



HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS

**GLORIA DEI PRESCHOOL DISCOVERY CENTER
570 WELSH ROAD
HUNTINGDON VALLEY, PA 19006
(215) 947-8653
www.gloriadei.com**

**Office email: gdkids@gloriadei.com
Director email: Director@gloriadei.com**

Gloria Dei Preschool is licensed by PA- DHS

<http://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=/secure/pacode/data/055/chapter3270/chap3270toc.html&d=>

MISSION STATEMENT

Gloria Dei Preschool Discovery Center seeks to provide a strong Educational foundation where each child will:



Discover their God-given gifts and talents
Feel valued in a loving community
Experience nurturing in a developmentally appropriate environment
Be motivated to become a life-long learner



WELCOME TO GLORIA DEI PRESCHOOL

We believe that children learn best through play, exploration, and discovery. Learning focuses on developing the whole child by encouraging their physical, social/emotional, and cognitive growth as well as their creative expression. We know the importance of the physical environment as an aid to learning and offer a beautiful and safe setting suitable to the particular needs of each preschooler.

Special events, visitors and field trips enrich the children's learning in areas such as science, nature, dental health, children's literature and the arts.

Parents may select a program with a non-sectarian approach for two, three and four year olds or a Christian emphasis for three and four year olds, which fosters the spiritual growth of the child in addition to their social/emotional, physical and cognitive growth.

Intergenerational interaction provided in some classes by senior "Huggers" offers our children a unique opportunity to develop special relationships and to learn about the aging process.

Parents are invited to become vital partners in the educational process and in the ongoing functioning of the preschool. Our Parent Teacher Organization assists with parent education and enrichment, social events, coordination of parent volunteers and school programs. The Preschool Board of the Gloria Dei Evangelical Lutheran Church guides school policies and programs.

Gloria Dei Preschool teachers are credentialed, certified in elementary or early childhood education. All staff is criminal history, child abuse cleared and fingerprinted. Teachers and assistants receive continual professional development training and undergo yearly evaluations.

The preschool follows the state standards for curriculum and regulations set forth by the PA Department of Human Services.

We believe that every child who enters our preschool is unique, competent, resourceful and full of potential. The strong foundation laid here will nurture those gifts so that each child will enter kindergarten ready and eager to learn.

Gloria Dei Preschool provides each child opportunities to learn regardless of race, gender, ancestry, disability, religion or socio-economic standing. Gloria Dei Preschool is an equal opportunity care provider.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES

PLEASE INFORM RELATIVES, AND OR THOSE IN PRIMARY CARE OF YOUR CHILD OF OUR POLICIES. PARENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND PARENT ORIENTATION AND ONE PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCE, AND TO UPDATE ALL STUDENT INFORMATION WHENEVER CHANGES OCCUR OR EVERY SIX MONTHS AT A MINIMUM.



ARRIVAL/PICK UP TIME

Children should not be dropped off before 9:00 am. PLEASE USE THE EARLY BIRD PROGRAM SHOULD YOU NEED CARE PRIOR TO 9:00AM. YOUR COOPERATION IN SUPERVISING YOUR CHILDREN AT ALL TIMES IN THE HALLWAYS, STAIRWAYS, PLAYGROUND, CHURCH GROUNDS, AND PARKING LOT IS REQUIRED. All children should be picked up promptly at their regular dismissal time. Children must be picked up at their classroom and will only be released to an adult specifically authorized by the parent prior to dismissal time. Children will not be released to anyone under the age of 18. A late fee of \$5.00 per 5 minutes will be charged if a child is picked up late. In the event of an emergency, please notify the office that your child will be picked up late.

If a child is in Room 108, 109, 110, or 111, please feel free to use the center hall stairway. This will alleviate the crowding at the main staircase. The elevator is available for use by anyone who has trouble navigating either staircase.

ABSENCE

If your child is absent from school for any reason, please notify the preschool office by 9am (215-947-8653 or gdkids@gloriadei.com). For safety reasons we will need to call you if you do not notify us of your child's absence.

