



Parents' Handbook

674 Mannsdale Road
Madison, MS 39110
601.842.8001 PDO
PDO.COTC@gmail.com

Purpose/Philosophy

Chapel of the Cross Preschool is designed to be a safe place where parents can leave their children and allow them to learn through play and age-appropriate activities. Our Preschool provides parents with flexibility to choose to enroll their child from two or four days per week. COTCP is a ministry of The Chapel of the Cross and is licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health. We are a member of the National Association of Episcopal Schools.

Curriculum/Program of Activities

Our preschool is designed to promote intellectual, social, emotional, physical and spiritual development of children ages 1 through 4 years old. This is accomplished by teacher modeled activities, free play, music, art, and hands on experiences.

We use a thematic based unit curriculum, for example: holidays, seasons, animals, etc. Academic concepts related to the alphabet and numbers are presented through activities, stories, art, and individualized opportunities.

Scheduled enrichment programs include:

Monday & Wednesday – Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (2's & 3's class, must be 3 years old to go in the level I atrium. *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is the curriculum we use for children's spiritual development. This program invites children to explore and deepen their relationship with the Good Shepherd.*

We have several "Special guests" come and speak to the children pertaining to the specific theme we are learning. Example Local firefighters, real animals, doctors, etc.

Each month parents will receive a calendar that will assist them in knowing our units, special occasions, closings, or other information for the month.

Policies, Procedures and Organization

Chapel of the Cross preschool accepts one-year olds for admission. Children may be enrolled until prior to entering formal school kindergarten or until the day of their 5th birthday. We are open all year including the summers. To keep your enrollment, you must pay for the summer months even if you do not plan to attend. We are closed 8 weeks out of the year.

Our Preschool is a ministry of The Chapel of the Cross, a parish within the Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi and is licensed by the Mississippi State Department of Health. We are a member of the National Association of Episcopal Schools. We strive to follow the Episcopal liturgical calendar for religious education and ceremonies. We do teach the children Christian themes, values, prayers, etc. and use the Holy Bible for lessons, stories, songs, etc.

The Director (and director designees in director's absence) are responsible for the day-to-day operations. The teachers are to provide a safe, loving, and nurturing environment and to provide

direction to the children for learning and play. If a parent has a concern or complaint, it should be directed to the Director. In an emergency, Haylee Nix, can be reached at 601.218.8844.

Hours

Preschool hours of operation are Monday-Thursday from 8:15-2:00.

Regular School hours: 8:15-12:00. We offer the Lunch Bunch option which is available from 12:00-2:00pm. **Pickup is from 11:50-12/1:50-2** and we may close for the day, or part of the day, without prior notification of any unforeseen circumstances (bad weather, loss of electricity, or running water would be examples of this). **We follow the Madison County School weather plan as well as most Holidays.**

The Preschool is closed for 8 weeks each year:

- 1 week at the end of May for preparation for summer session
- 1 week usually the third week of June, for COTC VBS
- 1 week in the end of July/ or beginning of August for preparation for fall session (this depends on when the first day of school is for Fall)
- 1 week for fall break in October.
- 1 week for Thanksgiving break
- 2 weeks for Christmas/ New Year's break
- 1 week in March for Spring break

We will also be closed for the following holidays: Labor Day, MLK Day, Easter Monday, and 4th of July- only if it falls on a Mon-Thurs.

We may also be dismissed for a day/week for other church functions (VBS) requiring the space. We will notify parents in advance if this occurs.

Registration

Priority registration for the following school year and the summer session is in February. Children who receive priority registration include children currently enrolled in the program, siblings of those currently enrolled, children whose parents are members and currently attend Chapel of the Cross. Regular registration opens to the public three weeks later on a first come, first serve basis. Fall commitments are required in February of each year. If we do not receive the commitment form back your child's spot will not be held for the following fall. Our K3 and K4 space is limited so we will go by the same process of enrollment as stated above.

Enrollment/Withdrawal

The Preschool accepts children regardless of race or religion.

Enrollment requirements:

- Completed and signed registration form
- Paid non-refundable registration fee
- Current child's immunization form 121

You are welcome to increase the number of days your child attends if we have the availability, however, you may not decrease the number of days you originally registered for. When you register and sign our policies, you are committing to those days for the entire school year.

If you must withdrawal a 30 day notice is required. If we do not receive a 30 day notice you will be responsible for the following month's tuition.

