

Parent Handbook 2023-2024



Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten
A Ministry of Oak Grove United Methodist Church

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2023-2024 School Year

Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten, a Ministry of Oak Grove United Methodist Church, is a religiously exempt program under Section 63.2-1716 of the Code of Virginia, meeting all code requirements, including health and fire inspections, staff reports and code compliance reports.



Mission

Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten, a Ministry of Oak Grove United Methodist Church, serves children by providing an emotional, social and educational experience rich in Christian values. With love and encouragement, we plant the seeds for excitement of lifelong learning. We build relationships with the entire family, as we journey together and experience God's unconditional love.

Program Goals

- Stimulate each child's natural desire to learn by providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences.
- Meet individual learning needs through varied experiences and activities.
- Provide learning experiences to develop spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and cognitive readiness for kindergarten.
- Children will grow socially and emotionally by learning to:
 - Listen
 - Follow simple directions
 - Think for themselves
 - Make choices
 - Express feelings in socially acceptable ways
 - Identify with adults other than a parent
 - Feel secure when away from home
 - Make new friends
 - Work individually and in a group
 - Take turns
 - Share
 - Take responsibility for personal items and materials
 - Clean up after themselves

Children will grow physically and cognitively by:

- Developing large and small muscle coordination
- Developing language skills
- Exposure to colors and shapes
- Exposure to uppercase and lowercase letters
- Exposure to simple math concepts
- Working creatively with the hands
- Exposure to musical opportunities

Children will grow spiritually with an opportunity to:

- Pray
- Hear age-appropriate Bible stories
- Experience God's creation
- Celebrate Christian holidays



Our Classes

At Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten, all classes have a lead teacher and a full-time teaching assistant, which fulfills our goal of small teacher/student ratios. The maximum number of children in each classroom ranges from 8 in the two-year-old class to 16 in the four-year-old and kindergarten class. A weekly theme is studied, and creative learning methods are used to enhance the curriculum both individually and in groups.



Examples of possible daily activities designed to fit each theme:

Free Play/Centers

Clay molding
Painting
Housekeeping
Games
Stringing beads
Science Center
Math Center

Reading books and listening to stories
Building with blocks
Dress up role play
Language Center
Sorting
Puzzles

Circle Time

Calendar activities
Finger plays
Faith sharing

Story time
Drama
Singing

Fine Motor/Art

Blocks
Pasting
Printing
Sorting

Lacing
Sequencing
Tactile Activities
Coloring & Cutting



Music and Movement

Seasonal activities
Rhythm activities

Singing
Learning centers

Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten Classes

Two Year-Old Class

The children in the *two year-old* class are developing a sense of self-awareness and learning to share with their peers. The teachers have a sweet, loving manner as they help the children with separation from the parents. We offer 2 and 3 day classes for 2 year-olds.

Three Year-Old Class

Children in the *three year-old* classroom are mastering self-help skills and lengthening their attention spans in group settings. We begin to introduce academics and focus on small motor development. 2 and 3 day classes are available.

Four Year-Old Class

Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Learning: Comprehensive Standards for Four-Year-Olds is introduced in the *4 year-old* classes. ***The VA Foundation Blocks for Learning*** features readiness and writing, language and literacy, and numbers and math programs that incorporate special activities to foster success. Learning centers in the classroom emphasize sequencing, patterning, math skills, and science. 3 or 5 day a week programs are offered for four year-olds.

PreK: Older 4's, Younger 5's

Must be 5 years old by March 31st of the current school year

PreK is designed for *older 4's, younger 5's* and meets 5 days a week. Admission is determined by Director discretion. The class features ***Virginia's Foundation Blocks for Learning that are aligned with Virginia's Kindergarten Standards of Learning (SOL) and Virginia's Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)***. The teacher-designed comprehensive curriculum embraces children's natural curiosity and builds the foundation for success in school and life. The children thrive with the language and vocabulary focus, as well as an emphasis in science & math academics for Kindergarten preparation.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten at Oak Grove offers a rich scholastic curriculum designed to meet the State of Virginia Standards of Learning. Our class size of 16 students provides an excellent opportunity for each child to learn through small group and individual instruction. There is also a full-time assistant working alongside the kindergarten teacher to further support and meet student needs. Our goal is to prepare our kindergarteners to be confident, independent and assured when they enter first grade. The kindergarten class follows the same annual calendar as the preschool classes. Kindergarten children are 5 years-old on or before September 30th of the current school year.