ALLERGIES

If a child has an allergy of any kind an Allergy Action Form must be completed and kept on file in the preschool office. The school does not dispense medications, except when authorized by a physician. All medications must be in the original container labeled with the child's name.

ASSESSMENT

Children are assessed throughout the school year for the purpose of planning and implementing curriculum and preparing progress reports for parent / teacher conferences. This information is gathered during the preschool day through activities, parent input, and or observations.

The assessment materials are available throughout the school year as needed. Progress reports are distributed two times during the school year.

Information obtained is accessible by preschool staff only. Information will not be released without written permission by the parent/guardian.

BATHROOMS

In order to insure privacy for all, the boy's room is for use by boys only, and the girl's room is for use by girls only. If an opposite sex child is in need of assistance, please use the downstairs adult or family bathrooms located in the library lounge or across from the elevator. If you are visiting the preschool, please use the adult bathrooms on the first floor. Teachers accompany the children to the bathrooms at all times.

BOOK DONATIONS

A family may wish to celebrate a child's birthday or other special occasion by donating a book to the Children's Library or the child's classroom library in the child's name.

COMMUNICATIONS

The preschool publishes a monthly CALENDAR and NEWS-LETTER in order to inform parents of important upcoming school events and schedule changes. Each parent also receives a classroom newsletter particular to the events of their child's classroom. It is important that you regularly check the website and bulletin boards located in the hall outside of your child's classroom.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES are formally held in January; however parents should feel free to set up an appointment with the teacher at any time in order to discuss a child's progress. Staff home phone numbers are not available; please call or e-mail the teacher or office for an appointment if you need to speak to the teacher.

KEEP COMMUNICATION LINES OPEN. Communicate calmly and directly with your child's teacher when problems regarding your child or other children arise. It is important to model appropriate conflict resolution and communication skills for children. If your concern is not resolved in this way, then speak with the Director to help with this process.

The office should be contacted if there is an emergency, a change in address, phone or carpool situation, or if a child is ill or will not be attending preschool.

CLOTHING

Please label ALL jackets, hats, boots, mittens, lunch boxes, book bags and other personal items with children's names. THE SCHOOL IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LOST ARTICLES. A LOST AND FOUND BOX is located in the Preschool Office; please check it on a regular basis if your child has misplaced something.

Children should wear washable play clothes. RUBBER SOLED SHOES OR SNEAKERS ARE RECOMMENDED: (no sandals, flip flops, or open toed shoes) for indoor/outdoor play periods.

Children should be dressed for current weather conditions since the classes go outdoors daily (weather permitting). Children should bring a change of clothing in case of accidents. The clothing will be stored in your child's school bag.

DISCIPLINE

It is the philosophy of the preschool to treat every child with dignity and respect. Disciplinary practices are not punitive in nature. Staff is instructed to use positive approaches to help children behave constructively using these guidelines:

1. Plan ahead to prevent problems
2. Redirect children by diverting their attention
3. Encourage and reinforce appropriate behaviors
4. Establish consistent, clear rules with the class
5. Guide children in resolving their own conflicts
6. Apply logical or natural consequences to problem behaviors
7. Time away from the group is used as a last resort.



In order to encourage non-violent play among the preschool children, toys such as weapons and action figures are not permitted at school.

If an incident in the classroom merits documentation, the teacher will submit an incident report to the office informing the Director of the circumstances surrounding the occurrence and the steps taken to correct the situation.

All forms are kept on file and are confidential. Written permission is required for files to be made available to any source outside the preschool.

The Director will meet with Parents and Children as necessary during the school year to discuss inappropriate behavior that cannot be handled in the classroom.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

An emergency evacuation plan is posted in all classrooms and on file in the Preschool Office. Fire drills and trips to the “weather room – Shelter in Place” are scheduled regularly throughout the school year. If you are in the building during a fire drill you must exit with your child’s class. Our Emergency Plan of Action Letter can be found in your parent packet.