Parental Access

Parents have access to their child at all times although, we ask you are considerate of not disturbing other children participating in our normal daily activities.

Fees

Registration Fee: **\$100 non-refundable, due upon initial enrollment**

Supply Fee: **\$100 (\$50 due in Aug & \$50 due in Feb)**

Monthly tuition is:

- Two days \$220/Month
- Four days \$390/month

Lunch Bunch is **\$13** per day used. Drop-in is **\$35** per day (**by reservation only, we rarely have this available**).

We do an automatic draft each month. A form will provided to you to fill out upon enrollment. It will draft out between the 1st and the 5th. If you have a specific day that works for your budget simply write it on the form.

Monthly tuition is due even when there is a holiday, or your child is not present due to illness or other circumstances.

It is the parent's responsibility to be prompt in picking up their child from Lunch Bunch or the end of the day. After a period of 10 minutes, an additional dollar per minute will be charged. All children should be out of the building by 12 and 2 each day. Several staff members have other jobs to get to or their own children to pick up.

Arrival/Departure

The doors open at 8:15 not a minute before. All children must be walked into the building by his/her parents and walked to his/her classroom. Each child must be signed in and out via the sign in sheets in the lobby.

Children will not be released to any individual not listed on your child's parental authorization form. If needed, a copy of court ordered legal documents that prohibit or limit non-custodial

parents from having their children released to them will be kept on file. If the staff does not recognize the individual picking up your child, they may be requested to show a photo ID. Everyone will be asked to show their ID on their first time picking up.

In the event your child is not picked up from Preschool, parents will receive a phone call by 12:10 OR 2:10pm. At 2:20 if we have not been able to reach parents, we will proceed to call the people listed on your Parent Authorization Form. **A LATE FEE IS ISSUED AFTER 12:10 AND 2:10. ALL CHILDREN SHOULD BE PICKED UP BY 12:00 AND 2:00!**

Weather

In the case of inclement weather, we will follow the schedule for the Madison County School District. We will announce closings on our Facebook Page, Chapel of the Cross Parents' Day Out, and via our group text app "Remind." If this happens during school hours, we will follow safety procedures until you can come for your child.

Emergency Evacuation

In case of emergency which requires evacuation (fire, damage to facility because of weather, gas leak, etc.) of the facility, children will be taken via staff vehicles to:

SITE 1: Mannsdale Lower Elementary, 443 Mannsdale Rd., Madison MS (approx. 1 mile)
OR

SITE 2: Madison Middle School, 1365 Mannsdale Rd., Madison MS (approx. 5 miles) Parents will be notified immediately by the remind app and phone calls as to the evacuation location.

In the event of a dangerous situation that could potentially pose a threat to children, we will 1. Lock doors to facility 2. Call 911 (Madison County Sheriff Dept) 3. Move Children to a safe place within the facility, 4. Inform parents.

Sun Safe Practices

Chapel of the Cross Preschool encourages *Sun Safe Practices* by asking parents to apply sunscreen to their child at home. We schedule outdoor activities between 10am and 2pm during the months of April-September, weather permitting. Staff is not able to apply sunscreen to children.

Insurance

The preschool has liability insurance with the Southern Division of Church Mutual Insurance Company.

Clothing

Our program involves many “hands-on” activities that are developmentally appropriate for children. Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes allowing him/her the opportunity to benefit the most from all activities, including outdoor play. We are not liable for damage to children's clothing resulting from our normal daily activities like outdoor play, art projects, etc. Please pack an emergency change of clothes in your child's bag. If you prefer, the clothes can be left at the school. Please put the clothes in a zip lock bag clearly labeled with your child's full name.

Biting Policy

We take biting seriously, but biting is a normal stage of development for younger children. Children who are often biters could be teething, developing language skills, sensory exploration, crowded in play, find an intense desire for a toy or seek to gain attention. Teachers supervise activities but sometimes they are not in immediate reach to prevent a bite.

The child bitten is taken care of first by consolation and first aid. The biter is given a firm, “NO”. An accident report will be written and placed in the child's files. Parents of the children involved will be asked to sign. The names of the children involved will not be released to the parents.

We will work to resolve biting patterns with the help of the parents. After 3 bites, we may ask for a parent conference to figure out a plan of action to move forward in a positive way. If the behavior continues a child can be dismissed.

Discipline Policy

Young children sometimes have a difficult time expressing their feelings so they may hit, throw, bite, or have a temper tantrum. We first try to prevent problems by classroom management, redirection, discussing inappropriate behavior at a level they can best understand, positive reinforcement and encouragement. We encourage, “I'm sorry”.

