



Parent/Student Handbook 2023-2024

Early Learning Program

Father Joah Ellis, Pastor

Paul Berry, Principal

5435 11th Ave. S Minneapolis, MN 55417

612-823-8253

school.olpmn.org/early-learning-program/

Dear Families,

Welcome to Our Lady of Peace Early Learning Program (ELP). 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's ELP.

ELP Staff

Mission Statement & Philosophy

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, spiritual, 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, safe, 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.
- Work cooperatively with the community to serve 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, spiritual, and language development of ELP's children. Through learning activities and play, each child will be encouraged to grow at his or her 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 interesting areas around the room. Teachers flow with children to give them individualized attention and to extend their learning experience

within a given area. Teachers interact with children in small groups and one-on-one allowing for individualized support with fine motor skills. 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, in our school gym, and in our gross motor room.

Statement of Services

ELP is a mission of Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church and School. The program provides a Christian, non-profit community for all preschool age children regardless of race, color, religion, gender, nationality, or ethnic origin. We offer preschool and prekindergarten.

Children must be at least three (3) years of age as of September 1. Children must be toilet trained.

Curriculum

Preschool Mathematics

- Our math 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 and learning styles as it prepares children for the next step in their educational journey. We also highlight STEAM experiences throughout our lesson plans.

Preschool Literacy

- Prekindergarten students participate in the Believe and Read Program, a partnership between Our Lady of Peace, the Catholic Schools Center for Excellence (CSCOE), and Groves Learning Organization (GLO). This is a multi-sensory, scientific systematic approach to teaching literacy skills. The program continues in OLP in kindergarten through grade 3.
- All students participate in daily, in class literacy activities including beginning reading comprehension, fine motor skill work regarding drawing, and classroom discussions. Students will also be exposed to letters and letter sounds.

Specialists

- All students in the ELP program will have time with our specialists every week. This includes art, Spanish, library, music, and physical education.

Registration & Enrollment

Procedure

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.
3. When a class is full, a child's name will be placed on a waiting list.
4. Enrollment is completed through TADS.

Required Forms

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, special needs, or allergies so that the staff can provide appropriate care and support.
- Emergency Form
 - A parent or legal guardian will be asked to sign an emergency form which includes sources of emergency medical and dental care, persons to contact in case of an emergency, and medical/dental insurance information.
- Immunization Record
 - Current immunization records are due on or before the first day of school. This record must give specific dates 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 school 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 exam.
- Parent Permission Form
 - This form gives permission to take the children on walking field trips, to have your child's picture taken for school use, permission regarding pick up of your child, curbside drop off and pick up permission, permission to talk with your child's school district of residence regarding development, and permission for your child's health records to be reviewed by our nurse consultant.
- Baptismal Certificate
 - If applicable to your child.
- Birth Certificate

Please provide any updates to these forms to the Our Lady of Peace school office should things change during the school year. All forms are kept in a child's file and will be kept confidential.

Preschool staff, school administration, and legal parents or guardians will have access to a child's file.

Withdrawing from the Program

Each child is enrolled for the entire school year or balance of the school year. If permanent withdrawal from 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 family non-compliance with ELP policies. Additionally, Our Lady of Peace may terminate enrollment if it is determined that the program is not reasonably able to meet the needs of a child. ELP will communicate with families in efforts to proactively solve difficulties and termination of enrollment will be a last resort.

Campus Life

A detailed Child Care Program Plan is available on our school website at school.olpmn.org/early-learning-program/.

School Arrival and Departure

All students will enter at Door 2W. The doors will open at 7:45am. At the end of the school day, all students will be dismissed from Door 2W. Siblings of students in ELP may also be dropped and dismissed from Door 2W.

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

Students should be picked up promptly. Your child must be picked up no later than five (5) minutes after the day is over. This time frame is used for emergencies only. Overuse of this time may result in late fees. Following this policy will allow proper supervision and safety of the students. A fee of \$5 per five minutes per child will be assessed for families who do not follow this guideline. If a parent calls or sends an email to inform the school of an unforeseen situation, the school administration will make a decision as to whether or not a fee will be charged.