CANCELLATIONS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

When area schools have a **ONE** or **TWO hour delay** we will implement the following alternate class schedule for all classes:

9:00AM – 11:30AM/12:00 CLASSES WILL MEET: 10:00AM – 12:00PM

9:00AM – 1:00 PM CLASSES WILL MEET: 10:00AM – 1:00PM

9:00AM – 2:30 PM CLASSES WILL MEET: 10:00AM – 2:30PM

When area schools are closed due to inclement weather, Gloria Dei will close as well. You will receive an email from the school office. A closing message will be recorded after 6:30am and it will also be posted on our website. It will also be posted on NBC 10 and CBS Philly.

EXTENDED DAY OPTIONS: NOT AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME

Gloria Dei Preschool offers extended day options for the convenience of our families. All programs begin in mid-September, after children have had a period of adjustment to school. Current staff members provide enrichment opportunities for the children in the extended day classes.

Early Birds: \$10.00 fee and runs from 8:15 – 9:00 am. This is designed for those parents that require an earlier drop-off time due to their work schedules; this must be prearranged with the preschool office.

Extended Day: \$10.00 per hour 1:00 – 2:30 PM. This option is open to children who are enrolled in the three and four-year-old classes, who are potty, trained, and no longer need naps in the afternoon.

Early Care/Extended Day Program costs are per session and are billed separately from the monthly tuition. Extended day classes are based on need and are subject to cancellation due to lack of enrollment.

FEES

Tuition is a yearly figure broken down into nine monthly payments, for your convenience. The tuition payment for September is paid by July 1st. Subsequent tuition payments are due by the **first of each month**, September through April. If tuition is not paid by the 15th of the month a service fee of \$10.00 will be charged. Enrollment is for the school year, September to May. **Parents are responsible for tuition due regardless of absence. MONEY WILL NOT BE REFUNDED for absences due to illness, vacation (including extended leave), snow days, etc. THIRTY DAYS PAID, WRITTEN NOTICE IS REQUIRED TO WITHDRAWAL after September 1st**

Please notify the Director or Controller if an alternate due date or financial arrangement needs to be established. If tuition becomes more than one month in arrears, the Director has the right to

remove the child from the school. Checks are to be made payable to **Gloria Dei Preschool** and should be mailed or delivered to the Tuition Box in the Preschool office. Please note your child's name and class in the memo portion of your check. There will be a \$20.00 Returned Check Charge.

Activity Fee

Each year a one-time activity fee is charged for each child. This fee is used to provide your child with a school bag, fall field trip, and various enrichment activities through the year.

FIELD TRIPS

All 2, 3, and 4 year old children are required to be transported by their parents for all field trips.



HEALTH RECORDS/ILLNESS

A Health Form must be completed by the child's pediatrician or family physician. The original form must be returned to the preschool office by September 1st, prior to the start of school. Health forms for school files must be updated on an annual basis, with a signed medical form and listing of current immunizations. To ensure the health and safety of everyone at Gloria Dei Preschool, children who are not fully immunized, or those without a current medical form, will not be permitted to attend classes.

A child should be kept home at the first sign of fever, diarrhea, vomiting or contagious disease. In the event of contagious disease, please inform the Preschool Office immediately. The class will be notified that a student (unnamed) in the class has a contagious disease. Information will be sent home regarding the symptoms and care of the particular disease. The entire school is not notified unless multiple cases are reported.



A child that has been kept home due to a sickness such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, etc. should not return to school until 24 hours AFTER the child's symptoms have been resolved, without the use of fever reducing medication.

The decision to send a child home from school due to illness will be made by the Teaching Staff and Preschool Office. If your child is not well enough for regular preschool activities, indoor or outdoor play, please keep him/her home. As a general rule, provisions cannot be made for a child to remain in the office or classroom when the class is outside.

In the event of a minor injury, the preschool's first aid policy is to wash the injured area and to apply ice or a bandage. Parents will be notified with a note sent home with the child, or with more serious injuries, will be called immediately. Please be sure that all contact information, as well as emergency contact phone numbers, are kept current with the Preschool Office.

