



Preschool Department

**PARENT HANDBOOK
AND
POLICIES**

Effective August 2020

Welcome to the Preschool Department of Nashville Christian School, providing early education for children six weeks through Pre-K! NCS Preschool functions under the direction of the governing bodies serving Nashville Christian School as a whole. The preschool staff functions under the direction of its Director appointed by Nashville Christian School's president.

Licensure

The preschool department at Nashville Christian School is licensed by the Tennessee Department of Education. Inspections are conducted as required by state regulations. Any questions or concerns relative to our license can be addressed to:

Child Care Program Evaluator
Andrew Johnson Tower
710 James Robertson Parkway 11th floor
Nashville, TN 37243-0376
Phone 615-517-8236

Mission Statement

The Preschool Department at Nashville Christian School ministers to the needs of young children and their families by providing a safe, loving, Christian care environment to foster intellectual, social, physical, emotional, and spiritual growth and development.

Goals

- To create a warm, creative, nurturing, & Christian environment for children and their parents, staff, and caregivers
- To facilitate each child's development and growth as a child of God through a wide variety of experiences, activities, and opportunities for learning through play
- To nurture developing qualities and skills in each child, including small and large motor development, hand-eye coordination, problem-solving skills, the ability to appreciate diversity and the capacity to trust, respect, and connect emotionally to others
- To successfully prepare children for entering kindergarten and begin a lifelong love of learning
- To provide parents and caregivers with a source of support, community, and information in all aspects of parenting and nurturing their children
- To be advocates for children

Enrollment Process

There is a priority system for enrollment. Families who are currently in the program have priority followed by children of Nashville Christian School staff, followed then by the community.

Current preschool students and their siblings will be re-enrolled each spring for the following fall session. Once the designated re-enrollment period has closed, remaining spots will be filled from the wait list during the open enrollment process.

Tuition, Fees & Payments

Monthly tuition, registration and supply fees set by the administration of Nashville Christian School are reviewed on an annual basis. Any changes in rates will be advertised in advance.

The non-refundable registration fee, supply fee and required deposit are due to hold a child's spot and are considered non-refundable. Monthly tuition is billed on the 2nd day of each month and should be paid in full no later than the 1st of the following month. If an account has a balance remaining as of the 7th of the month, attendance for that child/family will be suspended until payment is made. The non-refundable annual supply fee is billed on the 2nd of September along with the typical monthly tuition, or upon admittance into the program.

All accounts must remain current and in good standing. Parents are encouraged to contact the preschool business office to discuss any payment issues.

Withdrawal

Parents must give a minimum of a 30 day written notice when planning to withdraw a child from NCS preschool. Monthly tuition will be charged if notice has not been received in writing. Parents of students entering kindergarten in August should communicate summer attendance plans to the preschool office.

Potty Training

We believe in meeting the child's developmental needs. Potty training is a developmental skill; some children need longer than others to master this skill. There is no magic date when this occurs, however all children who enter our Pre-K class should be toileting independently due to our ratios and room accommodations. Please talk with teachers and develop a plan so that together we can help your child master this important skill. For specific information, a "potty training" packet of information is available.

Hours, Holidays and Important Dates

NCS Preschool operates year round, Monday through Friday, from 7:00am until 6:00pm. We will close for typical holidays and a few days for teacher in service each year. For specifics, please see the current year's Holiday Calendar, available on our website or hard copy upon request.

Bad Weather, Emergency, and Disaster Closings

In the event Nashville Christian School needs to close early, open late or close for the day due to inclement weather, announcements will be made on the NCS web page at www.nashvillechristian.org, listed on news channel 5, text and e-mail communication will be sent to all parents. In the event the area surrounding NCS is involved in a disaster, your child will be transported to safety. We will notify parents and guardians as quickly as possible, but please contact the Metro Nashville Fire Department if you have been unable to speak with someone from NCS. Tuition will not be adjusted for bad weather occurrences.

NCS conducts bad weather and security drills in accordance with our licensing standards and reviews these plans yearly.