We DO NOT use corporal punishment, isolation, verbal or emotional abuse or denial of food as discipline measures in our preschool. “Time out” is not allowed for children under the age of three. Children 3 and over may have to sit and think about an inappropriate action for no more than 1 minute per year old they are at the time.

If an inappropriate or dangerous behavior continues, the parents may be called for a parent conference to discuss constructive cooperative solutions or to remove the child for the day.

Removal from the Program

In some cases, several behavioral problems which require more attention than our staff can manage may lead to a child's removal from our program. This may include, but is not limited to, aggressive behavior, pushing excessively, biting, running from teachers, tackling, hitting teachers, inappropriate toileting/ restroom/ nudity behavior, etc. Any behavior that poses a liability to the program such as a child repeatedly eating nonfood items, attempting to escape

from the group, exhibiting behaviors that are a constant distraction for the classroom. If a **parent** is verbally abusive or uses inappropriate language or actions toward any staff, or does not follow other policies of the program, the parent and their child will be dismissed from current and future enrollment. Any of the behaviors listed above can result in an immediate dismissal.

Conferences

If a parent would like a conference because of a concern with their child, please contact the director to set up a time. Parents may also be asked by the director to have a conference if behavioral or other concerns arise.

Health/Safety

Please keep your child at home if he/she has any signs of illness including:

1. Fever of 99 degrees or more
2. A severe cold, sinus infection, chills
3. Undetermined rash or spots
4. Red, draining eyes
5. Upset stomach/diarrhea
6. Earache
7. Sore throat
8. Yellow/green runny nose
9. Lice
10. Symptoms of a communicable disease (flu, RSV, strep) i.e. extreme coughing
11. Covid exposure or positive covid test
12. If a sibling or parent is currently dismissed from school or work due to exposure then your child also needs to stay home.

We do not administer medication to children. **Do not put medication in your child's backpack/ diaper bag and send to Preschool.** Do not put medication in your child's sippy cup or bottle. If we find medication in their sippy cups or bottles, they will be sent home. Should your child contract a communicable disease, please notify the Preschool program immediately so we are able to notify other parents their child has been exposed. Children should be fever free *without fever reducing medication* for 24 hours without symptoms before returning to school. We reserve the right to call you to pick up your child if he/she begins to show symptoms of illness.

Minor scrapes, bumps and bruises are inevitable, but we make an effort to keep children safe. For minor injuries a child will receive appropriate first aid and the parent will be sent a text with details and a photo. They may also be made aware of the injury at pickup if it was minor.

Although staff is CPR and First Aid certified, in the event a child becomes seriously ill or injured and deemed an emergency, we will call 911 and immediately notify parents. EMS will determine ER location.

Child Abuse Reports

Mississippi State Department of Health requires any employee of a childcare facility who has suspicion or evidence of child abuse or neglect shall report it immediately to the Mississippi Department of Human Services in accordance with the State's Youth Court Act.

Labels

Please label all removable clothing (**especially jackets**), cups, pacifiers, blankets, lunch boxes, book bags, etc.

Snacks

We will serve a breakfast snack at 9:30am each morning. We provide one grain item such as bread, crackers, etc. and one serving of fruit. Children are served their own water cups that are brought from home for this snack.

Parents need to send a water bottle or cup every day. Teachers will refill it as needed throughout the day. Children will have free access to water throughout the day.

The menu of what we serve daily is provided in the preschool lobby.

Please alert the office and teachers **in writing** of any known food allergies. Parents of children with food allergies are requested to send a substitute food item if their child is allergic to the food, we are serving that day.

Party Policy

For holiday parties and children's birthdays, parents are allowed to bring food items and supplies if they wish to do so. All food items must be store bought, not homemade, due to our licensing requirements. All food served must come from a kitchen or store with a food permit by the health department. Food brought in for parties must arrive in the original packaging, still sealed from the store it was purchased from. Please also make sure food brought in complies with our "Peanut Free" policy to accommodate for children's allergies.

Lunch Bunch

Lunch is served at 12:00pm to the children staying for Lunch Bunch. If you intend for your child to stay, please make sure you send them lunch. Your child's lunch must contain the following 4 items: a meat or meat alternative, a starch or grain, a veggie or fruit or 2 veggies or 2 fruits. We provide water to drink for lunch. If your child's lunch does not meet our requirements, we will provide the missing item at a \$10 charge to you.

