



# Early Learning Program Handbook 2020-2021

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# Contents

COVID-19	4
Mission Statement	4
Goals and Objectives	4
Program Philosophy	4
Statement of Services	5
Registration and Tuition	5-6
Confidentiality	7
School Information	7
Arrival and Departure	7
School Closings	8
Fire and Tornado Drills	8
Sample Schedule	8
Program Plan	8
Curriculum and Assessment	8
Outdoor Play Policy	9
Snacktime	9
Lunch	9
Behavior Guidelines	9
Special Needs	10
Family and Staff Communication	10
Parent Involvement	11
Parental Grievance and Program Review	11
Health	11
Guidelines for Ill Children and Staff	12

First Aid	13
Care of Ill or Injured Children	13
Medications	13
Health Consultation Services	13
Clothing	13
Special Events	13
Field Trips	13
Birthdays	14
Pets	14
OLP Bags	14
Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect	14

## COVID- 19

The Pandemic Preparedness Response Plan supersedes any items related to health and daily school operations located in the handbook. Please check the COVID-19 page on our website for any updates [www.school.olpmn.org/covid-19-updates](http://www.school.olpmn.org/covid-19-updates)

Dear Families,

Welcome to Our Lady of Peace Early Learning Program. We are excited to have the opportunity to work with you and your family. This handbook has been prepared to introduce you to our program and its' policies and procedures. Our hope is that you will take the time to read the handbook so that your child and your family will have a wonderful experience at Our Lady of Peace Early Learning Program (ELP).

Preschool Staff

## Mission Statement

To provide an environment that nurtures growth and learning.

### Goals and Objectives

- Provide learning opportunities that facilitate the development of the whole child (social, emotional, intellectual and physical) in a nurturing environment.
- Help children prepare for kindergarten by focusing on their unique interests, abilities and needs.
- Provide an environment that is stimulating, educational, caring, clean, healthy and fun.
- Develop supportive relationships with parents, guardians and families.
- Develop and maintain a qualified and nurturing teaching staff.
- Be creative, innovative and a leader in the delivery of early childhood education.
- Provide a setting that is inclusive and fosters diversity.
- Provide intentional early education opportunities to at risk children. Work cooperatively with the community to serve these children and their families.
- Maintain the highest ethical and professional standards and practices.

## Program Philosophy

It is our goal to provide a variety of experiences and opportunities for the social/emotional, cognitive, physical, and language development of the ELP's children. Through learning activities and play, each child will be encouraged to grow at their own rate. Children will be encouraged to imagine, explore, invent, create, interact and express ideas and feelings. A child's work is play!

The classroom is child centered in order to foster development through creative play choices. The teachers prepare the environment for children to learn through exploration and interaction with adults, other children and materials. The children can choose from a variety of developmentally appropriate activities set up in interest areas around the room. Teachers flow with children to give them individual attention and to extend their learning experience within a given area. Teachers interact with small groups and one on one. Each day, large group activities are offered to help develop large group skills and a sense of community. Large muscle activities are offered on the playground, outside and in our school gym.

*Get Set for School* by Learning without Tears curriculum provides our students with a structured guideline for learning but also allows for unplanned and spontaneous learning experiences. In addition, our curriculum provides learning opportunities for all children. The curriculum is adapted to account for individual differences including interests, learning styles, life experiences, temperament, culture, special needs and English language learners. The curriculum specifically includes multicultural concepts and activities. We also highlight STEM experiences throughout our lesson plans.

Prekindergarten students participate in the Believe and Read Program a partnership between Our Lady of Peace, CSCOE (Catholic School Center of Excellence), and Groves Academy. This is a multi-sensory, systematic approach to teaching literacy skills. This program continues in Our Lady of Peace Catholic School kindergarten through grade 3 and the goal is to have all students reading at or above grade level by grade 3.

Families and parents are an essential ingredient for a positive early childhood experience. Parents are welcome at school anytime and are asked to volunteer for special activities as well as attending all specialist classes. Please see the website for volunteer requirements.

