

Mars Hill Church Preschool

-PARENT HANDBOOK- 2024/2025



Mars Hill Church Preschool

3385 Mars Hill Road • Acworth, GA 30101
(404) 435-7959

www.mhchurch.com/mhchurch/preschool

Dr. Bryant Harris: Pastor
Jessica Pehel: Preschool Director
mhcp3385@gmail.com

Table of Contents

Purpose	3
Objectives	3
Sponsorship and Administration	3
Enrollment Policy	4
Registration Procedures	4
Registration and Tuition Fees	5
Late and Returned Check Fees	6
Withdrawal From the Program	6
Scholarship Fund	6
Fees	7
Custodial Rights Policy	8
Confidentiality	8
Office Hours	8
Health Reminders	9
Coronavirus Procedures	10
Emergency Medical Procedures	11
Toilet Training	11
Insurance	12
Conferences/Assessments	12
Classroom Visitation/Parent Volunteers	12
Arrival and Pick-Up	12
Absences	13
Emergency Pick-Up	14
Visitors	14
Birthdays	14
Parties	14
Book Bags and Clothing	15
Communication	16
Biting	16
Discipline	17
Security and Toy Items	17
Separation Anxiety	17
Snacks	17
Lunch Bunch	18
Inclement Weather Days and School Calendar	18
Safety Plan	19
Things to Remember	19

PURPOSE

Mars Hill Church Preschool, hereinafter referred to as the Preschool, in response to the needs of the church and community, is committed to quality education in a loving Christian setting for children ages 24 months to 5 years old.

OBJECTIVES

1. To provide a positive, safe, happy environment where a child will be able to experience success.
2. To provide hands-on learning with a Bible/theme-based curriculum through art, music, creative play, Bible stories and verses.
3. To build skills for kindergarten readiness.
4. To satisfy a child's need to find out, need to belong, and need to feel secure in God's plan for us.
5. To foster the vision/mission of Mars Hill Church by:
 - a) Bringing people in our community to Jesus through their children.
 - b) Educating children about God's love.
 - c) Ministering to our church and community through the children's programs.
 - d) Having our children spread the good news of Jesus Christ to the community.
 - e) Having our children worship together with their families and community.

SPONSORSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

The preschool is operated, maintained and governed by Mars Hill Presbyterian Church. The Preschool Board administers general oversight of the Preschool. The Preschool Board consists of the Pastor and/or Assistant Pastor, a representative from the Session, a representative from the GROW team, the Preschool Director (herein after referred to as the Director) and three at-large congregational members. The congregational members represent the Chairperson, Secretary and Treasurer.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

The Preschool is open to all children in the community ages twenty-four months through four years of age by September 1st of the school year. A birth certificate is needed for classroom placement. Enrollment is on a first come, first serve basis with the following considerations taken into account:

- 1) priority will be given to families already participating in the program
- 2) second priority will be given to Mars Hill Presbyterian Church congregation members
- 3) third priority will be given to the community in general

The Preschool admits students of any race, color, nationality and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarships, athletic and other school-administered programs.

Upon enrollment, families need to recognize that this is a Christian based program and both the New and Old Testaments of the Bible will be used in our lessons and activities.

In the event there is insufficient enrollment to keep a class open, the parents will be given a two-week notice and given the option of placement in another class provided there is an age-appropriate available opening. If no opening exists, the parents will have the option of being placed on a preferred waiting list for the next available opening or having the registration fee refunded.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Registration forms are available from the Preschool office or online. In order to be admitted into the Preschool, each child must have a completed set of forms on file including, but not limited to:

- 1) Registration form- including emergency release information and permission to release the child
- 2) Child's Health Record form- including emergency medical care and insurance information

- 3) GA Form 3231 (immunization record, must be this exact form from the state of Georgia)
- 4) Birth Certificate
- 5) Release Form- including Parent Handbook Agreement, Student Directory Agreement, Permission to Photograph Form and Notice of State License Exempt Form, financial commitment, and assumption of risk

You have 30 days from date of enrollment to produce the Form 3231 issued by the State of Georgia.