All students have music class once a week, and Chapel once a month.



Our Staff

Teachers at Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten are chosen on the basis of their education, their experience, and most importantly, their understanding of children and the caring respect they exhibit towards them. All staff members have undergone background checks and are CPR and 1st Aid certified.

As a group, we stay on the cutting edge of early childhood development by participating in workshops and training sessions throughout the year. This includes training on a child's transition from class to class as well as the transition into Kindergarten and 1st grade.

Age and Admission Requirements

Student birth dates conform to Virginia Public School enrollment requirements. Class placement is determined by the child's age as of September 30. Children must be toilet trained for enrollment in the 3 and 4-year-old classes, as well as the kindergarten class. There are no exceptions to the toilet training policy.

The following are required for enrollment:

- A current shot record with up-to-date vaccinations is required for all new students. This form must be signed by the child's physician.
- For kindergarten, a Virginia School Entrance Health Form (including results of current physical) with a current shot record is required before school begins.
- Original Birth Certificate or Proof of Birth verification
- Completed Registration form (including photo release)
- Registration fee (non-refundable)
- Emergency Medical Authorization Form
- Completed Tuition and Fees Agreement

*It is the policy of Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten to refuse the release of information regarding a student without written consent of the parent.

Registration Fee

A non-refundable registration fee of \$225 is due at the time of verified enrollment. The registration fee holds a place for the applicant in the preschool. Enrollment is not complete until a spot has been confirmed by the Director first, and the Registration Fee has been paid.

Tuition— curriculum and supply fees are included in our tuition rates

2 days/week	\$235.00 month
3 days/week (2 & 3 year olds)	\$265.00 month
3 days/week (4 year olds)	\$275.00 month
5 days/week (4 year olds & PreK)	\$300.00 month
Kindergarten	\$375.00 month

Monthly tuition will automatically be pulled through an ACH account designated at time of enrollment.

- Tuition is due on the 1st of each month. No partial tuition will be accepted.
- A \$25 late fee will be assessed for any tuition not received by the 5th of each month.
- A \$35 fee will be assessed on any insufficient ACH account.
- Non-payment of tuition will result in dismissal from the program.



Discounts

- Members of Oak Grove United Methodist Church receive a 5% discount on tuition.
- A 5% discount is offered for tuition paid-in-full by August 1, 2023.
- A 5% discount in tuition applies to all siblings after the first child or on the tuition that is of lesser value.

If you are unable to provide an ACH account, please contact the Director as arrangements can be made to pay tuition via the preschool website at www.oakgrovepreschool-k.org. Please note that a 4% processing fee will be applied to all transactions made via the preschool website.

Schedule of Operation and Open House

Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten operates from the Wednesday following Labor Day until the Friday before Memorial Day weekend. School calendars are issued at the beginning of each school year.

Parents should expect a 2 1/2 week break for Christmas. School is in session from 9 a.m. until noon Monday - Friday for the preschool classes; 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. for the kindergarteners. School doors are open from 8:50 a.m. until 9:10 a.m. for drop-off. We ask that no one enter the preschool before 8:50 a.m. Late arrivals or anyone wishing admittance to the school when doors are locked must request access by ringing the doorbell. After being screened, an office staff member will unlock the door for you. Doors are unlocked for dismissal at noon (1:00 p.m. for Lunch Bunch and kindergarten). Families are invited to "Open House" on the Thursday before school begins.



Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch is an optional program offered at Oak Grove Preschool, and extends the school day until 1:00 p.m. Children may stay and eat lunch, provided by parents, with their friends for a small daily fee. There is a separate daily sign-up for parents to indicate a child's attendance in Lunch Bunch. Lunch Bunch is offered for 1/2 price to siblings of students in the kindergarten class. Lunch Bunch payments will be billed via ACH.