Communication between families and ELP staff is important and may include newsletters, face to face communication, conferences, flyers, notes, phone calls and e-mail. A parent survey and program evaluation is conducted on an annual basis for feedback and assessment.

## Statement of Services

ELP is a mission of Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church and School, 5435 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. So, Mpls, MN 55417. Phone: 612-823-8253; Website: school.olpmn.org. The program provides a Christian, non-profit community for all preschool age children regardless of race, color, religion, gender, national or ethnic origin. We can serve up to 80 children per session. Children must be at least 33 months of age as of Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> at the time of enrollment; toilet trained and not enrolled in kindergarten. Our hours of operation are Monday – Friday, 6:30 AM – 6:00 PM.

We offer Preschool, Pre-kindergarten (Pre-K), and a before and after care program.

## Registration and Tuition

1. An annual enrollment fee will be charged to cover administrative costs and materials. This fee must accompany the enrollment form. This fee is non-refundable and does not apply toward tuition.
2. Students must be enrolled annually. Enrollment begins in November. Daily priority will be established on a first come, first serve basis to currently enrolled ELP families, followed

by Our Lady of Peace Parishioners, then general enrollment begins later in the month. Current families must reenroll during the first week of priority enrollment. Failure to do so may result in being placed on a waiting list.

3. When a class is full, a child's name will be placed on a waiting list for that class.
4. Enrollment is completed on the school's website [www.olpmn.org](http://www.olpmn.org) through Tads.
5. Tuition agreements are completed online at [www.mytads.com](http://www.mytads.com) and payment options are presented at that time. Tuition is due according to your tuition agreement. Please see the Tuition Policy.

## Forms Required for Enrollment

The following information will be collected during our online enrollment process through Tads.

**Student Enrollment Form** - this form provides information that will allow staff to work with each child more effectively. Parents have the responsibility to inform the school if their child has any special medical conditions, dietary modifications, or special needs or allergies so that we can provide for appropriate care and support

**Emergency Form** - a parent/legal guardian will be asked to sign an emergency form which includes source of emergency medical and dental care, persons to contact in case of emergency and medical/dental insurance information.

**Immunization Record** - current immunization records are due on or before the first day of class. This record must give dates (month, day, and year) of immunizations your child has received. Immunization records must be updated whenever your child receives additional immunizations.

**Health Record** - this form is due on or before the first day of class and must be signed by the child's source of health care. This information must include the date of the child's most recent physical examination.

**Baptismal Certificate Birth**

**Certificate**

Please notify the office of any changes to these forms during the school year.

Written parental permission will be required if a class should decide to go on any field trips and each occasion of research, experimental procedure or public relations activity involving a child. All forms are kept in a child's file and will be kept confidential. Only preschool staff and legal parents/guardians will have access to a child's file.

## Withdrawal from the Program

Each child is enrolled for the entire year or balance of the year. If permanent withdrawal from the ELP is necessary, a two week notice is required. No adjustments will be made to tuition for absence due to illness or vacation.

Our Lady of Peace may terminate enrollment of a child for reasons of family non-compliance with the policies of the ELP. Additionally, the preschool may terminate enrollment if it is determined that the ELP is not reasonably able to meet the needs of a child. The ELP will communicate with families in efforts to solve difficulties and termination of enrollment will be a last resort.

## Confidentiality

The ELP's work with children and families will sometimes bring preschool staff into contact with confidential information. We will respect the privacy of children and the families, while ensuring that they have a high quality early childhood experience in our setting. Our goal is to ensure that all parents/guardians feel comfortable sharing information that will enhance their child's experience at school. There are record keeping systems in place to maintain confidentiality.

\*Parents/guardians will only have access to the files and records of their own children.

\*Staff will not discuss individual children with people other than the parents/guardians, except for the purposes of curriculum planning or classroom management. Written permission from the parent/guardian is required if they wish staff to discuss their child with others (i.e., grandparent, nanny, etc.).