If space is available, the child will be enrolled and placed in the appropriate class when the parent/guardian pays:

- 1) The non-refundable registration fees
- 2) First month's tuition (refundable with 30 days written notice)

If there are no vacancies, the child will be placed on a waiting list, and the parent/guardian will be notified as space becomes available.

REGISTRATION AND TUITION FEES

A Registration Fee is due at the time of registration and is non-refundable. Fees cover: classroom supplies to start the school year, insurance, equipment and teacher training, and cleaning supplies. Also due at the time of registration is the first month's tuition; this payment is refundable with a 30-day written notice.

Tuition is a yearly amount and may be paid in full or in **ten equal monthly payments**. Checks should be made payable to Mars Hill Church Preschool, cash, or paid online at <https://mars-hill-church-preschool.square.site/>, a small fee will be added to an online payment.

If you choose the ten equal payments option, your **first payment is due at the time of registration**. For every month thereafter, tuition is due by the **1st of each month**, starting September 1st and ending May 1st. Because tuition is an annual fee, no refunds are given for illness, vacations, inclement weather days, or quarantine.

LATE PAYMENT AND RETURNED CHECK FEES

After the 7th day of each month, if you have not paid your tuition payment, you will be charged a late fee of \$20 and your child will not be permitted to return to school until tuition is paid for the month. Failure to repeatedly pay tuition in a timely manner will result in your child being dismissed from the preschool.

All returned checks will be charged a \$12.50 fee.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

If the need arises to withdraw your child from our program, a 30-day written notice or one month's tuition is required.

SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Scholarship funds are available for those students who qualify on the basis of need. Applications may be obtained from the Director.

General guidelines are as follows:

1. Scholarships are available to all students.
2. Scholarships are considered on the basis of need and are available for a portion of the yearly tuition.
3. The names of the scholarship applicants and recipients are confidential.
4. Scholarships depend on the availability of funds. Funds are limited.
5. The applicant must submit an application to the Director for consideration by the Preschool Board.
6. Scholarships are not given in exchange for services.

FEES

Classes	Size & Ratio	Days	Tuition	Registration	Hours
2's 24-35 months	10 children 2 teachers per class	Monday/ Wednesday or Tuesday/ Thursday	\$195/ month x 10	\$195	9:00am- 12:00pm
3A 3 years	12 children 2 teachers	Monday- Thursday	\$250/ month x 10	\$250	9:00am- 1:00pm
3B 3 years	12 children 2 teachers	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday	\$225/ month x 10	\$225	9:00am- 1:00pm
PreK 4 years	12 children 2 teachers	Monday- Thursday	\$250/ month x 10	\$250	9:00am- 1:00pm

Class placement is based on the child's age on September 1st of the school year for which he/she is enrolling.

A non-refundable Registration Fee will hold your class spot and is due at the time of registration. If you choose the 10 equal payments option for your yearly tuition payments, the first month's tuition is also due at the time of registration. For every month thereafter, tuition is due by the 1st of the month, starting August 1st and ending May 1st. Payments not received by the 7th of each month are late and will be charged a \$20 fee.

If you choose to pay for the year in full, it may be paid on August 1st. A discount of \$100 is given to all families that pay the yearly tuition in full.

Discounts:

- Pay for the year in full at registration or by August 1st and receive \$100 discount from the yearly cost.
- Enroll more than one child during the same calendar year and receive \$10 off of each child's monthly payment (\$100 from total tuition if paying for the year in full).
- Enroll more than one child during the same calendar year and pay only the registration fee for your oldest child.

CUSTODIAL RIGHTS POLICY

In the event that a student at the Preschool has custody arrangements involving a court order, one or both of the following conditions must be met:

1. Copies of legal court documents establishing the custodial rights of the parent or guardian must be submitted to the Director
2. Copies of legal court documentation denying custodial rights to a parent must be submitted to the Director.

In cases where custody to a parent is denied, we will be unable to uphold a verbal or written request that has not been ordered by a judge. Legal documentation must be presented to the Director.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Children's records are open only to the child's teachers, the Director, and the child's parent(s) or legal guardian. Any request for a copy of the child's records must be made in writing and signed by the parent or legal guardian.

