Veterans Day Parade.
 - Collecting food for the local food bank on the day of our Thanksgiving Chapel.
 - Toys for Tots.
 - Collecting necessities for Grace Lutheran Church's medical mission trip to Nicaragua.

Diversity Awareness Days

Throughout the school year, our preschool & kindergarten classes learn how we are all special, and celebrate all of our unique abilities through diversity awareness. Diversity awareness is one's ability to embrace the uniqueness of all individuals along several dimensions such as race, religious beliefs, ethnicity, age, gender, physical abilities, political beliefs, and socio-economic status.

Our goals are to help the children learn that:

- Each of us is different and we are all special.
- Our bodies are amazing and can do lots of things.
- We can be friends to all kinds of people.

2017-2018 Preschool & Kindergarten Tuition Payments

Registration Fee

A \$50 non-refundable registration fee is required for each child at the time of registration for the upcoming school year at Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten. The Kindergarten deposit is \$100, with a \$50 refund credited on the first tuition invoice.

Preschool & Kindergarten Tuition Payments

Families will be reminded via email when tuition is due. **Tuition is due on the 10th of each month from August through May. The bill in May will be pro-rated for the one week that school is in session during June.** Please contact Dawn Vanden Heuvel if you have questions.

Payment Methods

Please make checks payable to **Grace Lutheran**. Payment may be mailed or placed in the tuition box located in our school office. Please write your child's name on your check; if you pay in cash, ask for a receipt.

Some families choose to pay for an entire semester or year of GLPK tuition in advance. If this is more convenient for you than writing monthly checks, you are welcome to do so.

Electronic fund transfer is also available at no additional cost. For details, please contact Dawn Vanden Heuvel at 238-8110.

Refunds and Non-Payment

Unless parents have contacted Cathy Smarkusky or Dawn Vanden Heuvel at 238-8110 or dvandenheuvel@glcpa.org to make late payment arrangements, a **\$25.00 late fee will be charged for any payments received after the 30th of the month (February deadline is the 28th).**

The \$50 registration fee is a non-refundable, yearly charge. It is separate from tuition and may not be applied to tuition payments.

Tuition for enrollees must be paid in full by the 10th of each month, regardless of lengthy absenteeism. Tuition payment reserves your child's space, giving him/her the right to return to class following a lengthy absence. Unpaid tuition means forfeiture of enrollment.



Student Tuition Assistance Policy

As a faith community, GLPK values children and families of all backgrounds regardless of their ability to pay. We create and maintain an inclusive environment by supporting and valuing families that:

- value a Christian education in a loving, nurturing environment;
- are working to improve their skills in order to provide a better future for their child(ren) (i.e., going back to school, career changes that positively impact the family's future);
- choose to have one member stay at home to provide what they believe is the best environment for the child(ren);
- are in emergency crisis situations, such as a major illness within the family, loss of home, immediate change of financial status, etc.

Tuition assistance funds are available to help qualifying families that need assistance. Funds are replenished through personal and congregational gifts; and/or GLPK fundraising activities; and community scholarships.

Families wishing to request financial aid must complete a *Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten Tuition Assistance Application* form. Forms and a description of the application process are available from the Directors.

Delinquent Payment Policy

Grace Lutheran Church has a clear and consistent Delinquent Payment Policy for families who are unable and/or unwilling to promptly pay their monthly tuition bills. The goal is to work with families during difficult times in a loving, Christian manner and to ensure a loving, caring, consistent and nurturing environment for each child in our school.

Payment Assumptions:

1. Families are expected to pay preschool & kindergarten tuition fees promptly and in full.
2. If someone other than a child's parent(s) will be responsible for GLPK tuition payments, the name and address of those parties shall be supplied by the child's parents or legal guardians.