Campus Security

Nashville Christian School considers the safety of your child and the security of our campus a high priority. NCS employs an armed School Resource Officer who is tasked to identify and address any security weaknesses found. The SRO is on campus during normal school hours and works closely with department administrators. All campus visitors are required to be screened through our Raptor system which flags people who may be a particular risk to our children. Any person flagged by the Raptor will be asked to leave our campus and not permitted access to children. All Preschool buildings are equipped with controlled access. Parents are assigned a proximity card upon enrollment, which allows entrance into the building and your child's classroom. Do not share this proximity card with anyone, even alternate pick up people. We will assist any alternate pick up persons at the door, after we scan their license in our Raptor system. Please notify the Preschool office immediately if your card is misplaced. New cards will be issued along with a fee.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Teachers are ready to accept your child beginning at 7:00 am and no earlier. Please do not enter the classroom early or attempt to enter the building earlier. Many of our teachers arrive early to arrange their rooms, settle their belongings and make preparations for the day. Please respect this time they put in to ensuring your child has a successful day.

Children must be picked up by 6:00 pm. A late fee of \$20.00 is assessed for any child not picked up by 6:06. An additional fee of \$1.00 per minute thereafter will be added to that. Chronic tardiness cannot be tolerated and will be addressed by the Management.

If possible, please communicate any change in your normal schedule to Management via phone or email.

All parents are expected to act in a responsible manner while on campus. Please help to assure the safety of all our children by following our campus one-way traffic pattern, securing doors and gates behind you as you leave and holding your child's hand at all times while in the parking lots. While you may be tempted to hold the door open for a fellow parent, please refrain. We may have working knowledge of custody issues, security threats, etc, and each approved parent/guardian will have a working proximity card. If there is ever a person suspected to be under the influence or acting in an erratic or unsettling way, please notify Management immediately.

Children will not be permitted to leave NCS with anyone other than a parent or person listed on their enrollment form without permission from a parent. In the event an emergency requires someone not listed on the form to pick up a child, please call or e-Management to make arrangements. Children will not be released to anyone appearing to be impaired and unsuitable to drive. All visitors to our campus will be asked to present their photo identification for the purpose of screening through our electronic security system.

Discipline and Classroom Guidance

NCS promotes problem solving and social skills in young children. Our philosophy includes:

- Teaching children to evaluate a situation and make reasonable choices
- Expecting children to take responsibility for their own actions
- Encouraging children to recognize and express their feelings appropriately
- Modeling how to be considerate and fair when solving problems with others

Some examples of age appropriate discipline are:

- Birth to 1 year – redirection to other activities
- 1 year to 2 years – redirection and verbal requests to change behavior (stating what is desired i.e. “Feet go on the floor please.”); If a child is throwing blocks, the teacher will request appropriate behavior, and if it is not met, the child will be relocated to another activity.
- 2 years and up – redirection, verbal requests to change behavior and natural consequences (If a child is throwing blocks at his friends, the friends may not want to play with him. This is a natural consequence, and conversation around this event will take place between the teacher and the child.)
- There may be times where relocating a child to a cozy corner or alternative rest spot is needed in order for the child to regain control of their body and emotions. This will be done in a calm and loving manner.
- NCS believes in positive reinforcement and will strive to “praise the positives”.

NCS will utilize redirection as much as possible. Any form of corporal punishment is strictly forbidden at NCS and is grounds for immediate dismissal. NCS does not allow yelling, threatening, shaming or humiliating children as a means of discipline. Should behavioral issues continue to occur, teachers will document these on the appropriate form to aid in finding a resolution. A conference may be requested to help resolve the concern. Outlying programs and specialist information is available through Management, should a family need resources. Because NCS has to ensure the safety of all our children, we reserve the right to disenroll if the safety of our staff or children are at risk due to the behavior of a child. Nashville Christian School respectfully requests parents share any and all information concerning a child’s medical condition, developmental history and any assessments or evaluations which have been performed.

Biting Policy

Biting and/or being bitten are common occurrences in early childhood programs. NCS realizes biting can be a frustrating problem for both the children and parents. We implement a proactive approach hoping to minimize triggers which often lead to biting as well as monitoring children closely and redirecting when appropriate. Ultimately, we have to consider the health and safety of all of the children in our care, so we have ascribed to the following policy:

- **If a child in a Two, Toddler or Infant room bites 3 times in one day, we’ll send that child home for the day. We have a zero tolerance policy in our Threes and Pre-K rooms,** as we expect certain verbal and social skills development. Of

course, considerations will be given to those with developmental delays and special needs.