School Closings

Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten follows the Chesapeake Public Schools for weather or emergency closings only. If CPS closes for inclement weather, OGP&K will also close. If CPS is delayed one hour, OGP&K will open at 10:00 a.m. If CPS is delayed two hours, OGP&K will be closed for the day. OGP&K does not have a make-up day policy. Tuition will not be refunded/prorated for inclement weather or any other unforeseen circumstances.

Drop Off & Dismissal

We ask Parents/Guardians to park in a designated parking space and escort their child into the building through the preschool entrance. The parent/guardian should walk the child to the classroom, sign the child in, and make eye contact with the teacher. At the end of the day this procedure should be reversed. This transfers the responsibility of supervision from the parent to the teacher and from the teacher back to the parent.



At no time should a child be allowed to enter or exit the building unescorted and at no time should a driver park in a loading zone, fire lane, handicap parking space (unless permitted with proper decal), or in any place other than an appropriate parking space. If there are cones set out near the playground, we kindly ask that you drive around to the opposite side of the building and do not remove the cones. Please make every effort to have your child at school on time and exit from your child's classroom as quickly as possible.

If someone other than the child's custodial parents or guardians will be picking up the child from preschool, prior written authorization must be given. The parent or guardian is the only person who can authorize the preschool to release the child to another individual. The parent or guardian should provide the names of at least two other adults who have permission to pick up the child in case of an emergency. This authorization is given on the enrollment form. Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten will ask for proper photo identification before releasing a child to someone other than his/her custodial parent or legal guardian.

Late Pick-Up

If a child is not picked up by 12:10 p.m., (1:10 p.m. for Lunch Bunch and Kindergarten) a \$10.00 fee will be charged, with \$1.00 added for each additional minute thereafter. The Preschool Director will attempt to locate the child's parents/guardian. If they cannot be reached, the local authorities will be notified.



Parental Participation

We believe that education is most effective when parents and teachers work together. This partnership promotes and enriches the learning environment for children. Spending time with your child at preschool allows you to be a part of their first learning experience and teaches children that school is important to you. For this reason, we have established Oak Grove Preschool Partners. The goal of OGPP is to strengthen the home-school connection and create a community between teachers, parents and children. OGPP provides opportunities for involvement in activities during and outside school. There are organized functions to promote socialization with other school parents. Because the family experience is so important to us, siblings will be included in several events throughout the school year.



Communication

You will find notes and calendars in the backpacks regularly, but the primary mode of communication between the Director and you as parents will be through email. Please check your inbox to stay up-to-date with information. Teachers will use email and/or the *Remind app* for all classroom reminders and school-wide emergency notifications. It is important that you grant permission for your teacher to contact you through the *Remind app*.

Appropriate Dress

Children should be dressed comfortably to allow freedom to play and should have clothing they can manage independently in the bathroom. Playground time is part of each day's activities, so appropriate outerwear should also be worn. No open-toed shoes or flip flops. Athletic shoes are always appropriate. Parents should provide a change of clothes appropriate for the current season. Please label items and leave them in the child's backpack. Children in the two-year-old class, who are not potty trained, will need disposable toilet training/diapering items to be kept in the backpacks.

Child Abuse & Neglect Policy

Staff of Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse/neglect. Any suspected abuse will be reported to Social Services for investigation as required by Virginia state laws. All who supervise children as paid/volunteer staff at our school must first complete Safe Sanctuary Training and criminal background checks.



Personal Belongings

Please label everything your child may bring to school (i.e. coats, sweaters, book bags, etc.) Our classes are well stocked with toys and supplies, so we ask that children not bring toys to school unless requested by a teacher.

Special Events

Exploration outside of the classroom is an important part of our curriculum. For that reason, we extend invitations to individuals and groups in our community to bring their expertise to our school throughout the school year. Some examples include a visit from the Chesapeake Fire Department, story-telling by Chesapeake Public Library, and a presentation from the staff of a pediatric dentist. Typically, we do not leave the school for field trips.



