



**BETHANY
LUTHERAN**



PARENT HANDBOOK

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BLPS

MISSION

Bethany Lutheran Preschool was founded in 1959 to provide a Christian education for young children and to be an outreach to their families. The school is an extension of the educational ministry of Bethany Lutheran Church, a Missouri Synod congregation. The school includes children of the congregation, children of other congregations, and children whose families have no church affiliation.

The Christian faith is the foundation of Bethany Lutheran. The school program is designed to develop children's knowledge and skills in all developmental areas — spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and intellectual — and to help children become lifelong learners.

Each child is a child of God; our objective is that children come to know God and His love for them. To achieve this, we tell Bible stories about the life of Jesus and hold regular chapel services led by the Pastor.

The concept of individual self-worth is basic to our program. Each child has an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as an individual personality, learning style, and family background.

Curriculum and instruction are responsive to individual differences in ability and interests. Different levels of ability, development, and learning styles are expected, accepted, and used to design the curriculum. Children are allowed to move at their own pace in acquiring important skills including language arts, math, science, social studies, art, etc.

Kelley Durham

Director

ADMISSIONS

Bethany Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational and admission policies.

A completed health form, signed by a physician, and proof of the child's identity and age must be in the school files before a child may attend classes.

These documents are required by law.



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TUITION

Our annual tuition may be paid in one of three ways: in full, semi-annual (two payments made in August and January), or in ten monthly installments (beginning in August and ending in May).

The Tuition Installment Plan begins with the first payment due August 5 and the final payment due May 5.

Tuition payments are made electronically through your Brightwheel account. Payments are scheduled on the 5th of each month and must be paid no later than the 15th.

Please keep in mind: ALL debit and credit card fees are your responsibility. An additional 2.9% of all debit/credit transactions, made on your Brightwheel account, will be added to your payment total. There is no additional fee for Brightwheel payments linked directly to your bank account.

A late fee of \$45 will be charged for tuition payments paid after the 15th of each month. A notice of insufficient funds will also be subject to a \$45 fee.

If special payment schedules need to be arranged, please contact the preschool office.

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NOTIFICATION OF **WITHDRAWAL**

If at any time during the school year your child is unable to continue attending Bethany Lutheran, whether due to relocation or other factors, please notify the preschool office in writing, at least 45 days in advance of the child's last day of school. If less than 45 days' notice is given, parents are responsible for tuition for the next monthly installment. There are no refunds or prorating of tuition for withdrawals after May 1st.

● **Student Dismissal**

The school reserves the right to dismiss a student when ...

- Required documents are incomplete
- Tuition payments are 45 days late
- A child's behavior threatens others
- A child exhibits behaviors of unreadiness such as severe anxiety

Dismissal may occur after a conference with the Director, Assistant Director, child's teachers and child's family.

KEEP IN TOUCH WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

Bethany Lutheran is not just a school, it is a FAMILY. Teachers and parents greatly enrich the lives of children by sharing ideas and information. Aside from informal contacts, parents receive weekly updates that include your child's daily learning activities, a calendar of events, and photos sharing their school experiences. We work together to support each other and your child's educational growth.



BRIGHTWHEEL

Brightwheel is our main form of communication throughout the school year. This is how you will communicate with your teachers as well as receive updates on school events, closures, and other important notices.

PALS

Parents can stay involved by joining our Parent Activity Liason's (PALS). Whether you sign up to be a classroom parent or to help with a special event. There are several opportunities throughout the school year to be a part of the Bethany community.

CONFRENCES

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled once per semester. Parents may also speak with their child's teacher over the phone or via the Brightwheel app.

Please avoid lengthy discussions during the busy times of drop-off and pick-up. You are welcome to schedule a time to speak with your teachers after hours.

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BABYSITTING

We discourage staff members from providing private childcare or babysitting services on their own time. If a staff member does provide babysitting services, the staff member is acting in their individual capacity.

We **ARE NOT** responsible for the performance of babysitting services by members of our staff, including transportation of your child(ren). Staff members are **NOT** allowed to transport students to and from school.

BEFORE/AFTER CARE

Before and After Care hours are provided for an additional fee. If you would like to sign up for extended care or need care on a drop-in basis, please let the office know.