Both parents of the child who has bitten and the child who was bitten will be notified of the incident. The reports are anonymous to protect privacy, and teachers are expected to keep this information confidential. NCS has a more detailed biting policy form and is available upon request.

Clothing/Personal Belongings

Please label everything your child brings to school. If necessary, teaching staff may mark items with child's name in permanent marker.

Outside play is important for healthy development. You should always assume that your child's class will go outside unless weather does not permit. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather. Appropriate jackets or coats as well as mittens/gloves and hats are needed during cold weather. NCS preschool children from time to time will experience supervised outdoor play in the rain or after rain. Care will be taken to assure the surrounding area is safe.

Children in our infant through three year old classes should wear their choice of washable, comfortable play clothes suitable for indoor and outdoor play. Little girls should wear shorts under their dresses. Expect that children will get messy while at NCS and dress them accordingly. Tennis or other rubber-soled shoes are required for active play. Open toed sandals, slides or crocs are not allowed. A change of clothing should be sent with every child and should be appropriate for the current season. If necessary, please send several changes of underwear.

Nashville Christian School Pre-K children are asked to adhere to the following dress code. Girls and boys are permitted to wear pants or shorts made of denim, khaki or navy twill and a solid white, navy or orange polo shirt. In addition to pants and shorts, girls may wear white, navy or orange polo dresses or twill skirts or jumpers provided shorts are worn underneath. Navy polos or polo dresses are required for chapel day which is Wednesday. Spirit shirt day and special dress days will be announced through the classroom. Pre-K children will be asked to change into school provided clothing if they arrive at school out of dress code.

Food

Children at NCS preschool are provided a nutritious morning and afternoon snack as well as a hot lunch. Milk is always served with lunch.

Parents of infants should inquire with their child's teacher about specific information concerning bottles and baby food. All bottles should come to school assembled & prepared, ready to feed with child's name clearly indicated. A current infant feeding plan should be on file with the child's teacher. Parents are asked to record the last feeding time daily upon arrival. Please do not expect that teachers can begin feeding your infant within the first hour after arrival. This allows teachers to plan for the needs of all our babies.

NCS is a **nut free** environment. Food brought from home cannot contain peanuts or nuts of any kind nor can it be labeled with any alert about contact with nuts. This includes products processed in a nut facility. **If you are bringing in birthday treats for the class, these need to be pre-packaged (not homemade) and contain no nuts and not produced in a nut facility.** We will not be able to serve the items if these requirements are not met.

Breakfast may be brought to school from home and should be complete with everything your child will need including utensils and drink. Meals brought from home should be nutritious and food with a high content of sugar is strongly discouraged. Breakfast time will end at 8:00 a.m. and morning snack is served around 8:30.

NCS does not serve caffeinated drinks or sugar added drinks and request that parents refrain from sending these drinks to school. NCS is proud of our nutritionally balanced meals and snacks in keeping with FDA guidelines, federal initiatives for health and The Gold Sneaker certification. We strongly request that any meals brought from home reflect these standards by avoiding packaged sugary food items. We will not serve candy sent from home as a part of lunch.

Naptime

Children will have a naptime every day. NCS will provide an approved nap mat or cot for each child. Each family is responsible for bringing in a sheet and blanket (if sleeping on a mat or cot), and these items will be sent home to be laundered on the last day of the week. Although not every child will sleep, it is important that every child rest.

Communication

NCS will communicate information to you via parent meetings, periodic newsletters, daily sheets, classroom notes, cell phone texts alerts and emails. Feel free to contact the NCS preschool office at 615-356-5605 with any questions or concerns.

We also encourage parents to communicate with their child's teacher through the teacher's NCS emailed. These are available through the teacher's bio placed in the classroom and available upon request.

Staff members are not permitted to exchange information via social media outlets with parents if that teacher is part of their child's current teaching team. NCS teachers are not permitted to share any photos or videos of NCS children on their personal social media sites.

Curriculum

NCS Preschool's unique multi sensory, brain based teaching curriculum is based on weekly themes chosen to stimulate a child's individual curiosity and broaden their understanding of the world around them. Each weekly theme contains an age appropriate academic component including numbers, letters, colors and shapes as well as a Bible concept. Classrooms are equipped with materials and furnishings which both entertain and challenge

children fostering a sense of accomplishment. Daily activities are chosen to enhance development and encourage social maturation.