OFFICE HOURS

The Preschool office will be open from 8:30am until 1:30pm, Monday through Thursday. Any messages received after 1:30pm will be held until the next school day. You may contact the director at 404-435-7959, private message on ClassDojo or email at; mhcp3385@gmail.com.

HEALTH REMINDERS

Preschool is a place for a well child; sick or recuperating children cannot enjoy themselves and have a potential for spreading illness to other children. Please work together with us in keeping all staff and students healthy and keep a sick child at home.

Do not bring your child to school if he/she has had any of these symptoms *within the last 24 hours*:

- Diarrhea
- Temperature above 100.4 degrees F
- Rash or open lesion
- Serious chest congestion, cough, or other respiratory symptoms
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Discharge from the eyes
- Green or yellow discharge from the nose
- Vomiting
- Head lice
- At least 2 of the following: chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, loss of taste or smell

If your child becomes sick at school, you will be notified immediately and your child will be isolated and monitored by a staff member until someone can come get them. The school needs to have a phone number for the parents/guardians and at least one other authorized person at all times; we need to be able to reach someone when we call these numbers.

If your child develops a communicable disease, please notify the Director immediately. Your child will not be allowed to return to preschool until the period of contagion has passed. Communicable diseases include but are not limited to: COVID, Strep Throat, Viral Diarrhea, Chicken Pox, Measles, Mumps, Pertussis, Meningitis, Rosella, RSV, Hand Foot & Mouth, Hepatitis A, Fifth Disease, Ringworm, Pinkeye, Impetigo and Scabies. In some cases, a doctor's note may be required.

It is the policy of the preschool not to administer over the counter medication. Please make arrangements to give any medications to your child before or after school. If your child must have medication during school hours, please let the Director know. You will need to complete a form giving permission to administer the medication. This form includes the date, length of authorization to administer the medication, and instructions regarding dosage. The medicine will need to be in the original prescription bottle and include the original prescription from the physician on it. Do not leave medication in your child's bag; all medication must be delivered to the Director by the parent/guardian. You will also be required to sign a hold harmless agreement.

If an inhaler or EpiPen is necessary, you will need to complete the authorization to administer medication form, and we will need a copy of the original prescription. The inhaler and/or EpiPen will need to be left at school in a secure location that the teacher chooses.

Coronavirus Procedures

COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person contact. Mars Hill Church Preschool has put in place preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19; however, the Preschool cannot guarantee that you or your child(ren) will not become infected with COVID-19.

Every parent/guardian will need to sign an assumption of risk voluntarily agreeing to and acknowledging the contagious nature of COVID-19. There is a risk that your child(ren) may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 by attending the Mars Hill Church Preschool. We need your help in complying with all set procedures to reduce the spread while your child(ren) attends Mars Hill Church Preschool.

Things we ask you to look for:

1. Do you or do any of the children you are dropping off have a fever* (*please do not give them medicine before they come to cover a fever*) cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, other respiratory symptoms, or at least two of the following symptoms: chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell?
2. Have you/family or any of the children you are dropping off:
 - Had any of these symptoms since last time you were here?
 - Been in contact with anyone with these symptoms since the last time you were here?
 - Potentially been exposed** to COVID-19 or have reason to believe you/they have COVID-19?

If your answer is YES to any of the above questions, please do not send your child to school. If anyone in your family tests positive for COVID-19 please contact us and let us know.