INTERNET POLICY

Enrichment in the classroom is an integral part of the curriculum at the preschool. Understanding technology as part of that enrichment is an important aspect to introduce to children.

Preschool Internet access will be tailored for educational use with 3 and 4 year old children. Students will learn appropriate computer use through teacher directed extensions. Staff will guide students in online "hands on" preschool programs that will support the curriculum of the school. All internet programs used for enrichment will be previewed prior to student usage.

Parents need to give permission for students to use internet based student programs. Those students who do not have written permission on file will not be able to participate in internet based programs.



LIBRARY

All three and four year old classes visit the school library once a week. Our children's library circulation policy is 1 book per child, due back in 7 days. Parents are responsible for the replacement value of any lost or damaged books.

PARKING

ALL CARS must be parked in the church parking lot and the children must be escorted across the driveway to the classroom. **DO NOT PARK AT THE CURB OR ON THE HILL BY THE UPPER PATH.** For the consideration of others, please observe the "RESERVED FOR HANDICAPPED" signs. Handicapped spaces are used regularly by church members and preschool families, and are strictly reserved for cars with handicapped license plates. Please do not leave sleeping children unattended in your car.

POTTY TRAINING

All three and four year olds must be toilet trained by the beginning of the school year. Children may not attend school wearing diapers or pull-ups. Please notify the office if your child is not trained by the beginning of the school year.

TODDLER OR OLDER 2'S CLASSROOMS:

Parents please advise teachers when you are potty training your child. We take all children to the bathroom to wash their hands, but only encourage those who are potty trained, wearing pull ups, or training underwear to use the toilets. Diapers are difficult for the children to be independent in the bathroom. Pull ups are a nice transition for your child. Please refrain from putting your child in underwear until your child is fully potty trained.

PRIVACY POLICY

All information regarding your child is kept in the preschool office and is accessible only by staff and the child's parent or guardian. Information will not be released without written permission by the parent/guardian.

REGISTRATION/WITHDRAWAL

Registration for current Gloria Dei Church members and Preschool families is held in January. A registration fee must accompany each application. New Families may call to set up an appointment to visit the preschool in January; applications are taken on a first come, first served basis.

Enrollment is for the school year, September to May. If parents should choose to withdraw a child for any reason **a 30-day written notification must be given to the Director.**

All parents are required to sign a tuition agreement on a yearly basis. *In the case of separated or divorced parents, both parent/guardian signatures are required on all forms.*

The Director reserves the right to request withdrawal of a child from school if he/she is not adjusting to school, if the child is in need of specialized care, or if other children are being harmed. The Director has the right to remove any child for inappropriate or abusive behavior towards other children and or/staff implemented by a child and/or parent. **Parents will be advised of these concerns prior to a child's withdrawal.**

SAFETY AT SCHOOL

THE FOLLOWING RULES WERE ESTABLISHED WITH THE BEST INTEREST OF YOUR CHILDREN IN MIND. THANK YOU FOR HELPING US KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE.

Elevator Warning

ALWAYS ACCOMPANY CHILDREN ON THE ELEVATOR AND INSIST THAT THEY HOLD YOUR HAND OR THE STROLLER HANDLES. DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO OPERATE OR RIDE ALONE IN THE ELEVATOR.

Outdoor Safety

- Hold children's hands in the parking lots at all times.
- Children may not walk on the walls leading to and around the fishpond.
- Supervise children near the pond at all times.
- Children should not be permitted to run in the garden and around the statues.
- Children are not permitted to enter or leave the building unaccompanied by an adult.

SNACKS

Parents are encouraged to sign up to donate a snack for the class by signing up on the class bulletin board. Cups, napkins and water are provided at snack time by the preschool. This is a chance for children to share a special healthy snack with friends. Snack suggestions include fresh fruit, dried fruits, string cheese, veggies, granola bars, applesauce, pretzels, crackers, etc. Please check with your child's teacher to see if there are any food allergies prior to sending in a snack. **Birthday** snacks are welcome but we would like to make your child's birthday the central focus, not the food. Please speak to your child's teacher for birthday suggestions. Please refrain from sending party favors to class.