\*Information relating to staff employment, paid or unpaid, will remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.

\*Any concerns or evidence relating to a child's safety will be kept in a confidential file and will only be shared with the child's teachers, Early Learning Program Director and Principal.

\*All visitors to the preschool are made aware of our confidentiality policy and are required to respect it.

## School Information

### School Arrival and Departure

All children must be escorted to their classroom. The classroom door is opened, at 7:50, please sign your child in on the daily attendance sheet. At the end of the school day, families must come to the preschool classroom or playground to pick up their child. The responsible adult is required to sign your child out. A child will be released to parents and those adults identified by the parents as authorized to pick-up their child. If another adult comes to pick up your child, we

will release the child only through notification in writing from the child's parent/guardian. Proper ID must be given before the child is released.

Children should be picked up promptly. Your child must be picked up no later than five (5) minutes after the class is over. This 5 minute time frame is for emergency purposes only.

Overuse of these 5 minutes may result in late fees. Following this policy will allow proper supervision and safety of the students. A fee of \$5.00 per five minutes, per child, will be assessed for families who do not follow this guideline. If a parent calls to inform the school of an unforeseen situation, the Director will make a decision as to whether or not a fee will be charged. This policy will be strictly enforced.

### School Closing

In the event of severe weather or an emergency, a decision to close the school will be made as early as possible. School closings will be announced on WCCO-4 TV. Our school follows the Mpls. School district regarding severe weather closings. The decision to dismiss school early once it has begun for the day will be made only in the most extreme emergency.

### School Fire Drills & Tornado Drills

OLP conducts Monthly fire and tornado drills while school is in session.

### Sample Daily Schedule

6:30-7:50- Before school care

7:50-8:00- Arrival

8:00-8:40- Choice Time

8:40-9:00- Large Group/Morning Meeting

9:05-9:25- Specialist class (gym, library, Spanish, art, music or technology)

9:25-9:45- Large muscle activity

9:45-10:15- Bathroom break & Snack

10:15-10:30- Small groups

10:30-10:45- Centers

10:45-11:15- Recess and dismissal

11:15-3:00 PM Aftercare

11:15-11:30 Bathroom/Handwashing

11:30- 11:50 Lunch

12:00-12:45 Recess

12:45- 1:00 Literature

1:00-1:30 Rest/ Quiet time (Mandated by Minnesota Rule 3)

1:30-1:45 Snack

1:45-3:00 Circle time & guided learning activities

3:00- Dismissal

3:00-6:00 PM Extended Aftercare Rolling Dismissal

3:15-4:15 large motor/outdoor activities

4:15-4:30 Bathroom/hand washing

4:30-6:00 Indoor activities

\*All schedules are subject to change

## Child Care Program Plan

A detailed Child Care Program Plan is available on our school website. Printed copies are available to all parents upon request.

## Curriculum and Assessment

ELP uses *Get Set for School* by Learning Without Tears as a blueprint for planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate program. The curriculum is based on child development research.

Our curriculum, to meet the needs of every child, contains an *Assessment System* that are used as a guideline for assessing each child in our program.

Assessments are based on observation, children's work, and evaluation of the collected facts.

All assessments are confidential and will be shared with parents and/or legal guardians only.

## Outdoor Play Policy

Outside recreation is an essential part of our program. Please send your child appropriately dressed for Minnesota weather keeping in mind that it is often cooler in the mornings. Oftentimes, layering works well and when a child becomes cold or hot, she/he can add or take off a layer. In the winter time, please send hat, mittens, snow pants, boots and jacket each day. We will try to get outdoors daily and will use Director and Teacher discretion with colder temperatures.

In hot, sunny or rainy weather, general precautions will be taken in determining appropriate outdoor time. At times when a heat, weather or smog advisory has been issued, the children will be kept indoors. For safety reasons we ask that the children wear tennis shoes and no open toes sandals.

