

# CATCH THE SON PRESCHOOL

A Ministry of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church



## PARENT HANDBOOK 2024-2025

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# WELCOME & ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

## WELCOME TO CATCH THE SON PRESCHOOL

Catch the Son was started at Christ the Servant Lutheran Church in 1985 to meet the needs of young families in our community and to provide a quality early learning program for young children. It was modeled after the cooperative school programs found throughout the county. We believe that parents are their child's first and best teacher; therefore, we encourage and welcome parent involvement in the school.

When Catch the Son opened, there was one teacher and 12 students who met twice a week. Today, five teachers, a classroom aide, and 62 children meet in five different classes. These classes meet a total of five mornings a week.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Catch the Son Preschool is an outreach ministry of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church providing the community with a quality early learning education program, nurturing Christian faith and values.

## VISION AND VALUES

Catch the Son Preschool is a cooperative Christian-based early learning program. It is an extension of the Christian education ministry of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church that reflects the church's desire to serve the spiritual and educational needs of families in the community. Catch the Son teachers and parents work hand in hand to create a rich, meaningful environment where social, emotional, cognitive, physical, creative and spiritual growth are developed and nurtured.

Catch the Son Preschool's curriculum, policies, and procedures reflect the following values:

- A. Each child is a unique creation to be honored and respected.
- B. Families are a child's first teacher; family member's gifts of time, talents and energy are fully appreciated and utilized in creating a supportive family network.
- C. Teachers, Catch the Son staff, and Pastoral staff are valued, celebrated and encouraged to grow as professionals and role models.
- D. Our program emerges from the interests and needs of the children. The curriculum is child-centered rather than teacher-directed.
- E. Young children learn best through play and constructing their own knowledge. Therefore, children will explore through authentic, hands-on experiences in all subject areas:
  - . Literacy
  - . Math
  - . Science
  - . Social Studies and Interpersonal Skills
  - . Art
  - . Music
  - . Drama
  - . Physical Fitness and Health
  - . Spirituality
- F. Faith and values are caught and taught when teachers, staff, parents, and children work collaboratively in an environment reflective of God's love. These are reflected in:
  - . Day-to-day relationships
  - . Studying and exploring spiritual growth and commitment
- G. Parent education facilitates spiritual and educational growth in families as well as the community and is supported by Catch the Son Preschool.

## NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Catch the Son Preschool admits students of any race, color, national 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, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school administered programs.

## **PRESCHOOL EXECUTIVE TEAM (PET)**

The Preschool Executive Team is responsible for the overall management and operation of the school and is accountable to Christ the Servant Lutheran Church through the Congregation Council.

The Preschool Executive Team consists of the Preschool Administrator, Lead Teacher, Church Council Rep, and CTS Pastor. They meet monthly and have specific responsibility for the following areas:

- Financial Operations of the school including tuition, registration fees, budget and expenditure of funds.
- admission and enrollment policies
- Scholarship requests and disbursement of scholarship funds
- Teacher continuing education and curriculum development support
- Risk management issues including insurance certification and background checks

2024-2025 Preschool Executive Team

Nicole Pridachuk, Preschool Administrator -- info@catchtheson.org

Dana Evans, Lead Teacher -- devans3025@comcast.net

Pastor Jana Schofield -- pastorjana@ctslutheran.org

## **PRESCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR**

The Preschool Administrator is a paid staff person that provides continuity for the preschool organization and a strong link to Christ the Servant Lutheran Church. The person in this position is accountable to the Preschool Executive Team and Christ the Servant Lutheran Church through the Congregation Council.

The Preschool Administrator is responsible for the following areas:

- Registration
- Parent Communication
- Parent Advisory Team Liaison
- Publicity
- Scholarship Requests
- Maintaining Documents
- Tracking tuition and other payments
- Liaison with Christ the Servant Lutheran Church regarding: Finances, Facilities Use, and Church Communications.