If Covid-19 is present within a Mars Hill Church Preschool class we will dismiss students from the class for 5 days. This dismissal allows time for all close contacts to quarantine and see if they develop symptoms. Protocol is to wear a mask for 5 days if exposed and at this age children cannot properly wear a mask for the entirety of the school day. We will continue to monitor CDC guidelines and update as needed.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURES

Every precaution is taken to keep the children safe and well at school. Parents must sign an Emergency Release Form in order for us to provide your child optimum care while at school. The school will make every reasonable effort to contact a parent and the physician named on the Emergency Release Form. In the event an injury or illness does not appear serious, but medical treatment is deemed necessary, the school and/or hospital to which the child is transported will give necessary emergency treatment. In the event an injury or illness appears serious and medical treatment is deemed necessary, paramedics will be contacted immediately. The paramedics will decide whether they can administer treatment at the school or whether the child should be taken to the nearest hospital for emergency care. A Mars Hill Church Preschool staff member will accompany your child. Should this be necessary, the paramedics and/or hospital to which the child is taken will give emergency treatment.

TOILET TRAINING

We recognize that all children progress differently and may not be toilet trained by age three. While we do not require toilet training for admittance to our 3-year-old program, the child will not be changed unless he/she experiences a bowel movement or has soiled his/her clothes. Therefore, children should be dressed appropriately. 3-year-old students who are not potty trained must wear a Pull-Up with Velcro sides; no diapers. Underwear may only be worn by children who are fully potty trained. The preschool reserves the right to require Pull-Ups with Velcro sides for 3-year-old students. **All 4-year-old children (Pre-k class) must be fully toilet trained.**

INSURANCE

Each child enrolled as a student at the Preschool is covered by a health and accident insurance program. The cost is included in the registration fee. The church maintains liability insurance.

CONFERENCES/ASSESSMENTS

Open, honest communication is a key to any successful relationship. A parent-teacher conference can be arranged as a phone conference, an in-person meeting, or by written report. Morning and afternoon car line are not appropriate times for you to speak with your child's teacher about classroom or individual issues. If you need to speak with your child's teacher before or after school, you should call the preschool between the hours of 8:30-9:00am or 1:10-1:30pm or email your child's teacher or the Director. If you need to meet with a teacher, you can set up an appointment during these times.

Mid-year and end of year assessments will be completed by teachers for 3-year-old and PreK classes.

CLASSROOM VISITATION/VOLUNTEER

We allow visitors into the preschool; we do require that you schedule your visit ahead of time with the classroom teacher or director. This is a time to observe your child, but not to discuss your child with the teacher. All parents are welcomed as volunteers in each classroom. Please contact your child's teacher with regard to their classroom procedures for parent volunteers.

ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP

Arrival is from 9:00 - 9:15am every day. When dropping off your child, teachers will be in front of the school to assist getting your child out of the car. We ask that you remain in your car to facilitate a smooth flow. We will begin car line at 9:00 and end at 9:15. Should you arrive late, there is a doorbell on the front lobby door, ring the doorbell and a staff member will come to get your child and take them to their class. You or the staff member will need to sign your child in. Please

be on time. Remember it is your child who misses out on activities when you are late, and **lateness is disruptive to the entire class.**

PICK-UP time will begin at 11:50 am in front of the school for the 2's class; car line for Lunch Bunch, 3's and PreK classes will begin at 12:50pm.

The number card that we will provide to you should be hung from your rear-view mirror. (A child's pant hanger works great for this.) We will seat your child in your car using the number system that we have; this system is set up for your child's protection.

If you need for someone else to pick up your child, you must provide written notice to the Director.

Once your child is in the car, we ask that you pull over in the main parking lot to buckle your child. For legal reasons, we will not be able to secure your child into his or her seat. PLEASE PULL AHEAD TO THE MAIN PARKING LOT TO BUCKLE YOUR CHILD. Do not get out of your car or buckle your child in front of the school.

After 12:15pm, a late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged for students in the 2's classes. After 1:15pm, a late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed for Lunch Bunch, 3's and PreK students. If someone is habitually late, the child will be dismissed from the program.

If you know in advance that you will be picking up your child early, please let the teacher know so that she can prepare your child for an early departure.

If someone other than the parent/guardian picks up your child, a written note is required to release your child to that person if he/she is not on your list; please give the note to your child's teacher ahead of time. We will check photo ID before releasing a child to someone other than the parent/guardian.

ABSENCES

If your child is going to be absent from school, please call the school and or email/message the teacher or director to notify them that your child will be out. The teacher/director will be in contact with you if we have not received a message and your child is out for more than 2 days.