Due to ELP policy, staff does not apply sunscreen or bug spray on the children. These may be applied to a child by a parent/guardian before coming to school. Shade is available on sunny days and if bugs are a problem, children will remain indoors.

## Breakfast

For children attending early morning care, breakfast will be offered between 6:30-7:40 a.m. Choices include fruit, grains, water and milk on a daily basis.

## Snack Time

Children will have a healthy snack each day. A monthly snacks schedule is posted on the ELP

parent information board located by the children's coat hooks. Milk and water will be provided daily.

### Water Bottle Policy

Our Lady of Peace Early Childhood Program does not provide water bottles for individual students. If parents choose to provide one for lunchtime, it is the parent's responsibility to label the bottle and to clean it daily. OLP-ELP does provide regularly scheduled water breaks for children at least 3 times a day

### Lunch at School

For children who bring a lunch to school we encourage you to follow the USDA Requirements. Please provide the following in your child's lunch each day:

- One cup of fruit and/or vegetable serving or juice
- 1 ½ ounces of grains/breads
- 1 ½ ounces of meat/meat alternate \*
- Keep in mind raw carrots and grapes must be sliced in half for all children under the age of 4 years old.
- Ice packs if needed

\*\*\* Allergies may conflict with these guidelines

Lancer provides our school's hot lunch program. Please see the school website for detailed information about this program. All ordering is completed online through the school website.

### Behavior Guidance

We believe that the modeling of respectful behavior by teachers toward children and each other is essential. This means that positive reinforcement and redirection will be used in the preschool classroom.

Classroom rules are necessary to provide for a positive learning environment. All classroom rules will be discussed (what and why) with the children and modeled by the teachers. These guidelines are tailored to the developmental level of young children.

When behavior by a child is unacceptable, the following guidelines will be followed:

- children will be redirected away from a problem toward a constructive activity.
- children will be taught how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behavior.
- the safety of children and staff persons will be protected.
- immediate and directly related consequences for a child's unacceptable behavior will be provided.

If the above guidelines are not effective, a child will be moved a short distance away for a private discussion with a staff member. At this time it is important for the child to understand the rule, how it was broken and what behavior needs to change. The child is assured that he/she may try the activity again later.

If persistent unacceptable behavior occurs that requires an increased amount of staff guidance and time, parents will be notified and an Individual Behavior Plan may be created.

Physical punishment, verbal or emotional abuse, restriction from snack or distant isolation will never be used. Children are assured during any difficulty that the teacher cares for them and wants to help them.

## ESSENTIAL OILS:

As of date, OLP-ELP will be following the recommendations/guidelines of the MNVNA and will not be responsible for applying oils to children.

## Special Needs

Parents/legal guardians have the responsibility to inform the preschool when their child has any special medical condition, dietary restrictions, and/or special need or allergies so that we are able to provide appropriate care and support.

If applicable, you will be required by Rule 3 to share your child's ISP (Individual Service Plan) with us. In addition, state licensing regulations require us to develop an Individualized Child Care Plan (ICCP) with you that will assist us to meet your child's needs. The ICCP must be signed by you and your child's source of licensed healthcare as listed above and be reviewed annually to assure that necessary modifications are made to the plan of care.

ELP will make every effort to meet the needs of all children enrolled in our program. If the special need requires that our staff be trained to perform a new skill, we will ask that you arrange for this training.

## Family and Staff Communication

Communication between families and teachers is essential to a successful early childhood experience. Therefore, we welcome and encourage the exchange of ideas and suggestions. Following are some ways that we encourage family/teacher communication:

1. A Back to School Night open house will be held before classes begin. At this time, teachers will be available to answer any questions or concerns.
2. Two parent-teacher conferences will be held during the school year; one in late fall and one in the second half of the year. The child's intellectual, physical, emotional/social, and language development will be discussed. Parents will review a written assessment of their child at each of the conferences.

Written assessments are confidential and will be given to legal parents/guardians only upon

request. A copy will be kept in a child's file.