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES & SCHOOL INFORMATION**

### **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Catch the Son is a cooperative school that depends on the support and participation of parents. It is our hope that parents who choose Catch the Son have done so because it is a cooperative school and they wish to have an active role in their child's early learning education.

By functioning as a cooperative school, Catch the Son is able to offer a quality early education program at affordable tuition rates. Your Cooperative Parent Responsibilities include:

1. Work as a Parent Helper in your child's class the designated number of days each month, as directed by your Class Scheduler. Other children should not be brought with you when it is your turn to be a Parent Helper in your child's classroom (babies ok until mobile).
2. Fulfill your Parent Job assignment during the school year. (Parents pick from a list sent during the summer.)
3. Participate in the End-of-Year Clean or Playground Work Party.
4. Participate in Fundraising. We do fundraising events throughout the year to supplement our budget as tuition does not cover all school expenses. There is no minimum fundraising requirement but we do expect all families to support our fundraising efforts.
5. Attend Parent/Teacher Meetings and stay informed through newsletters, emails and other communication pieces. Parent/Teacher Meetings will be scheduled three times a year. During these meetings, teachers will meet with class parents in order to provide specific information on what is happening in the classroom. This is a great way to keep the lines of communication open and build community within our cooperative school.

In the event the above outlined volunteer responsibilities are not being met, the procedure outlined below will be followed:

1. 1st offense--a written email from the administrator, classroom teacher will be copied on the email
2. 2nd offense--a meeting with the administrator and classroom teacher followed with an email summarizing the meeting
3. 3rd offense--removal from the program

## **FUNDRAISING**

While there is no specific fundraising requirement, we encourage all families to participate in fundraisers as they are able. Tuition alone does not fully fund our yearly budgeted expenses. In addition, proceeds from fundraisers help fund classroom supplies, all-school equipment, field trip expenses, and scholarships.

## **DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

When dropping-off, children must be checked-in by a parent or authorized adult using the Brightwheel application. You will scan the QR code upon arrival and check your child in. Each class will have a designated drop-off and pick-up door. Parents do not enter the building unless they are parent helpers for the day.

All contact information needs to be kept up to date in the Brightwheel application since this is what teachers will be using to contact you in the event of an emergency. You can select whether or not a contact in Brightwheel is authorized to pick-up your child. The parent or authorized adult must note if someone different is picking up the child and communicate this to the child's teacher.

Teachers keep a file for each child with the names, addresses and telephone numbers of adults who are permitted to drop off or pick up. If someone other than a parent arrives to pick up a child and the teacher has not been informed and the person's name is not in the child's file, we cannot allow the child to leave with that person. Please keep your "authorized to pick up file" current.

In order for children to participate in all the planned activities for the day, it is in the child's best interest to arrive on time for class. Please do not bring your child early to class (unless you are the parent helper) as that is teacher preparation time. If you are the parent helper, please arrive five minutes before the start of class.

It is very important that children be picked up on time. It is the responsibility of the Parent Helper to stay until the last child is picked up. Please respect fellow parents and teachers by being punctual at pick-up time.

Parents running unexpectedly late should send a text message or a BAND message to their classroom teacher. Parents who know they will be late picking up must make arrangements with another class parent to supervise their child until they arrive.

Please **DO NOT PARK** in the following areas:

- 1) Handicapped spaces
- 2) In front of the dumpster enclosure
- 3) In the cut out area directly in front of the school

## **BACKGROUND CHECKS**

Parents, grandparents, babysitters, or other adults, who will be working in the classroom as a Parent Helper or will be attending a class field trip, must have a background check run. This is a requirement of our insurance company. Catch the Son will pay for 2 background checks per family every 3 years. Families will be charged \$9.45 for any additional background checks. Parents were sent background check forms at the beginning of the year. Additional forms are in the forms holder in the hall.

## **SAFETY**

- Weapons of any kind must never be brought to school or school-related events including but not limited to off-site events such as field trips, family events and picnics. This includes but is not limited to real or toy guns, swords, knives, or explosives such as caps or fireworks.
- Children must receive permission from the teacher if they need to leave the classroom for the restroom, water, or to place items in their cubbies. Parent Helpers are to monitor children who leave the classroom to assure they return

promptly. Children will only be excused to the designated pick-up parent/authorized adult and are required to wait in the classroom until that person arrives.