Sample Daily Schedule

*This schedule is subject to change

7:45-8am	Morning Arrival (drop off at Door 2W)
8-11:15am	Free Choice Time
	Large Group/Morning Meeting
	Specialist Classes and large muscle activities
	Snack and Bathroom Break
	Centers
	Outside Play Time
11:15am-12:15pm	Lunch and Recess
12:15-3pm	Rest Time
	Free Choice Time
	Centers
	Outside Play Time

Outdoor Play

Outside recreation is an essential part of our program. Please send your child(ren) appropriately dressed for Minnesota weather, keeping in mind that it is often cooler in the mornings.

Oftentimes, layering works well. In the wintertime, please send a hat, mittens, snow pants, boots, and coats each day. We will try to get outdoors daily and will use 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 weather advisory has been issued, the children will be kept indoors. Shade is available on sunny days and if bugs are a problem, students will remain indoors.

Due to DHS policy, staff will only apply sunscreen on students once a permission slip has been signed by a parent or guardian. Sunscreen is provided by the child's family.

Snack Time

Our Lady of Peace Catholic School is an environment that protects and promotes students' health, well-being, ability to learn, healthy eating habits and physical activity. Our Lady of Peace Catholic School recognizes that nutrition education and physical education are essential components of the educational process, and that good health fosters staff and student attendance and education. Children will have a healthy snack each day. A monthly snack schedule can be provided upon request. Milk and water will be provided daily.

School Clothing

Please dress children appropriately for preschool. An additional set of clothing should be provided to each child's teacher to be kept at school in case of an emergency.

Lunch at School

For children who bring lunch to school, we encourage you to follow the USDA Requirements.

OLP does provide a school lunch program for families who are interested. Please see the school website for detailed information about this program and to create your account.

Lunch will include a main entrée, a selection of fruits and vegetables, and milk.

Families will need to set up an account for your student, which can be managed through a mobile application. Funds can be added at any time and will only be deducted on days when a student receives hot lunch.

Rest Time

Each ELP student enrolled in a full day will rest quietly for a minimum of 30 minutes after lunch. Students who participate in rest time may bring a blanket with them.

Field Trips

We prefer to have in-house field trips for the ELP students; however, if the field trip involves transportation away from our site, a permission slip will be provided for parent consent. It will contain information about 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 requested when needed.

Emergency Drills

ELP students will participate in monthly fire and safety drills. Occasionally, these will coincide with school safety drills for the K-8 building.

Personal Property

Children are discouraged from bringing toys and personal items from home. OLP is not responsible for the loss or damage of these items. All clothing (indoor and outdoor) should be labeled with your child's name.

Any items causing a distraction to the learning environment will be collected by a staff member and returned to the student at the end of the day with the expectation that the item(s) will remain at home in the future.

Birthdays and Treats

Our Lady of Peace Catholic School works to provide a safe learning environment for all children. Because we have a number of students that have food allergies, especially peanut, dairy, and gluten allergies, we do not want to endanger any of our students in any way. We strongly encourage students who want to bring a treat for their birthday to bring non-food items (bubbles, pencils, stickers, play dough, funky straws, bookmarks, etc.). We also encourage a parent/guardian to come to school on their child's birthday to read a story, do a craft, or have lunch.

If you are planning on having a party for your student(s), please remember that feelings of being left out do happen. Unless the entire class is being invited, please refrain from handing out birthday party invitations at school. A parent directory can be found on Educate for email addresses.

Program Plan

A copy of the Our Lady of Peace Early Learning Program Plan is available on the school website at <http://school.olpmn.org/early-learning-program/>.

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 and expectations are necessary to provide 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.

Special Needs

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

If applicable, a parent or guardian will need to share a child's ISP (Individual Service Plan) with us, per Rule 3. 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.

Health Information

Absences

If your child is sick, or will miss preschool for any reason, please call the school attendance line or let the classroom teacher know. Please state the reason for the child's absence. This may include:

- Illness
- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

Children should be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school; this means that no fever-reducing medications or other medications are being used to treat symptoms.

First Aid

All ELP staff and OLP administration is trained in First Aid & CPR within the first 90 days of contact with children. Certifications are maintained every other year after that. 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 connected 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 comforted according to program procedures. If staff determines it is necessary, the child's health care provider will be contacted.

Medications

If your child requires medication, discuss a schedule with your healthcare provider that would allow the doses to be given at home. If it must be given in school, all medication (both prescription and non-prescription) can be given only with the written consent of the parent and the physician. The medication must be provided by the parent and be in a properly labeled bottle from the pharmacy. Medication must be kept in the school office at all times and be administered by school personnel. Consent forms are available from the school office or school nurse.