3. Parents are welcome at preschool anytime. However, during classtime, teachers will be unable to talk with parents. Teachers are available to discuss any questions or concerns outside of class hours.
4. Parents are encouraged to volunteer and share their talents. Scheduled parent participation is encouraged.
5. A weekly newsletter via email will be sent home with the children.
6. ELP information will be displayed on the bulletin board in the hallway.
7. E-mail addresses for ELP will be provided at the start of the school year.

## Parent Involvement

Classroom visits are always encouraged. These visits give families the opportunity to observe what happens each day in our classrooms. Following are some of the ways in which families can become involved in the classrooms: sharing cultures and traditions; assisting with classroom activities; sharing a craft, collection, or treasure; sharing career and work experiences; saving materials for school projects; talking and listening to children tell their stories; preparing materials at home (i.e. making playdough); sending in clothes for dress up; assisting during specialist classes; and reading to children. Please let us know how you would like to be involved. VIRTUS TRAINING, BACKGROUND CHECK AND ANNUAL CODE OF CONDUCT ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS.

## Parental Grievance and Program Review

When a parent/guardian has a concern about an aspect of our preschool program we will take every step to help resolve the issue as promptly as possible, keeping the safety and well-being of the children and staff a priority. It is preferred that the concern is first addressed with the staff member involved. If you do not receive a satisfactory resolution or you do not feel comfortable talking with the staff member, please contact the Principal or Director. ELP is always open to suggestions and feedback to improve the way we serve your family.

Each year the Principal, Director and Pastor will review the preschool program and policies to ensure good program and fiscal administration. We also conduct an annual family and teacher survey at the end of the school year. Family survey results are available by request. Parents may question the director or child's teacher about the preschool in person, by phone or in writing.

## Health

### Guidelines for Ill Children and Staff

The Department of Human Services requires that we exclude a child with an illness or condition that the Commissioner of Health determines to be contagious and a physician

determines has not had sufficient treatment to reduce the health risk to others. Please call or email the classroom teacher if your child will not be attending class. We follow the exclusion guidelines listed below which are taken from ***Infectious Diseases in Child Care Settings: Information for Directors, Caregivers and Parents or Guardians and School Health Staff, Sixth Edition, June 2008*** prepared by Hennepin County Community Health Department, Epidemiology Program. We must exclude a child with any of the following:

- Illness            Unable to participate in routine activities or needs more care than can be provided by the preschool staff.
- Fever              With an elevation of body temperature above normal when accompanied by behavior changes, stiff neck, difficulty breathing, rash, sore throat, and/or other signs or symptoms of illness; or is unable to participate in routine activities. Measure temperature before giving medications to reduce fever. (Axillary, armpit temperature of 100 degrees or higher OR oral temperature of 101 degrees or higher).

#### Signs/Symptoms of Possible Severe Illness

Until a healthcare provider has done an evaluation to rule out severe illness when the child is unusually tired, has uncontrolled coughing, unexplained irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs for the child.

- Diarrhea            Until diarrhea stops or until a medical exam indicates that it is not due to a communicable disease. Diarrhea is defined as an increased number of stools compared with a child's normal pattern, along with decreased stool form and/or stools that are watery, bloody, or contain mucus.

- Vomiting           Vomiting two or more times in the previous 24 hours, unless determined to be caused by a non communicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.

#### Mouth Sores with Drooling

Until a medical exam indicates the child may return or until sores have healed.

#### Rash with Fever or Behavior Change

Until a medical exam indicates these symptoms are not those of a communicable disease that requires exclusion.

- Eye Drainage      When purulent (pus) drainage and/or fever or eye pain is present or a medical exam indicates that a child may return.

#### Unusual Color of Skin, Eyes, Stool or Urine

Until a medical exam indicates the child does not have hepatitis A. Symptoms of hepatitis A include yellow eyes or skin, gray or white stools, or dark urine.