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DRESS CODE

SNACK & LUNCH

● Student Dress Code

Children will be more comfortable and ready to engage if they wear clothing suitable for play. Learning how to manage snaps, belts, zippers, tights, etc. is something to be responsible for at home, as well as at school. It is helpful to dress children in clothes that can be easily pulled down and up by the child in the bathroom. **Younger children should wear clothing that makes diaper changes easy and quick.**

Student's clothing should be suitable for weather, mess, and fun. Painting and running on the playground can mean spills and dirty clothing. Please dress your child appropriately for their educational day. They will also need to keep a change of weather appropriate clothing in their cubby at school.

Appropriate shoes for play are important! Children's shoes should be closed toe, while providing support and traction for play. **Sneakers are recommended!** Sandals, plastic shoes, or cowboy boots are dangerous on the playground and not safe for climbing.

Clothing and personal belongings, such as a backpacks, lunch boxes, coats, sweaters, etc. should be labeled with your child's full name.

● Snack & Lunch Time

Parents are responsible for providing their child's snack, lunch, and water bottle each day. Please note: staff are unable to heat up snacks and/or lunches. Make sure your child's snack is in a labeled Ziploc bag, separate from their lunch, to avoid confusion. Bethany Lutheran CANNOT provide utensils, so please make sure your child has everything that they need in their lunchbox each day. Snacks should be healthy, and in child-size portions.

Please let your teacher know if your child has a medical condition that impacts their dietary needs.

The following are prohibited items at school for snacks or lunch...

NO tree nuts such as walnuts, almonds, macadamia nuts, etc.

NO peanuts or peanut products

This includes, but is not limited to, peanut cookies, peanut butter, trail mixes or granola bars with nuts and products containing peanuts or tree nuts.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

Our mission is to ensure that each child has an equal right and opportunity to receive a quality Christian education in a safe, secure, and nurturing environment. Teachers make every effort to address disruptive and unsafe behaviors through age appropriate behavior management techniques.

● Student Behavior

Behaviors that interfere with learning or the safety of others will be addressed. Disruptive behaviors impact your child and their class. Disruptive behaviors include, but are not limited to, aggressive behaviors such as hitting, kicking, biting, attempting to bite, throwing objects, and severe anxiety such as inconsolable crying.

In the event a child exhibits aggressive behaviors, the following is practice at BLPS:

1. The event is discussed with the teacher and child involved. There will be an age-appropriate discussion of acceptable behavior as well as making good choices.
2. At the judgement of the staff, students may be removed from the room to discuss the event and more appropriate conflict resolution.
3. Parents of all children involved will be made aware of the event.

If there are reoccurrences of aggressive behavior:

1. Guardian(s) of the child will be notified and instructed to pick up their child as soon as possible.
2. A meeting between child's guardian(s) and staff may be required to address the issue, explore positive intervention techniques at school and home, or to discuss continuation in the school program.

It is our desire that both parents and school work in Christian harmony to help our students interact in appropriate ways. Parents may be required to meet with staff to best resolve issues. Resolutions may include, but are not limited to, abbreviated days for the child or parents remaining at school for a period of time.

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BEHAVIOR POLICY CONTINUED

● Parent Behavior

Although the child is the representative of a family during the school day, parents and guardians are an integral part of the Bethany family. Parents and guardians are welcome at Bethany and we encourage that involvement.

If at any time a parent or guardian's behavior is threatening or inappropriate, Bethany Lutheran Preschool reserves the right to dismiss a student from the preschool.

The school maintains the right to terminate enrollment at any time.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Bethany Lutheran Preschool is focused on ensuring the safety and well-being of all employees and children. To promote infection control and mitigate risks, the following policies are in effect for all.

● Temperature

Students and/or staff who spike a fever during school hours will be sent home. A fever is considered 99.9 degrees and above. Those who have a fever will not be permitted to return to school/work until they are fever free for a minimum of 24 hours (without the use of fever reducing medication).

● COVID-19

COVID-19 is common amongst adults and children and can spike during cold a flu season. **Symptoms include:** *fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea.*

An outbreak of COVID-19 is defined by the Fairfax County Health Department as three (3) or more epi-linked cases (cases with known exposure or close contact to one another) that occur within 14 days of another case in a single group, such as a classroom or after-school activity. Bethany Lutheran follows CDC guidelines for updated quarantine policies.