NCS curriculum meets or exceeds developmental standards as set by the Tennessee Department of Education. Following is a summary of targeted goals for each age group. Nashville Christian is committed to excellence in early childhood programming. For this reason, we offer a language rich classroom environment which incorporates visual scheduling, sensory activities such as mid-line awareness and stress the singing-reading connection. During student directed activities, trained teachers encourage high-level play supporting language development and literacy skills.

NCS teachers will also review your child's development in accordance with CDC guidelines. These developmental milestone progression checks will occur throughout the year, and a conference will be arranged upon request.

Copies of each age group's curriculum goals are available upon request.

Video Usage

TV usage is kept to a minimum at NCS preschool. Each class (toddlers through Pre-K) has the opportunity to have screen time one morning and one afternoon each week for a length of time not to exceed one hour. An alternative activity is always offered.

Medical and Health Policies

Expect your child's teacher to be interested in his/her health. The information shared between home and school will foster a healthier environment. It is important that teachers know if your child is on any kind of medication. NCS teachers will conduct a health check each morning with your child. NCS teachers may request more information regarding how your child slept, ate, and what his/her disposition was before arriving at school, and will document any injuries/accidents that occur on site.

Please notify Management if your child has a communicable disease, for example, chicken pox, head lice, ringworm, or conjunctivitis, even though he/she will not be at school. This will enable teachers to take precautions to minimize the risk of infecting other children and to alert parents of other children to be on the lookout for symptoms of the illness involved.

NCS is not prepared to accommodate sick children. Please do not send your child to school with any communicable illness. Before bringing your child back to school after an illness, he/she should be symptom-free at least 24 hours without medication. In some cases, NCS may require that a doctor's note be provided stating the child is not contagious and may return to school.

NCS can administer antibiotic medications prescribed by a physician when accompanied by written parental authorization each day the medication is to be given. The medication and written authorization must be received each day by preschool staff and no medication can be left at school over night. NCS preschool will not routinely administer medications used to reduce fever, cough or allergy symptoms. In the case of children with life-

threatening medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, severe allergic conditions, seizure disorders, etc. medications directly related to that condition may be stored under Management's supervision and administered according to instructions.

Additionally, teachers will accept sunscreen and non-prescription diaper ointments and powder if these guidelines are followed: the child's name must be on the container and these items will be stored in an appropriate area in the classroom. We will need a signed release allowing NCS to apply creams. Parents are asked to apply sunscreen to their child prior to arriving at school each morning.

NCS will exclude children who display the following symptoms:

- Fever – defined as having a temperature of 100.4°F or higher
- Diarrhea – runny/watery/bloody stool occurring 2 or more times in an hour
- Vomiting
- Atypical Body Rash
- Sore Throat – if accompanied by a fever
- Severe Coughing/Wheezing – child gets red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched whooping sound after coughing
- Eye-Discharge – thick mucus or pus draining from the eye, or pink eye
- Yellowish Skin or Eyes
- Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requiring more attention than teacher can provide without risking the health and safety of other children in care

We will contact you if your child displays the above symptoms and provide you with a health care referral form upon your arrival. We require children to be picked up within 1 hour. For more information on our Illness Policy, please contact Management.

Our teachers are responsible for maintaining licensing standards for cleaning. Our teachers utilize a soap and water solution and a bleach and water solution. NCS follows these daily health practices along with appropriate hand washing and diapering procedures.

Children's Protective Services

Tennessee children protection laws require any individual or organization having knowledge of suspected child abuse or neglect to report it to a juvenile judge, the Department of Children's Services, or a local law enforcement official.

NCS will abide by Child Protective Services laws and will report any suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children's Services. As part of Child Protective Services requirements, personal safety curriculum will be taught to Preschoolers.

To Report Child Abuse: 1-877-237-0004

TN Childcare Complaint Hotline: 1-800-462-8261

Licensing Requirements

The comprehensive licensing requirements for childcare centers is available upon request and at <https://publications.tnsosfiles.com/rules/0520/0520-12/0520-12-01.20180801.pdf>.