Late Payment Policy

1. **1st Notice, Payment Reminder:** A payment reminder will be sent by the 20th of each month to families with unpaid tuition. Tuition unpaid by the 30th of the month will result in a \$25.00 late fee.
2. **2nd Notice, 30 Day Delinquent Letter:** On the 10th of the next month a 30-day Letter will be sent. This is a reminder that payment is one month overdue and a \$25.00 late fee has been assessed. The family may meet with the Directors to make special arrangements for payment if necessary.
3. **3rd Notice, 60-Day Delinquent Letter:** On the 10th of the second month, a *60-day Letter* will be sent. This is a reminder that payment is two months overdue and states pursuant consequences if the bill is not paid. The family will be required to meet with the Directors to make special arrangements for payment. If the delinquency is not resolved within the next billing period (90 days past due), the child will no longer be able to attend GLPK classes.
4. **4th Notice, 90-Days Delinquent Letter:** On the 10th day of the third month, the family will be notified in a *90-day Letter* that the child will be withdrawn from GLPK and must reapply to be considered for admission. Families will be notified that if complete payment of the delinquent bill (or special payment arrangements) has not been satisfied by the 20th of the month, the account will be turned over to a collection agency.

5. If a bill remains outstanding from the previous school year or summer session, a child will not be accepted into any other GLPK programs.

Change of Enrollment/Withdrawal from Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten

If you wish to change your child's enrollment status in a specific class/program or withdraw your child from Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten, a **written notice** must be submitted to the administrative staff at least **30 days before** the date of change or withdrawal. Tuition payment is expected for this 30-day period. A *Request for Change of Enrollment/Withdrawal Form* can be picked up from the Preschool & Kindergarten Office.

Registration Procedure for 2018-2019 School Year

Registration for the 2018-2019 school year will take place beginning February 5, 2018.

1. Families of children currently enrolled in GLPK, siblings of enrolled students, and families of children of whom at least one parent is a member of Grace Lutheran Church, ELCA shall have first registration priority for the following school year (2018-2019). Registration forms will be sent home in children's book bags on Thursday, January 11 (for T/TH children) and on Friday, January 12 (for MWF and M-F children.) Church members will be mailed their forms. Further information will be available in January's Grace Notes. Completed application forms and the non-refundable registration fee will be accepted onsite, in person, beginning Monday, February 5, 2018. Registrations will be received on a first-come, first-served basis.
2. On Thursday, January 25, we will host an Open House from 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.
3. Beginning Tuesday, **February 12, 2018**, priority registration **ends** and open registration applications will be reviewed in the order in which they were received.

Families will be formally notified via mail of their child's acceptance for the 2018-2019 school year on March 21, 2018. Class placements will be announced at the end of August, 2018. (See the **Admission** section for information about the class placement process.)

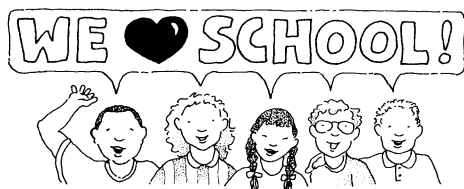
Registration Procedures for the Young Explorer's Camps (Summer)

Registrations for the summer, 2018 *Young Explorer's Camps* will be processed starting on or after March 31, 2018. Any forms received prior to that date will be date-stamped and held until the 31st.

1. Registrations will be processed on a first-come, first-served basis.
2. The directors will receive all registration applications, make appropriate class placements and notify families of their child's placement in the program.

(See the *Admission* section for information about the class placement process.)

Those Who Serve Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten



Classroom Teachers, Specialists and Support Staff

GLPK teachers have four-year degrees and are certified by the State of Pennsylvania in the areas of Nursery School and Kindergarten. All teachers and support staff meet the criteria for their assignments as set by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and Grace Lutheran personnel policies. Staff enrichment opportunities keep teachers abreast of current

trends in education and innovative classroom techniques as well as the latest issues, policies and recommendations related to the welfare of children.

Pastoral Staff

Pastor P. Stevens Lynn
Rev. Scott E. Schul
Vicar Ariel Williams

Senior Pastor, Head of Staff
Pastor for Education and Outreach
Intern

Preschool & Kindergarten Office Staff

The Preschool & Kindergarten Office is open from 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. daily. The office may be contacted by stopping in, calling 238-8110 or e-mail glpk@glcpa.org. The office staff includes:

Director

Cathy Smarkusky holds the administrative responsibility for GLPK and its staff. She is responsible for all aspects of the school and reports to the Council of Grace Lutheran Church. Cathy also maintains day-to-day responsibility for curriculum development, educational support for teachers and students, and the enrollment process. She is a member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAECY) and holds the license for GLPK given by the PA Dept. of Education. Please contact her with questions concerning GLPK policies, questions related to early childhood educational standards and expectations, our curriculum, and/or your child(ren)'s special needs. She is available in the school office from 8:30–2:45, M-F.