## **BATHROOM POLICY**

### Hallway Bathrooms

- Children will let an adult (teacher or parent helper) know when they need to use the restroom.
- Teacher or parent helper walks the child to the restroom and checks that there is not an adult using the restroom.
- If there is not an adult using the restroom, the teacher or parent helper will remain outside of the bathroom to ensure that another adult does not enter the bathroom while a child is in there. If an adult enters the bathroom while the child is in there, the teacher or parent helper will go into the bathroom and wait outside of the stall the child is using.
- If there is an adult using the restroom, have the child wait. If the child cannot wait, have the child use the women's restroom with a teacher or parent helper waiting outside of the stall the child is using.
- The teacher or parent helper will escort the child back to the classroom.

### Playgroup/3-Day Preschool Classroom (private restroom in room across the hall)

- Children are encouraged to use the restroom independently but supported as needed.
- Playgroup Only – Parent Helper changes diapers
  - A second adult needs to be present

### When a Child Needs Assistance in the Bathroom

- Try to walk the child through the appropriate steps first
- If the child still needs assistance (ie wiping, clothing, etc) a second adult needs to be present

## **CAR SEATS & BOOSTER SEATS**

Parents transporting children to and from Catch the Son on field trips must adhere to Washington State Child Restraint Laws. Children under 8 years of age or 4'9" must use a car seat or booster seat. Parents are required to install their own seats into the field trip vehicles. Any parent has a right to refuse to drive a child not properly restrained.

## **ILLNESS**

- **Catch the Son is not able to care for sick children. The school does not admit children with infectious diseases or any of the following symptoms:**
  - A cold less than 3 days old
  - An active runny nose
    - If your child has known allergies, please make sure this is listed in your child's Brightwheel profile and speak with your child's classroom teacher. Documentation may be required.
  - Red throat, swollen glands
  - Fever (must be fever-free, without the use of fever-reducing medications, for at least 24 hours before returning to school)
  - Unexplained rash or skin eruption
  - Productive cough
  - Sore throat
  - Pink eye, eye discharge
  - Signs the child is not well such as drowsiness, headache, listlessness, diarrhea, vomiting, etc.
- **Students and parent helpers must be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to school.**

If a child becomes ill during school time, we will isolate the child in an area away from other children and have a Parent Helper supervise the child. Parents will be notified and will be asked to pick up their child as soon as possible.

## **RECESS**

Sometimes parents request that their child remain inside during recess. Although on rare occasions a child may need to stay inside (for example a child who is just back to school after a long illness), we generally ask that all children go out at recess for the fresh air and change of scenery. If a child is too ill with a cold or sore throat to bundle up and be outside for 20 minutes, then she/he should probably be at home. If the weather is too miserable for anyone to be outside, the appropriate activities will be conducted in the gym.

## **ACCIDENTS**

Care is taken to prevent injuries to children while attending school. Regular inspections are made of all equipment to ensure safety.

Any child injured while attending school will receive appropriate first aid by a teacher. (Teachers are required to maintain certification.) If the injury is more serious than school personnel are qualified to handle, they will call 911. If the injured child is moved to the hospital, a school representative will accompany the child. Parents will be notified immediately of any injury to the child more serious than minor cuts and scratches.

In the event of a child being injured, a staff member will fill out an accident report. This report is then placed in the child's folder, a copy given to the Administrator and a copy to the family of the child involved. All head incidents, even if no observable injury is present, are recorded on the form.

First Aid supplies are kept in the classrooms, in the main hall closet, on the playground and with the teacher whenever the class is not in the classroom.

## **ABUSE AND NEGLECT**

Any child who appears maltreated, neglected or otherwise abused will be referred to appropriate Child Protective Services (CPS) in the community.