Peanut Policy

For the safety of all children, please **DO NOT SEND ANY PEANUT ITEMS**. Examples include: PB&J sandwiches, peanut butter crackers, any candy with peanuts, etc. If other allergies arise, we will inform parents to avoid specific items.

Prohibited Items

Smoking, use of tobacco products, alcohol, or illegal use of drugs is prohibited within the physical confines of the facility and parking lot. Chapel of the Cross is a smoke-free campus. If staff senses a parent is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, we reserve the right to prohibit that parent from removing their child from our care. COTC preschool is a weapon free building. Regardless if you have a gun permit, please leave your gun in your vehicle.

Children's Dress Code:

Shirts & Pants:

Child's clothes must fit to their body size. No stomach-showing shirts when child raises their hands above their head. Pants & shorts must fit to child's natural waist, not so big they consistently fall and also not so tight that they show the top of the buttocks. · Child's clothes must be seasonally appropriate.

A child who wears a dress please wear some type of legging or shorts under it so that when the child plays or sits down on the rug for circle time, their underwear or diaper doesn't show.

Socks & Shoes:

Socks are required to be worn with closed-toe shoes & boots.

Sandals are allowed in warm weather, HOWEVER, if your child consistently removes their sandals because rocks or dirt gets in it, they will have to start only wearing shoes with socks. Remember we go on nature walks frequently and the property has a lot of gravel. Also, children play in the courtyard where the cement gets very hot in the summer. A child's bare foot can become burned easily on hot cement, so it is important they keep their shoes on for safety. Native shoes are a great choice for summer.

Outerwear:

Winter coats with a hood (or a separate hat) are required in cold weather. If the child does not bring a coat, we will have to call the parent to pick the child up or bring a coat. It is not an option to allow one child to remain indoors while the rest of the class goes outside. Teacher/ child ratios must be maintained in each area of the school, so the class group needs to remain together. Allowing a child to remain indoors with another classroom throws off the ratio for that area.

This applies to infants also. In cold weather, infants must wear a hat, a coat (or be wrapped in a thick blanket), and socks. Infants go outside as well as the older children.

Raincoats with a hood and rain boots need to be worn on rainy days. If the rain lets up a little bit or if it is only a light sprinkle, we will still go outside. In this case the ground will still be wet so please wear rubber boots.

Hair: Please keep hair pulled back so that it does not interfere with the child's line of vision, ability to eat without getting food into the hair, and ability to participate in art projects. If the child's hair is consistently falling in their face, the teacher will use a ponytail holder or clip to hold it back.

***Remember it is a requirement of Health Department that children go outside every day, weather**

permitting. This means 40-90 degrees and not storming or hard raining. Seasonally appropriate clothing and outerwear is required.

*It is a part of our science curriculum to expose children to nature. This means working in our garden, stomping in muddy puddles, collecting leaves on a nature walk, etc. Please send your child in clothes that are appropriate for this.

*Make sure your child has a seasonally appropriate change of clothes, including underwear & socks, in their bag or cubby every day.

Lunch bunch guidelines:

1. You do not have to notify us in advance, just mark “Yes” on the sign-in clipboard that morning.
2. Please put First & Last name labels on lunchboxes! This is required by the health department! We would hate to serve the wrong food to your child!
3. Lunch boxes must include the following 4 food items:
 - **Item#1: grain** (bread, crackers, granola, etc.) do not buy the granola bars with peanut butter or chocolate chips in them! Plain ones or “oats & honey” kind are great!
 - **Item#2: fruit** (apple sauce pouch, fruit cups, raisins, etc.) Gummy fruit snacks do not count as a fruit!
 - **Item#3: vegetable** (dried veggie sticks, veggie cups, carrot or celery sticks, veggie pouch, etc)
 - **Item#4: protein** (can be any kind of meat, any real cheese or yogurt, or any beans. Hummus is ok! No peanut butter, but almond butter or soy-nut butter is ok!) Lunchables are ok, but take out the cookies or candy that is sometimes included in the package!

***\$10 fine if lunch box doesn't include correct items according to these guidelines! ***

***Please leave all toys at home except for on show and tell days. If your child brings a toy from home, it will remain in the hallway or be sent with you unless it is show and tell that day. Children in 1k may bring a Lovie and pacifier. They may have milk in a sippy cup with their snack and lunch. Bottles are not allowed in our 1k.**

Updated 12/23 for 2024 School year.