Beverage suggestions include unsweetened natural (100%) juices or milk. In order to follow safe handling guidelines, please send snacks in their original state or sealed container.

*Due to the increasing amount of children with peanut allergies, we are a **peanut free environment**. Please refrain from sending any peanut products or any food that is processed in a facility with peanuts. PLEASE CHECK ALL LABELS!

SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Integration of all students, in the least restrictive environment, is a welcoming aspect of the Gloria Dei Preschool program. We help all preschool children to integrate, understand differences, and establish relationships in the classroom.

Some children are visited and/or assisted by adults other than current staff members. All individuals who are in the classroom on a regular basis have the proper training and clearances required by our school. The staff works in conjunction with professional organizations to provide the best quality education for all of our students.

Information regarding any child's development is private and will not be discussed with anyone other than the child's parent or guardian.

TRANSLATORS

If English is the family's secondary language, it may be beneficial to use a translator such as a friend or family member who can convey the information to the teacher and or school. Please let us know if you will be using a translator for phone calls and or other communications.



GOALS FOR GLORIA DEI PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

The Gloria Dei Preschool provides each child, regardless of race, gender, ability, special needs, ethnicity, and socio-economic standing, or religion, opportunities to:

- Develop language skills to enable the child to convey wants, needs and ideas appropriately, expand vocabularies, and respond to and ask good questions.
- Develop the ability to observe, compare and describe objects and events.
- Develop thought processes that lead to greater understanding, awareness and curiosity through investigation and exploration with a variety of resources in a safe environment.
- Recognize and respect the rights, feelings and property of others and understand their place as responsible members of a family and community.
- Develop self-confidence in expressing, choosing and initiating behaviors and making decisions, and learn to accept responsibility for those choices in a group setting.
- Develop good habits in the areas of health, nutrition, safety, and hygiene.
- Develop physical coordination and motor skills and explore with the five senses.
- Experience a variety of visual art, music, drama, dance, literature and creative movement activities and learn to appreciate the expressive arts and cultures of other people, places and times.
- Experiment with a variety of tools, manipulatives, and materials for open-ended exploration.
- Engage the imagination with rhymes, songs, finger plays and pretend play.
- Develop a greater awareness of the self as a valued individual and competent learner.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PHILOSOPHY

Preschool children are in the beginning stages of faith development. What they learn about God comes largely from their relationship with caring adults. We trust that children will see themselves as unique creations of God and part of a loving Christian family. The focus of our program is on God's love as seen through the helping, sharing and caring demonstrated by Jesus. Application to life is an integral part of the curriculum. This is accomplished through:

Scripture – using Bible stories

Life – using everyday stories that show children how the principle presented in the

Bible story can be lived in their life
Concrete examples – using object lessons and their own personal examples or stories
Chapel – weekly visit to the chapel give children the opportunity to become familiar with and enjoy the church/chapel setting

GLORIA DEI PRESCHOOL OFFICE STAFF



Director..... Melissa Whitman (director@gloriadei.com)
Administrative Assistant.....Kristin Hiller(gdkids@gloriadei.com)



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gdkids@gloriadei.com

Nondiscrimination in Services

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any parent or child (and/or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint or discrimination with:

Gloria Dei Preschool
570 Welsh Road
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006

PA Human Relations Commission
Philadelphia Regional Office
110 North 8th St
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Department of Human Services
Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Room 225, Health & Welfare Building
PO Box 2675
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services
DPW Bureau of Equal Opportunity
Southeastern Regional Office
Suite 5034, 801 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

US Dept. of Health and Human Services
Office for Civil Rights
Suite 372, Public Ledger Bldg.
150 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106

PA Early Childhood Education Standards

<http://www.pakeys.org/pa-early-learning-initiatives/early-learning-standards/>