"School personnel (including teachers, counselors, administrators, school nurses and child care personnel) are required by Washington State Law to report suspected incidents of abuse and neglect (RCW 26.44.030(1)). In doing so, they have a civil immunity under the law of good faith reporting. Failure to report can result in gross misdemeanor charge."

The teacher does not need to know the details of the possible abuse or be certain whether or not an indicator means abuse has taken place in order to report. The reporting law specifies reporting when you have 'reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse and neglect'. The severity of an indicator or statements by the child as to the non-accidental nature of the injury may indicate possible abuse.

Reporting:

- A report of possible child abuse or neglect to CPS must be made within 48 hours after there is reasonable cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect.
- Reports will be telephoned to CPS.
- The report will be made prior to contacting the child's family. It is the responsibility of the CPS worker to notify the family of referral, unless assistance in doing so is requested by CPS.

## **MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

Any medical condition and/or allergy that your child has, must be noted on the registration form and in your child's Brightwheel profile. Parents are to meet with the teacher about their child's chronic health condition (i.e. Allergy, Asthma, Diabetes, Physical Disability...) prior to the Parent Orientation meeting. The teacher and parents will formulate a plan regarding each individual child. Specific guidance will be given regarding the condition on a case by case basis. All appropriate release forms must be in the school file prior to the start of school.

If your child's allergies are severe enough to require immediate treatment with an EpiPen you are required to supply it to your child's teacher with a note authorizing treatment.

## **LICE POLICY**

If a child is found to have lice, parents will be called to pick up their child. Notification letters and treatment instructions will be sent home to all parents of CTS children. The child may not return to the classroom until they are treated and the nits are manually removed. There is no quick fix for the treatment of head lice. You must physically remove all the live lice and eggs. This is time consuming, but necessary to eliminate lice. Upon the child's return to school, he/she will be checked by a teacher (trained in checking for lice) in-private, prior to re-entering the classroom. The child will be rechecked in 10-14 days and a second treatment may be necessary. If two or more children in one classroom are found to have lice, they will be sent home as above and the entire class will be checked. If three or more children in three separate classrooms are found to have lice this is considered an outbreak and the entire school population will be checked. The

school must be notified if your child was identified as having lice outside the school as well. Catch the Son parents can then be notified to check the heads of their children.

## **DISCIPLINE**

When a student's behavior becomes disruptive or inappropriate, we will take corrective action. Our intent is not to punish a child for disobedience but to gain an understanding of the problem and provide assistance and/or consequences for the child. Our efforts are designed to help the child understand his/her behavior, learn new ways to be responsible and manage his/her behavior in order to make better choices in the future.

If inappropriate behavior continues, the teacher will meet with parents to try and solve the problem. In the event the teacher and parent are not able to resolve the situation, the matter may be referred to the Preschool Executive Team. Ultimately, the child may be asked to leave the school.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

Children entering Preschool or Pre-Kindergarten classes must be toilet trained. (does not include Playgroup class)

## **CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS**

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and tennis shoes. Daily activities include active and messy play without worrying about their clothes. Since children are encouraged to care for their own toileting needs, and are encouraged to dress themselves, fasteners should be easy to open and close.

## **SNACKS**

Childhood is the best time to develop sensible eating habits. Snacks are an important part of a well-balanced diet. For young children, snacks are especially important because their stomachs are small and they usually cannot eat enough in three meals to meet their energy needs or satisfy appetites. Within three hours after a meal, young children will usually be hungry. Foods eaten at snack time can often provide nutrients missing from the rest of the day's food.

Please be aware that many children today have food allergies. Parents are asked to provide snacks that are **NUT FREE**, due to the severity of some peanut and tree-nut allergies.

If your child has a food allergy be sure to notify your teacher. Because of the many people using the church facilities, we cannot guarantee that our building is 100% nut free. But teachers will work with parents to monitor any food brought into the classroom in an attempt to prevent exposure to allergens.

## **SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS**

**Birthdays:** We strongly suggest the accent be put on the happiness of the birthday, the special uniqueness of the birthday child and the growth and development the child has made over the past year.