Health Consultation Services

Our program receives health consultation services for MN Child Care and Health Consultant, Inc. Kathy Justus, RN, BSN, PHN, 612.508.4683

Toileting Accidents

It is expected that all students in ELP are fully toilet trained. In the event that an accident does happen at school, the ELP staff will assist the child into clean, dry clothing and send the other clothing home to be washed. If persistent accidents happen at school, the child's teacher will reach out for a meeting to discuss a plan.

General Exclusion Guidelines for Ill Children

Certain symptoms in children may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. Excluding an ill child may decrease the spread of the disease to others in childcare and school settings. Recommended exclusion varies by the disease or infectious agent. Children with the symptoms

listed below should be excluded from the childcare or school setting until symptoms improve; or a health care provider has determined that the child can return; or children can participate in routine activities without more staff supervision than usual.

Prepared by Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department (HSPHD), June, 2021.

Acute Bronchitis (Chest Cold)/Bronchitis	Until fever is gone (without the use of a fever reducing medication) and the child is well enough until to participate in routine activities.
Fever	<p>An elevation of body temperature above normal and 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Axillary (armpit) temperature: 100°F or higher • Oral temperature: 101°F or higher • Rectal temperature: 102°F or higher • Ear temperatures are not recommended because of inconsistent and inaccurate results. Each manufacturer may have different temperature ranges, which makes setting standards difficult
Chicken Pox	Until all blisters have dried into scabs; usually by day six after rash began.
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	No exclusion, unless the child has a fever or is not healthy enough to participate in routine activities.
Diarrhea	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. Exclude until 24 hours after diarrhea stops or follow specific disease exclusion if the pathogen is known; or until a medical exam indicates that it is not due to a communicable disease.
Vomiting	Child has vomited two or more times in the previous 24 hours. Exclude for 24 hours after last episode of vomiting, unless it is determined to be caused by a

	noncommunicable condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration.
Mouth Sores with Drooling	Exclude until a medical exam indicates the child may return or until sores have healed.
Rash with Fever or Behavior Change	Exclude until a medical exam indicates these symptoms are not those of a communicable disease that requires exclusion.
Eye Drainage	No exclusion, unless the child has a fever or is not healthy enough to participate in routine activities. Antibiotics or a note from a health care provider are not required.
Unusual Color of Skin, Eyes, Stool, or Urine	Exclude until a medical exam indicates the child does not have hepatitis A. Symptoms of hepatitis A include yellow eyes or skin (jaundice), gray or white stools, or dark (tea or cola-colored) urine.
Please see https://www.hennepin.us/-/media/hennepinus/residents/health-medical/infectious-diseases/specific-exclusions-child-care.pdf for more specific information.	

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.

- 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 you may have.
- Two parent-teacher conferences will be held during the school year: one in the Fall and one in the Spring. 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.
- Lead teachers will provide a Weekly Newsletter to keep parents informed of important dates, classroom instruction, and other pertinent information.
- All ELP families will also receive the Our Lady of Peace Weekly Brief, which is distributed via email on Wednesdays.
- Various family-oriented events will happen each year and may include music concerts with family activity, get-togethers on the school playground, etc. These events will be communicated in various ways by the ELP staff.

Confidentiality

The ELP team working with children and families will sometimes bring preschool staff into contact with confidential information. The team will respect the privacy of children and the families, while ensuring that a high quality early childhood experience is consistently provided. 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.

Staff will not discuss individual children with people other than the parents/guardians, except for the purpose of curriculum planning and/or classroom management. Any concerns or evidence relating to a child's safety will be kept in a confidential file and will be shared only with the child's teachers, the ELP Director, and school administration.

Written assessments are confidential and will be given to parents/guardians only upon request. A copy will be kept in the child's file.

Parental Grievance and Program Review

When a parent or guardian has a concern about an aspect of our preschool program, we will take every reasonable step to help resolve the issue as promptly as possible, keeping the safety and wellbeing of the children and staff a priority.

It is preferred that the concern is first addressed with the staff member involved. If the person making the grievance does not feel that a satisfactory resolution has been reached, please contact school administration.

Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting Policy

MN Department of Human Services Division of Licensing December 2016

Who Should Report Child Abuse and Neglect

- Any person may voluntarily report abuse or neglect.
- If you work with children in a licensed facility, you are legally required or mandated to report and cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years you must immediately (within 24 hours) make a report to an outside agency.