Quarantine/Isolation

If your child tests positive for COVID-19 they must isolate at home for (5) days. On days 6-10 they can return to school MASKED (as long as they are fever free-without fever reducing medication, and symptoms are improving).

If your child is unable to mask, they will not be able to return to school until after 10 days of isolation.

Bethany Lutheran will follow Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) if they move to mask mandatory. All Fairfax County mask mandates will supersede BLPS policy.

HEALTH & SAFETY

CONTINUED

Bethany Lutheran Preschool is focused on ensuring the safety and well-being of all employees and children. To promote infection control and mitigate risks, the following policies are in effect for all.

● HFMD

Hand, Foot, Mouth Disease is common within young children and very contagious. Symptoms include: fever, mouth sores, and skin rash.

Students who contract HFMD will have to remain home. They can return to school once they are:

- Fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medication.
- Have no uncontrolled drooling with mouth sores.
- Have no sores that are puss filled.
- Feel well enough to participate in classroom activities.

● RSV

RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus) is highly contagious. Symptoms include: Runny nose, decrease in appetite, coughing, sneezing, fever, wheezing.

,If your child has HFM they will not be permitted to return to school until they are fever free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication.

HEALTH & SAFETY CONTINUED

Bethany Lutheran Preschool is focused on ensuring the safety and well-being of all employees and children. To promote infection control and mitigate risks, the following policies are in effect for all.

● PARKING LOT SAFETY

For the safety of children and parents, please drive slowly and enter the parking lot by driving towards the rear of the lot. A diagram has been provided for you below.

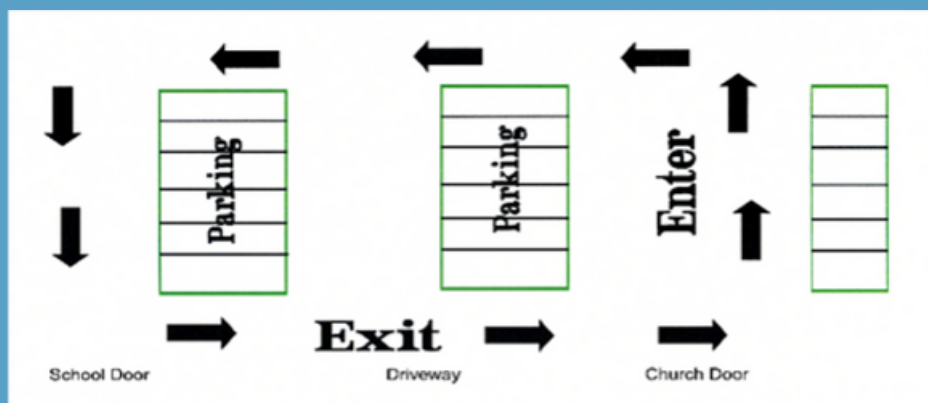
According to the Commonwealth of Virginia, leaving a young child unattended in a vehicle for any length of time is considered abandonment.

DROP OFF HOURS

Preschool & Kindergarten drop-off begins at 8:55 a.m

First grade drop-off begins at 7:55 a.m.

Please escort your child to their classroom door.





ARRIVAL

Our Preschool hours are 9am-1pm, Kindergarten hours are from 9am -2:30pm, and First grade hours are from 8am-2:30pm. Parents will pick-up and drop-off students at their classroom door. School doors will remain locked at all times (outside of pick-up and drop-off). School administration will monitor doors during unlocked time frames.

Elementary Families: If your student is more than 15 minutes late to class, they will be considered tardy. 4 tardies equal 1 absence. If a student has 9 or more unexcused absences during the school year, they will not be eligible to move on to the next grade level.

DISMISSAL

Children must be picked up no later than 10 minutes after their scheduled dismissal time. Charges for a late pick up are as follows:

- ◆\$15.00 for every 15 minutes after dismissal.
- ◆\$30/half hour or any part of the half hour after the first 10 minutes.

According to state guidelines, children whose parents/guardians are one-half hour late and have not communicated with the preschool are considered abandoned. Virginia law requires schools to report the event to Child Protective Services.