Concentrate on **HOW** the snack is presented (cups, plates, napkins) not the actual snack. The snack can be special because your child has helped prepare it. Please discuss with your child's teacher any treat you wish to bring and when you may bring it. In consideration for the feelings and needs of our children, please do NOT send gifts or invitations for parties and get-togethers, etc. to school unless all the girls and boys in the class are invited.

**Other Celebrations:** including holidays, will be handled by the teacher. Parents may be asked to contribute items for classroom celebrations.

It is tradition at Catch the Son to allow costumes as part of the Harvest Celebration. However, it is up to the individual parent(s), whether or not to have your child participate. Costumes must follow Catch the Son guidelines in that they are non-violent and include no weapons.

## **ATTENDANCE/VACATION**

CTS requires parents to provide their child's teacher with notice of an extended absence (illness or vacation) of more than 2 days. If a child has missed more than 2 weeks of school and no explanation was provided, we will assume the parent has chosen to withdraw the child. Teachers and the Preschool Administrator will make every attempt to reach the family.

## COMMUNICATING CONCERNS

Catch the Son strives for working together in harmony and with the spirit of cooperation for our children. If problems or concerns arise, we ask you to address them through the following channels:

- Concerns raised by parents that relate to the teacher, should first be presented by the parent to the teacher.
- If resolution by the teacher is unsatisfactory to the parent, the parent may raise the concern with the Preschool Administrator.
- The Administrator may address the concern or may wish to seek the counsel of the Lead Teacher and the Preschool Executive Team.
- If the parent is not satisfied with the decision of the Preschool Administrator, the parent may appeal the decision to the Preschool Executive Team.
- The decision of the Preschool Executive Team shall be final. The Preschool Executive Team may choose to consult with the Christ the Servant Lutheran Church Council.

As drop off and pick up times are extremely busy, this is not the best time to have detailed discussions with the teacher. Your teacher will give you her contact information and let you know the best times to get in touch.

If you need to contact a teacher by phone during school hours, please leave a message with the church secretary at 360-733-1277. She will relay the message to your child's teacher.

## WAYS TO STAY INFORMED

- BAND App - Primary source of communication for your class
- Parent/Teacher Meetings
- Teacher Calendar
- Email - [info@catchtheson.org](mailto:info@catchtheson.org)
- Website - [www.catchtheson.org](http://www.catchtheson.org)

## SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

See color-coded calendar passed out at the beginning of the year and posted on the bulletin board in the hall.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER/SCHOOL CLOSURES

We will follow the Bellingham Public Schools (BPS), if they are closed, we are closed. If they are open and on time, so is Catch the Son. However, if BPS are on a delayed start schedule, classes at CTS will be canceled.

- Update to BPS Delayed Start - if BPS declares a late start, our Pre-K classes may still meet for a couple hours depending on the conditions of the roads. The preschool administrator and Pre-K teachers will make this determination and communicate with the impacted families.

School closure information will also be posted on our school website—usually by 7:00 am.

Classes canceled due to inclement weather (snow, flooding, power outage etc.) will be made up as follows.

- Catch the Son will make up missed school days for an individual class that has missed more than one week equivalent of school.
- These days will be made up during the school year, as the calendar allows, or following the current school year.
- The teacher will notify the parents of the make-up schedule which will be scheduled as either an additional school day, extended hours, or after school activity.

The safety of our families is our main concern. If BPS has declared that enough roads are unsafe to provide transportation, we will take our cue from them. While we realize this is an inconvenience to many families, we are confident this is the safest choice for our students.

## FINANCIAL & TUITION INFORMATION

CTS operates as a self-supporting ministry of Christ the Servant Lutheran Church. It is financed by your tuition payments and fundraisers held by parents during the school year. We depend on prompt payment of tuition in order to meet our expenses and to keep tuition rates as low as possible. Questions should be directed to our Preschool Administrator -- Nicole Pridachuk, [info@catchtheson.org](mailto:info@catchtheson.org) -- who collects and tracks tuition payments through the Brightwheel application.