Medication

For life-threatening conditions of asthma and allergies to peanuts and/or tree nuts, there may be a time when emergency medication is needed while at school. Specially certified school staff will be happy to help care for the child's oral medication needs only if the following procedures are followed:

- All medication requires a doctor's permission.
- Medication shall only be distributed if an *Authorization to Give Medication* form is submitted by the child's parent or guardian.
- Medication must be in the original container with the prescription label or direction label attached.
- Medication must be labeled with the child's name, the name of the medication, the dosage amount, and the times to be given.
- If medication is needed longer than 10 school days, an *Authorization to Give Medication* form must be submitted by the child's physician.
- Medication will only be distributed by staff persons who have received Medication Training. The administering staff member will keep a record of all medications given in a Medication Log.
- Medication will be kept with the classroom teacher while school is in session.
- It is the parent's responsibility to claim all unused medication within five school days after the *Authorization to Give Medication* expires. Any unclaimed medication will be disposed of. At no time may children transport medication to and from school.



Sick Child Policy

Our program operates for well children and staff. Children should be fully able to participate in all activities, including outdoor play. Children with symptoms of communicable diseases will be removed from the classroom and remain with a staff member until the parent or designated representative arrives for the child. Children should be kept home from school for 24 hours after the following symptoms are present:

- Fever of 100 degrees
- Deep cough, wheezing
- Heavy and/or colored nasal drainage
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Pain that interferes with normal activity
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting
- Unusual fatigue/malaise
- Head lice (child must be nit-free to return to school)
- Incubation period of a contagious disease
- Contagious skin conditions
- Child does not feel like participating in activities

Emergencies

All parents/guardians must provide the school with the names and phone numbers of at least two adults who may be contacted in the event of an emergency. Additionally, an Authorization for Emergency Medical Care must be on file before the first day of classes. If a child sustains a life-threatening illness or injury during school hours, 911 will be called and the parent will be notified as quickly as possible. In the event of a non-life threatening injury or illness, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified and asked to make arrangements for the child to be picked up from school. If parents/guardians may not be reached, the emergency contact numbers will be contacted.

If a child is found to be at school with symptoms of a communicable disease, the parents/guardians of all children in the school will be notified within 24 hours. (See www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/regulations.htm for a complete list of included diseases.)

If a child, or any member of his/her household, develops a reportable communicable disease (as defined by the State Board of Health), the child's parent/guardian must inform the school within 24 hours or the next business day after diagnoses.

Discipline

Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten is a place for growth and learning. We believe disciplining a child involves teaching, learning, and helping. Our goal is to teach each child to manage his or her own behavior. Our teachers use guidance and positive reinforcement. If a child displays a behavior that poses physical harm to themselves or others, school staff reserve the right to remove the child from the classroom or redirect them to a designated area within the classroom. If a child has to be removed from the class due to aggressive behavior, the parent will be notified by the Director and a conference will be scheduled. Parents are encouraged to tell the child's teacher if something traumatic has happened at home. This helps the staff understand the child's need for extra support and encouragement.

Photos

We love to celebrate what is happening in our classrooms and often take pictures to capture the moments. Parents are asked to complete a photo release form at registration. Photos are generally for classroom use only, but on occasion a picture may be used in promotional or church publications (newsletters or brochures).

Birthdays & Celebrations

We love to celebrate children and the special days in their lives; birthdays are especially wonderful milestones to mark in the classroom, and we normally celebrate during snack time. Please let the teacher know if you plan to provide a birthday treat for your child's special day. We ask you to remember that our facility is peanut/tree nut-free at all times, and only store-bought items can be brought into the school.

Other wonderful ways to mark your child's birthday is by donating a book to the OGP&K Children's Ministry Library or by sending in non-edible items for classroom friends such as bubbles, play-doh or stickers. For celebrations outside of school hours, no invitations will be sent home unless every student in the class is invited to the event. Only staff members are allowed access to the students' backpacks.



Snacks

Snack time is an important part of our instructional day. When we sit and share a meal together, children learn important communication and social skills. They also learn about the importance of good food choices and often go home with the courage to try new foods that they've seen a peer eating. Please pack a nutritious snack and drink for your child each day, for example fruit, veggies, cheese, yogurt, etc. Please do not send junk food or extremely messy snacks. In order to protect those with peanut/tree nut allergies, do not send snacks containing peanuts or tree nuts or peanut oil. Children should carry snacks to school in a lunchbox, or sealed container, with the child's name clearly marked on the outside of the lunchbox or container. If a child forgets his/her snack the teacher will offer water and an appropriate snack. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the teacher and Director informed of any food allergies a child may have. Occasionally the teacher may ask for a donation towards a snack relating to a class activity.