Students will only be released to a guardian or to an adult who has been approved for pick-up. If your child will be picked up by someone NOT listed on their emergency contact form, please let the office know. This person will be required to provide identification upon arrival.



ENRICHMENT CLASSES

Enrichment classes are an opportunity for students to play and socialize with a variety of Bethany friends, learn a sport, or explore other activities. Offerings have included martial arts, cooking classes, soccer, sculpting, yoga, etc.

Children must be between the ages of 3 - 6 years old and bathroom independent.

Fees for enrichment classes are separate of tuition.

When in session, all after-school activities are 1:00 - 1:45 p.m.



WEATHER POLICY

When Fairfax County Schools (K - 12) close due to inclement weather, BLPS closes.

District closings are announced on local radio and television stations.

Bethany Lutheran will also notify parents via mobile text alerts using our Brightwheel system. Messages will go to the email addresses and/or phone numbers on your Brightwheel file.

DELAYED START

Any late openings (delay start) for FCPS will delay the opening of all Preschool and Elementary programs to 10:00 a.m. Dismissal will be at the regularly scheduled time. All before- school activities will be closed.

EARLY RELEASE

If FCPS closes early due to any emergency, all after-school activities will be cancelled and pick up will begin at 12:00 p.m.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Crisis plans and emergency preparedness have unfortunately become a way of life. In the event that Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) declares Emergency Preparedness mode, Bethany Lutheran Preschool will act as follows:

- In the event that FCPS emergency plans go into effect before the start of our school day, Bethany Lutheran Preschool will be closed.
- If FCPS emergency plans go into effect during our school day, children will be kept indoors in a safe, secure environment.
- Parents or a designated adult are expected to pick up their child as soon as possible, unless instructed otherwise.
- A staff person will remain with children until all children are united with a family member or designated adult.
- We will communicate via BRIGHTWHEEL mobile text alert.

In the event that an emergency or unsafe condition occurs at the school (which may cause us to close the building), children will be escorted away from the building in fire drill fashion. All classes will assemble at the furthest end of the parking lot. Families will be contacted via BRIGHTWHEEL mobile text alert, informing them to pick up their children. Children will be kept safe and secure with a staff member until a guardian arrives.

It is important that parents keep their child's emergency information up to date. Please notify the preschool office of any changes in phone numbers, address, or persons with permission to pick up their child, as well as any changes in medical information.

REGULATORY INFORMATION

Virginia State Law Section 63.1 - 196.3 of the Code of Virginia, allows preschools operated by religious institutions the opportunity to file for an exemption from license by meeting documentation and other requirements specified within the exemption law. The statements below have been prepared and distributed to meet requirements of the exemption law.

- The maximum number of children the preschool can have at any time is 80.
- BLPS is located at 2501 Beacon Hill Road, Alexandria, VA. There is more than 3,084 square feet of school space. The enclosed playground is beside the school and contains swings, slides, and preschool size playground units. The kitchen is made available for our use. However, we DO NOT provide food services.
- All staff are certified by a physician to be free from any disability which would prevent them from caring for children. A negative tuberculin skin test is also required.
- All staff are required to pass a criminal record check.
- Staff qualifications: The preschool director interviews prospective staff members and makes preliminary hiring recommendations. Final approval for selection must be decided by the Board of Christian Education of Bethany Lutheran Church.

Qualifications for Lead Teachers include:

- (1) A degree in education OR early childhood education course work.
- (2) Experience with preschool children.
- (3) The ability to plan daily and long range activities for preschool children in Christian environment.
- (4) A tender, caring concern for children.
- (5) A strong desire to work with preschool children.
- (6) An effective ability to interact with adults and children.
- (7) Christian by faith affirmation and example. Members of Bethany Lutheran Church have preference over other applicants if they have equal capabilities in all other areas.

Teaching Assistants are expected to meet the above qualifications for teachers except numbers (1) and (3).

Bethany Lutheran Church and Preschool is covered by Public Liability Insurance through Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company, Fort Wayne, Indiana. The agent is National Church Group Insurance Agency, Falls Church, Virginia.



YOUR JOURNEY HAS BEGUN

Let's Grow Together

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