Where to Report

- If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 911.
- Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in a licensed child foster care or family child care facility should be made to county child protection services
- Reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring in all other facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services should be made to the Department of Human Services, Licensing Division's Maltreatment Intake line at (651) 431-6600.

- Reports regarding incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children occurring within a family or in the community should be made to Hennepin County Child Protection Services at 612-348-3552 or the Minneapolis Police at 911.
- If your report does not involve possible abuse or neglect, but does involve possible violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules that govern the facility, you should call the Department of Human Services Licensing Division at (651) 431-6500.

What to Report

- Definitions of maltreatment are contained in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556) and should be attached to this policy.
- A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the abuse or neglect (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected abuse or neglect occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.
- An oral report of suspected abuse or neglect made to one of the above agencies by a mandated reporter must be followed by a written report to the same agency within 72 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays.

Retaliation Prohibited

An employer of any mandated reporter shall not retaliate against the mandated reporter for reports made in good faith or against a child with respect to whom the report is made. The Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act contains specific provisions regarding civil actions that can be initiated by mandated reporters who believe that retaliation has occurred.

Internal Review

When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the facility must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether:

- A. (i) related policies and procedures were followed;
- B. (ii) the policies and procedures were adequate;
- C. (iii) there is a need for additional staff training;
- D. (iv) the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved;
and
- E. (v) there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care.

Primary and Secondary Person or Position to Ensure Internal Reviews are Completed

The internal review will be completed by the Our Lady of Peace Principal. If this individual is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, Our Lady of Peace Assistant Principal will be responsible for completing the internal review.

Documentation of the Internal Review

The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request.

Corrective Action Plan

Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan designed to correct current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder, if any.

Staff Training

The license holder must provide training to all staff related to the mandated reporting responsibilities as specified in the Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors Act (Minnesota Statutes, section 626.556). The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

Parent Involvement

Classroom Visits

School visits by parents are welcomed and encouraged by the school staff. Advance calls or emails to the office and the classroom teacher are helpful in making arrangements for your visit. VIRTUS Certification, Background Check, and Volunteer Code of Conduct are required to volunteer in any way for the school. If you need to leave something for your child, please leave it inside door #1W on the table provided.

Upon entering the school via door #1W, all visitors must report to the school office. Visitors will be asked to sign in and to wear a visitor's badge while in the building.

The 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 stories
- Preparing materials at home
- Saving materials for school projects
- Talking and listening to children tell their stories
- Sending in clothes for dress up
- Assisting during specialist classes
- Reading to children

Volunteer Requirements

Volunteers are an integral part of the success of many OLP events and programs. With the dedication of parent and community volunteers, Our Lady of Peace can provide meaningful experiences to students through social, community building, and fundraising efforts.

We are asking each family to volunteer four (4) hours of their time this school year in order to meet the various needs we have in our school and community. More ideas and to log your volunteer hours can be found at school.olpmn.org/volunteer-opportunities/.

All OLP School Volunteer programs are run through Eagles Nest, OLP's Parent Organization. These programs include (but are not limited to)

- Social events: *Jingle Mingle, Trivia*
- Fundraising Events: *Gala, Pumpkin Patch, Dine Out*
- School Events: *Halloween Party, Christmas Market, Las Posadas, Book Fair*
- Classroom Programs: *Jr Achievement, Art Adventure, Guest Readers, Reading Buddies, room parent, chaperones and more*
- Behind the Scenes: *School ToolBox School Supplies, Communication/newsletters, Social Media Influencers, Book Repairs, Hospitality*

In accordance with the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, all volunteers at parishes and schools within the Archdiocese who have contact with minors are required to complete a background check every three years in order to protect those we serve. In addition to background checks, all employees and volunteers must complete ongoing VIRTUS training through the archdiocese and sign an annual Code of Conduct. Volunteer status is dependent on an acceptable background check(s), completing the VIRTUS class, and signing a current code of conduct. Background check(s) must be received, reviewed, and accepted before the volunteer begins his or her service. Please reach out to the school office to check your status or begin the process.

Volunteers working with money should meet with the Business Administrator in order to determine both the budget for the event and protocols when handling money.

*Each year, school administrators and the ELP teaching team will review the preschool program and policies to ensure good programming and fiscal administration.
Any changes made to the Parent/Student Handbook during the school year will be communicated.*