Cathy Smarkusky

Assistant Director

Dawn Vanden Heuvel provides support to the staff and GLPK families with day-to-day school needs as well as general administrative support. Dawn is responsible for communications to the church, GLPK staff and families through weekend notes, Grace Notes and the GLPK monthly newsletters. She is responsible for providing tours and registering new families. She is responsible for monthly billing, payment collections and accounts receivable for our school families. She verifies school-related purchases and deposits against the church's accounting systems. She also is responsible for the parent volunteer organization, special family events and fundraising. She is available 8:30–2:30, M-F.

Dawn VandenHeuvel

Grace Lutheran Church Council

Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten is a ministry of Grace Lutheran Church, ELCA. Grace Lutheran Church Council, the governing board of the congregation, supervises operational and administrative details, makes policies, and monitors finances and scholarships as needed.

Licensing Agencies and Memberships

Pennsylvania Department of Education: Private Academic School
Federal Identification Number: 24-0824048
Member of the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA)

Snow Policy

School cancellations follow SCASD public school closings and will be announced on FM radio stations WTLR, 3WZ, WRSC, WLTS, WQWK, WJHT, WMAJ, WBUS, WPSU and television channels 4, 6 and 10. Staff and parents of GLPK children are responsible for checking for school closing information. You can sign up for notifications of State College Area School District closings via text at Wearecentralpa.com or by downloading the State College School District App.



The following are the cancellation guidelines for GLPK classes and programs:

For SCASD delayed school starts:

GLPK **Kindergarten** will begin at 11:00 and end at 1:30. Bus service will be available; kindergarten children will be picked up 2 hours later and dropped off 1 hour later.

GLPK **Preschool** will provide a condensed school day with a shortened schedule:

- 11:00 – 12:30 Morning classes with NO specials
- 12:30 - 2:30 Shortened enrichment (Begins with lunch)

Instructional time on snow delay days will start at 11, keeping the schedule consistent with our kindergarten (which is dependent on SCASD bus schedules).

For SCASD early closings:

For PRESCHOOL students: Enrichment classes will be CANCELLED as long as we are notified by SCASD early enough to inform parents. For KINDERGARTEN students: Kindergarteners will be bussed home at the normal time unless SCASD decides otherwise. We will ONLY put children on an earlier bus if we have confirmed with parents that they will be at the bus stop to greet their children at an earlier time. Enrichment classes will be cancelled.

For SCASD school closings:

ALL Preschool & Kindergarten classes and programs will be CANCELLED.

In the event our school is closed due to inclement weather or any emergency situation, **Kindergarten make-up classes will be provided** if needed to fulfill Department of Education requirements. Three snow / inclement weather make-up days will be offered on Tuesday, April 3rd, Monday, April 2nd, and Friday June 9th. June 9 will be a floating make-up day for either M/W/F or T/Th classes, depending on which classes have had the most cancellation days (parents will be notified accordingly). *[Note: For preschool, any additional days beyond the first three snow days will NOT be made up.]* **In addition – for kindergarten only** – we have scheduled three “extra instructional days” beyond the dates we are required by the Commonwealth to be in school. These are noted on the school calendar.

The Role of the Parent

At Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten, parental involvement is encouraged! Parents are asked to read their Parent Handbooks carefully, as well as the letters, newsletters, and other information that will be sent home in their child’s “weekend folder”. Weekend folders are provided by the school and will be sent home on the last day your child attends each week. Teachers place classroom newsletters, the class leader schedule, reminders, and notes from the school office in your child’s weekend folder. Please empty the folders each week and read over the information carefully. Keep weekend folders in your child’s backpack or tote bag to ensure we always have a place to put important information.