EMERGENCY PICK-UP

In the case of an emergency where you are not able to pick up your child, please contact the Director as soon as possible to furnish the name of the person picking up your child, if at all possible. Without contact from the parent/guardian, we will not release a child to anyone not on the approved list. We will check photo ID before releasing a child to anyone other than the parent/guardian.

VISITORS

All visitors must check in with the Director in the preschool office prior to admittance to any classrooms. If you are dropping your child off late, drop-off will be at the lobby where a teacher or staff will walk your child to the classroom.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are a fun time at school for the children. If you would like to send in a special treat, please talk with your child's teacher to determine if there are any food allergies involved and to make arrangements. The special birthday treat takes the place of their normal snack. Please do not exchange presents or pass out party invitations in school. We also ask that you do not send in balloons, flowers or stuffed animals; this is a distraction to the class.

PARTIES

Our preschool celebrates some holidays and special events with class parties throughout the school year. If you work outside the home and cannot attend the party, please volunteer to send in refreshments or another item as needed. We encourage parent involvement with our celebrations throughout the year.

We encourage, but do not require that you leave other siblings at home so your preschool child can have your full attention.

BOOK BAGS AND CLOTHING

Your child will need to bring a bag to school that is large enough to contain a change of clothing (kept in a labeled Zip-Loc bag), artwork, folders, lunchbox and water bottle. We highly recommend the bag to be tote bag style with an open top. The child should be able to easily manage this bag.

The Preschool has canvas tote bags available for purchase at a reasonable price, \$7 per bag or \$15 for the bag and first name embroidered on it.

Please label all of your child's belongings (tote bag, jackets, sweaters, lunchboxes, etc.). **Be sure to go through your child's bag with them each day** to see what they have been doing, as well as to look for notes from the staff. Do not let your child bring toys to school unless it is a designated day on your child's classroom calendar.

Young children are very active, both in playing outside and experimenting with art and science projects. Their dress should allow for running, jumping, climbing, painting, potty time and general messiness. Also, remember to dress your child appropriately for outside weather. The children go outside during the school day and need proper garments.

Tennis shoes and socks are the best footwear and highly encouraged; cowboy boots, Crocs, and flip-flops aren't practical for school or playing outside on the playground. Please tie shoelaces twice for security.

Children may not wear costumes, capes or hats to school unless it is a designated dress-up day. Hats may only be worn outside on the playground. Sunscreen must be applied at home before coming to school; we will not be able to apply it at school.

Please remember to always have a complete change of season appropriate clothing kept in a labeled Zip-Loc bag in your child's school bag (including underwear and socks) in case of an accident. Make sure all clothing is labeled with your child's name.

If your child wears diapers, please have an adequate number of diapers in their bag each day.

COMMUNICATION

Newsletter: Each month you will receive a newsletter via email/ClassDojo to keep you informed of scheduled events and activities.

ClassDojo: Teachers and administration use ClassDojo as the main communication platform to inform parents and communicate important information to parents and to share pictures. **This is our primary form of communication** and it is a private platform that only our school/parents can see. To get connected to the school through the site you will be sent an invite shortly before school begins to join your child's class.

Monthly Calendar: At the beginning of each month, you will receive a paper copy of the monthly calendar in your child's folder. This calendar will list both school-wide dates and dates specific to your child's class.

Facebook: We will post special dates and announcements on our Facebook page. www.facebook.com/marhillchurchpreschool.

Church Website: There is detailed information about the preschool at www.mhchurch.com/marhill/preschool.

BITING

Children bite for a number of reasons. When this occurs, it is frustrating for all involved. We will deal with this issue on an individual basis, with discipline occurring in the classroom. If it reoccurs frequently, the biting child may be asked to leave the program. Please understand that we have a commitment to all families to work out the best solution for all of the children involved.