#### Lice

When a child in our care has been medically diagnosed with a communicable disease, we will

notify the appropriate health authorities and follow their recommendations to provide information to parents of all exposed children. The school office will notify the parents of exposed children on the same day or within 24 hours by email. Parents are required by State law and our center policies to inform the center within 24 hours, exclusive of weekend/holidays, if their child is diagnosed with a communicable disease.

### First Aid

In the event of injury or illness at school, appropriate first aid will be administered by trained staff. If staff decides this is an emergency situation, 911 will be contacted to provide emergency first aid. If necessary, the emergency medical service will transport your child to a medical facility as designated by emergency services. A parent or alternate listed on the Emergency Card will be contacted as soon as possible. An attempt to contact your child's source of health care may also be made. Staff will not transport children.

### Care of Ill or Injured Children

If your child becomes ill or injured while in our care, he/she will be isolated away from other children under supervision of a staff person in the school office. You or your designated alternate will be contacted to pick up your child immediately. Until you arrive, your child will be monitored and comfort measures provided according to program procedures. If staff determines it is necessary, the child's health care provider will be contacted.

### Medications

Medications will be administered by a designated staff member. All medication is to be in the original bottle and will be kept in a locked medicine cabinet in the school office. Proper paperwork must be submitted to the school before the medicine will be administered to the child.

### Health Consultation Services

Our program receives health consultation services from MN Child Care and Health Consultant, Inc. 612-508-4683, Kathy Justus RN, BSN, PHN

### Handling & Disposal of Bodily Fluids (Revised 2019)

OLP-ELP will comply with the following procedures for safely handling and disposing of bodily fluids: 1) Surfaces that come in contact with potentially infectious bodily fluids, including blood and vomit, must be cleaned and disinfected according to Rule 3. 2) Blood-contaminated material must be disposed of in a plastic bag with a secure tie: 3) Sharp items used for a child with special care needs must be disposed of in a "sharps container." The sharps container must be stored out of reach of children. 4) License holder must ensure that each staff person is trained on universal precautions to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. A staff person's completion of the training must be documented in the staff person's personnel record. 5) The license holder must

have the following bodily fluid disposal supplies in the center: Disposable gloves, disposable bags, and eye protection.

## Clothing

Please dress children appropriately for preschool. This means something comfortable and weather appropriate. Please realize that art projects, outdoor play and special activities in the classroom can be messy. All outerwear should be marked with your child's name. Weather permitting; the children will play outdoors each day.

## Special Events

### Field Trips

We prefer to have in-house field trips for the ELP however, if the field trip involves transportation away from our site, a permission slip will be sent home. The slip will explain the destination, mode of transportation, hours and cost. The program will follow Minnesota transportation guidelines when transporting preschool age children. Parent volunteers will also be needed.

### Birthdays

We will celebrate each child's birthday during the school year. Children who have a summer birthday will celebrate their half birthday. Each individual teacher will determine classroom celebrations based on allergies, etc.. Parents are invited to send a favorite book to school to be read to the class in celebration of their child's birthday. Please do not send party invitations to school for parties celebrated outside of the classroom unless you are including the entire class, all of the boys, or all of the girls in your classroom.

### Pets

Parents will be informed of pets in the school at time of admission. Center staff will care for pets following proper sanitation procedures. All pets will be licensed and vaccinated following local health department requirements.

## OLP Bags

Each child will receive an OLP bag to carry items to and from school. He/she should bring the bag to school each day. We ask that you don't send backpacks as they are often too small to hold our art projects.

## Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect. All preschool staff are mandated to report any suspected incidents of child abuse and/or neglect.

All reports regarding suspected abuse or neglect of children within the preschool program should be made to the Department Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651)431-6600.

Reports regarding incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to the local county services agency or local law enforcement.

Reports regarding violation of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the preschool program should be communicated to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division, at (651)431-6500.

If you have any questions regarding this handbook feel free to contact the Early Learning Program Director, Dolly Hinze- Kinney at [dhinze@olpmn.org](mailto:dhinze@olpmn.org)

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