Parents are an important part of our school. Your comments, suggestions, questions, constructive criticisms, encouragement and support are always welcome!

Parents are welcome to visit their child’s class at the teacher's discretion. Teachers and aides are asked not to confer with parents during class, but plan to visit or schedule a meeting after the session ends.

Go Green – get important messages via email

GLPK now sends most newsletters, notices, and other administrative communications via email. If you wish to change how you are receiving information or have a new email address, please contact the office at glpk@glcpa.org or call 238-8110.

Do you want to be a part of your children’s school? VOLUNTEER!

We love volunteers with talents to share, either for one-time events or ongoing projects where we need help. After you respond on the volunteer signup sheet (submitted with your back-to-school paperwork) and complete state requirements to be cleared as a volunteer, we will be in touch.

We typically need help with:

- Staff appreciation and support
- Fund raising (for GLPK tuition assistance and unbudgeted equipment and materials)
- Hospitality (for all-school events)
- Outreach (community outreach, service projects)
- Parent Volunteers (classroom participation, fund-raisers)
- Scholastic Book Fair (Fall and Spring), Class Picture Days (October), Busy Town (May)
- GLPK Silent Auction fundraiser (spring)

If you want to volunteer at our school, Pennsylvania laws require that you have all three volunteer clearances on file at our school BEFORE the first time you volunteer: the Pennsylvania Child Abuse certification; Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Record check; and fingerprinting (if you have lived in Pennsylvania for less than 10 consecutive years) or a disclosure form (obtained from our school office) in lieu of fingerprinting if you have lived in Pennsylvania for the past ten consecutive years. Specifics of the law are provided below. **Clearances must be no older than 24 months when we accept them at our school and they are valid for 60 months from the date of issue.**

Act 153 of 2014 requires that prospective employees and volunteers who have direct contact with children have the following comprehensive and regularly updated background checks, any costs of which will be covered by the employee or volunteer:

- 1. Criminal History Record Information obtained from the PA State Police**
(Volunteer Free/ Employment \$8 fee after July 25, 2015)
- 2. Child Abuse Clearance obtained through the PA Department of Public Welfare**
(now known as the Department of Human Services) certifying if the applicant is named in the statewide database “as the alleged perpetrator in a pending child abuse investigation or as the perpetrator of a founded report or indicated report” of child abuse. (Volunteer Free/ Employment \$8 fee after July 25, 2015)
- 3. Federal Criminal History Record Information obtained by submitting a full set of fingerprints to the PA State Police or its authorized agent for submission to the Federal Bureau of Investigation** “for the purpose of verifying the identity of the applicant and obtaining a current record of any criminal arrests and convictions.” (\$28.75 fee)

Certain volunteers (those living in PA consistently for ten years) can be exempted from the Federal Criminal History Record Information check (#3 above). Note: The Pennsylvania Act 34 Report of Criminal History Record Information and Act 151 Department of Public Welfare Child Abuse History Clearance Statement clearances **as well as requisite fingerprinting** are completed on all hired employees who work directly with children.

Please contact the school office if you are interested in volunteering at our school. Thanks for your support!

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Preschool

Grace Lutheran Preschool will provide two regular opportunities for Parent Conferences during the school year. This time is reserved for parents and teachers to discuss a child's progress in social and educational areas.

The first conference is scheduled for **Thursday/Friday, October 19 & 20, 2017**. This gives parents and teachers an opportunity to identify the unique needs of your child. There will be no preschool classes on those days.

The second conference will be held **the week of January 22nd 2018**. A schedule of conference days/times/classes will be provided on/before January 8th 2018. Preschool will be in session on these days.

Teachers post a conference sign-up sheet outside each classroom. Parents unable to take advantage of the offered times may reschedule at the teacher's convenience.

Kindergarten

GLPK provides two scheduled opportunities for parent conferences during the school year for parents and teachers to discuss a child's progress in social and educational areas. Close to the conference date you can schedule a time with the teacher.

- October 19 & 20, 2017 (there **will** be kindergarten class on this day)
- April 2 and 3, 2018 (these dates are snow make up days.)

If you wish to arrange for a special conference and/or conversation with your child's teacher in addition to the regular conferences, informal conferences can be scheduled by the teacher as needed to address family needs and questions.