Conferences

Conferences will be held once a year and as needed, either by request of the teacher or parent. Feel free to make an appointment any time you feel a conference is needed. Please inform us of events in life that may stress your child and cause behavioral changes at school. Examples include death of loved one, birth of a sibling and a parent's extended absence. Anticipating a potential problem helps us to support and reassure your child.

Custodial Parent Rights

Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten encourages the participation of parents and guardians in the classroom through volunteer opportunities, fellowship events, and school programs.

If either parent wishes to place restrictions on the other parent’s right to pick up a child, the enrolling parent must submit a copy of court orders or other legal documentation regarding child custody and/or visitation rights.

This information will be kept in the child’s file, and we will abide by all legally authorized restrictions.



Safe Sanctuary Policy & Social and Media Code of Conduct

Oak Grove United Methodist Church strives to create an environment where reasonable safety measures are taken to safeguard the physical, spiritual, and emotional welfare of all children who participate in the ministries of Oak Grove United Methodist Church.

The Safe Sanctuary Policy & The Social and Media Code of Conduct defines these safety measures and applies to all paid and volunteer staff participating in Oak Grove children’s programs, including church sponsored events held in off-campus locations.

All adults serving in paid and volunteer leadership positions with children must first complete Safe Sanctuary and Social and Media Code of Conduct training, including a background check before assuming leadership. The complete Safe Sanctuary & Social and Media Code of Conduct Policy is available in the Oak Grove United Methodist Church Offices.

Withdrawal or Dismissal from the Program

It is understood that enrollment at Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten is for the entire school year.

Parents are expected to provide the School Director with at least 30 days advance, written notice from the next billing date, of intent to withdraw a child from the school.

This notice helps the staff celebrate the friendships that have been made and also gives time to prepare the child and his/her classmates for the sense of loss they may feel when their friend leaves. If a parent fails to provide this notice, one month's full tuition will be due.

The staff will make every effort to help each child adjust to the preschool experience. Occasionally, a child is not ready for the group experience, or may exhibit physical, behavioral, social or disciplinary problems that prevent him/her from benefiting from our school. If this is the case, after discussing appropriate actions with the child's parents/guardians, the child may be dismissed from the program.

Except in the case of serious health or behavioral problems, parents/guardians will receive two weeks notice of the child's dismissal.

Any proposed dismissal will be the sole discretion of the School Director and will be reviewed by the Preschool Board.



Questions & Concerns

Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten is a ministry of Oak Grove United Methodist Church, and all school staff members are employees of the church. If a parent or guardian has a question or concern about a child's preschool experience, the child's teacher should be consulted first. If the parent needs further clarification, or is not comfortable with the answer received, we ask that the School Director be contacted. Further concerns should then be addressed to the Oak Grove Preschool Board. All preschool parties may be contacted at 757-410-2251.

Preparing Your Child for the First Day

We want to make your child's first day at Preschool as wonderful as possible. We have all faced "first" experiences, and it is natural to find the unknown a bit scary and unnerving. There are a number of suggestions that you can do to help your child conquer the fear of separation. Children are more comfortable with the idea of you leaving them if they know what to expect.

Here are some ideas:

- Sit down and talk with them about school before the first day. The more excited and positive you are, the less strange and unknown it will be for your child.
- Go through the daily routine from start to finish, stressing to your child that one of their parents or caretakers will be there at the end of the school day to pick them up.
- We also suggest that you visit the school with your child prior to the first day of school. We have an Open House the week before school starts, so please attend with your child. The staff will be eager to meet and assure both parent and preschooler.
- If your child does experience some distress at your departure on the first day of school, the teachers will make every effort to divert his/her attention to an activity that allows you to leave comfortably.



Notes



*Oak Grove Preschool & Kindergarten
is a ministry of Oak Grove United Methodist Church
serving children ages 2 through Kindergarten.*



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