DISCIPLINE

We will allow the children the opportunity to resolve conflicts with as little adult direction as possible. The staff will always use positive reinforcement and never corporal punishment. When the need arises, we will take the following course of action:

1. Discipline the behavior, not the child.
2. Discuss the situation with the children involved.
3. Take time out away from the situation (no more than one-minute for every year old).
4. Parental contact, if necessary.

SECURITY AND TOY ITEMS

Children in the preschool age group may be attached to a "blankie", stuffed animal or other security item. If this is something your child needs, please label your child's security item and inform the teacher about it. All other toys should be left at home unless you have cleared them with the teacher first.

SEPARATION ANXIETY

We are aware that children often cry at first, but usually by the time you have left the parking lot, they have become interested in what's going on in the classroom and have stopped crying. If a child is indeed very upset and continues to cry and disrupt the class, we will call the parent to come get the child. If after a few weeks the child is still very upset over separation from the parents, we reserve the right to make a decision concerning the child's enrollment. Sometimes a little one is just not yet ready for school at such a tender age.

SNACKS

Each student will be responsible to bring his/her own daily snack. We will provide a canvas snack bag that will go to and from school each day. We ask that you provide a healthy snack of fruit, crackers, cheese etc.

Please let us know if your child has any dietary restrictions. If your child suffers from a severe food allergy, special forms must be filled out and posted in the

preschool office as well as the classroom. It is up to the parents to notify the preschool of your child's allergies.

LUNCH BUNCH (2-year-old class only)

If you elect to have your child participate in Lunch Bunch, (2-year-old). You will have the option to purchase a prepaid lunch bunch card. (4 lunches - \$28 or 8 lunches -\$56)

You must provide a packed lunch for your child, and it needs to be foods they would normally eat during lunch. We are unable to heat food items in the microwave, so please do not send things that require heating. Also, please do not send foods that are a choking hazard. (ie., whole grapes, hot dogs, whole cherry tomatoes, peanuts) Pick-up from lunch bunch is at 1:00pm in car line. Late fees will be assessed as stated previously in the handbook.

INCLEMENT WEATHER DAYS AND SCHOOL CALENDAR

In general, we follow the Cobb County School schedule; there are a few differences.

Our first day of school will be Thursday, August 12, 2024, and our last day will be Wednesday, May 14, 2025.

The last day before Christmas Break will be Thursday, December 19, 2024 and we will return Monday, January 6, 2025.

For inclement weather days, listen to the radio or television; if Cobb Schools are closed or delayed 2 hours or more, *we will be closed*. If Cobb Schools are delayed 1 hour, we will start school at 10am. You may also check the preschool Facebook or ClassDojo for updates. *We will not make up canceled days*.


If there are any closures or changes from virtual/face to face learning within the Cobb County School District, this will not affect Mars Hill Church Preschool. If this should occur, we will step away from following the Cobb County School district and the Mars Hill Preschool School board will decide our next steps.

SAFETY PLAN

1. All visitors, including parents, must sign in at the Preschool office and sign out when they leave.
2. The hall doors to enter the classroom areas and double doors to enter the multi-purpose room will remain locked during school hours. All other doors leading out of the building will be locked from the outside.
3. The parent/guardian will need to contact the school if someone other than he/she will be picking up the child. Photo ID will be checked before the child will be sent home with someone other than the parent/guardian.
4. All staff must pass a criminal background check.
5. Teachers receive training in CPR, First Aid and Emergency Preparedness.
6. We will conduct a once-a-month fire drill.
7. We will practice tornado, severe weather, and emergency procedures (intruder drill).
8. In case of an emergency that requires evacuation from the premises, our students will be walked to the main sanctuary where a parent or guardian can pick them up.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- See that your child attends preschool regularly and arrives on time. Parents who practice punctuality help our program and are setting a good example for their children.
- Make sure you check your child's tote bag daily; a lot of very important communication comes home in your child's bag.
- NO CELL PHONES during car line!
- Always be positive about this new experience for your child. Assure them that we will take care of their needs at school. Children have a way of picking up on negative feelings.

TRAIN UP a CHILD
in THE WAY he SHOULD GO;
 even when HE IS OLD
he WILL NOT DEPART from it.
PROVERBS 22:6