Parents are asked not to call teachers or staff members at home during their personal time. Instead, please call your child's teacher at school. If the teacher is not available at the time of your call, he/she will promptly contact you to make an appointment.

All-School Events

All-School gatherings help students and staff to develop a sense of community. Several all-school gatherings/events will be scheduled each school year, to include:

Veterans Day Parade	Christmas Program
Moms Are Magnificent Breakfast	Dads Are COOL Breakfast
All-School Thanksgiving Chapel	Advent Family Fun Night
Young Author and Artist Day	End-of-the-year Busytown activities

Seasonal Celebrations and Parties

Birthdays

Our children are God's gifts to us, and we are honored to celebrate their birthdays in our classes. Parents may provide a non-edible treat (no food or candy) that can be sent home with the children. The school provides a special treat for the snack that day.

Children with summer birthdays may celebrate during the spring or six months before with a "half birthday." Teachers will schedule birthday celebrations for each student and will post them on their classroom leader calendar.

Should you host a private birthday party outside of school, we ask you **not to distribute invitations during school hours**. Teachers are not responsible for distributing personal items and this eliminates hurt feelings among uninvited children. Children should **not** be taken from school to the party either by private transportation or, in the case of kindergartners, by school bus.



Halloween

Halloween is not an age-appropriate holiday for young children who are away from the safety and security of their parents and therefore it is not celebrated at Grace Lutheran Church or GLPK. There will be no Halloween costumes, masks, references to ghosts, goblins, witches, etc., Instead, Pumpkin Parties and Fall Festivals will be hosted in the classrooms.



Thanksgiving

Parents and family members are invited to our Thanksgiving Chapel (listed in our calendar).



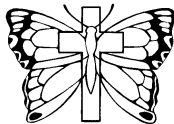
Christmas

At Christmas we celebrate the birthday of Jesus, the Son of God and our friend and Savior. Jesus's love -- and the love of family and of friends -- is emphasized. Please join us for our Christmas program.



Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day focuses on God's love for each of us, and we focus on sharing God's love for one another. Children exchange valentine cards and practice acts of love.



Easter

Easter focuses on new life. We tell children Easter is the day that Jesus became alive again. Birth and renewal are Easter themes. GLPK does not focus on Holy Week or crucifixion themes.

Other celebrations

Within the classrooms children may observe other holidays, seasons and/or celebrations such as Chinese New Year, *Dads are Cool!* Week, Martin Luther King Day, Hanukkah, Earth Day, *Moms are Magnificent* Week, Young Author and Artist Day, the Hundredth Day of School, Groundhog Day, etc.

Classroom Field Trips and Walking Trips

We schedule fall and spring field trips to take advantage of nice weather. During winter, in-house activities are scheduled.



Teachers are encouraged to plan their own field/walking trips and invite guests to support their own curriculum. Plans are reviewed and subject to approval by the Directors.

Indoor and Outdoor Play

Both indoor and outdoor play are essential to a well-balanced curriculum. Teachers can assess children's social, emotional and large-motor developmental levels by how they play and interact with others. Teachers and assistants encourage imaginative and cooperative play to help children gain confidence in their abilities and skills.

These guidelines help to ensure the well-being of each student in our care:

1. Children are required to stay in the designated play area unless accompanied by a teacher or teacher's aide.
2. Both teacher and teaching assistant should be with the children at all times, taking an active role in play activities. One adult may leave the play area in the event of an accident, emergency, or bathroom need.
3. Safety rules are established by the Directors and the teachers.
4. Safety and maintenance concerns are reported to the Directors as quickly as possible.

We work hard at GLPK to ensure your child is safe, happy, and benefits fully from the nurturing and educational environment we strive to provide. If ever you have a concern or an idea from which you feel we might benefit, please stop by the office or drop us a note. We appreciate all of your feedback and support and we wish you and your child a wonderful and successful year!



Grace Lutheran Preschool & Kindergarten * 205 S. Garner Street * State College, PA 16801
Ph: 814-238-8110 * www.glcpa.org

Rev. August 16, 2017