Tuition is due on the first day of the month, and considered late after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. Tuition is billed from August-April. Tuition and other fees are paid through the Brightwheel application. You can pay with a credit card or have it automatically withdrawn from a bank account.

If paying by cash or check:

- Place your payment in the “Catch the Son Payments” lockbox located in the main hallway by our bulletin board.
- The preschool administrator will prepare the deposit, provide you with a receipt and record an offline payment in Brightwheel.

Total yearly tuition is divided by nine months and there are no adjustments made for sickness, holidays, inclement weather or other absences. Withdrawal from the school requires two weeks' notice. Tuition refunds will not be issued unless the total annual tuition was paid in advance, then the remaining months will be refunded.

For late registrants: Tuition will be prorated depending on when the student starts.

### **LATE PAYMENT POLICY**

A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged on all payments received after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. There will be a \$20.00 charge for all returned checks.

1st offense -- If your tuition payment is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month

1. A \$10 late fee will be added to the families' Brightwheel account
2. The preschool administrator will send an email to the family notifying them of the late fee assessed and that they have until the 20<sup>th</sup> to make their tuition payment.
3. Scholarship assistance will be offered.

2nd offense -- If your tuition payment isn't made in full by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month

1. A second email from the preschool administrator will be sent to the family
2. The family will have until the end of the month to make their tuition payment and if payment isn't received they will be removed from the program until the account is paid.
3. Scholarship assistance will be offered

### **SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS**

Scholarship funds are available for the reduction of monthly tuition up to 50%. Scholarship request forms are available from the Preschool Administrator. The Preschool Administrator will maintain confidentiality for families requesting scholarships and will present anonymous requests to the Preschool Executive Team for review and approval. If you know in advance of a need for a scholarship, please contact the Preschool Administrator.

### **ENROLLMENT PRIORITY**

Registration priority for CTS classes is as follows:

1. In-house families will register at the end of January for the upcoming school year.
2. Christ the Servant Lutheran Church members (limited to parents) and Alumni families who have previously been in the school but do not currently have a child enrolled will be invited to register after In-house families.
3. New families from the community will be invited to register by the end of February/beginning of March.

If in-house, church members, or alumni families fail to register during their designated enrollment period, they will lose their priority status and will be put on the waiting list, along with the rest of the community on a first come first serve basis.

Non-refundable deposits for registration must be submitted on or before the announced deadline. If deposits are not received and no explanation given, the spot will be forfeited.

### **AGE CUT-OFF FOR CLASSES**

Playgroup -2 years old on or before March 31<sup>st</sup> of enrollment year (exceptions made if space available).

Preschool- 3 years old on or before August 31<sup>st</sup> of the enrollment year.

Pre-K- 4 years old on or before August 31<sup>st</sup> of the enrollment year.

Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis, based on observation by the teacher.

### **OVER ENROLLMENT BY IN-HOUSE FAMILIES IN ONE CLASS**

Each class has a maximum number of children that can be enrolled. In the event of over enrollment, the following point system will be used:

1. One (1) point for every year the child has attended CTS (includes current year).
2. One (1) point if a sibling was previously enrolled at CTS per year.
3. One (1) point if a sibling will also be enrolled at CTS.
4. One (1) point if the parents are Christ the Servant Lutheran church members.
5. One (1) point per full year a parent has served on the Parent Advisory Team.
6. One (1) point for a parent who is an alumni of Catch the Son Preschool.

In the case of fewer class spaces than children with equal lowest points, a drawing will be held.

### **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

Our goal is for all students to have a successful preschool experience. Should there be an instance in which a child is having a difficult time, our teachers follow specific protocol in handling the situation, including conferencing with the family and specific observations. This information is confidential. Ultimately, it may be in the child's best interest to be withdrawn from our program, and recommendations will be given for a more appropriate placement.

This is especially important for students that register after the school year has started. The transition into a classroom in which others have already learned the routine, can prove to be very difficult. For late registrants, there will be a mandatory one-month review.