St. John Christian Preschool
St. John Lutheran Church
200 South Main Street
Charles City, Iowa 50616
641-228-7274
E-mail: wfranke@stjohncharlescity.com
Website: http://sjcpreschool.org

Please save this handbook for the 2022-2023 school year.
St. John Christian Preschool

We are so very excited to welcome you and your family to
St. John Christian Preschool!

**Purpose**
We believe that the preschool experience should be a time of fun, warmth, security, exploration and discovery. We are committed to providing an excellent early childhood education within a loving, Christian environment.

**Goals**
Our goals are (1) be a place of Christian growth, proclaiming God’s Word for kindling and nurturing your child’s faith, (2) provide an educational program that is appropriate to the developmental needs of the children and (3) serve the mission of the church by providing evangelistic outreach to the children of the community and their parents.

**Curriculum**
We provide an eclectic, theme-based curriculum that strives to encompass all areas of development. Using *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, we encourage purposeful play in our varied interest areas that include: block play, dramatic play, a discovery center, sensory activities, a writing center, toys and games, cooking activities, art activities, music activities and a variety of large motor games and activities.

**Assessment**
We base our assessment off of the *Teaching Strategies GOLD* and the Iowa Early Learning Standards (IELS). In order to ensure we are meeting specific goals aimed at laying a strong foundation for our students, we also communicate annually with the Charles City School District’s kindergarten teachers. We assess each child in the fall and again in the spring. A copy of your child’s assessments will be sent home in his/her Communication Folder.

**License**
The preschool is fully licensed by the Iowa State Department of Human Services. All staff members hold current certificates in *Infant, Child and Adult CPR, First Aid and Universal Precautions*. We also receive ongoing training in *Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse*. Iowa Code Section 232.69 requires a preschool employee to report to the Department of Human Services within 24 hours when, in the course of working with a child, he/she has reason to believe that the child has suffered sexual abuse, physical abuse or neglect. All staff members receive employee orientation, complete all required initial training within the first 90 days of employment (a minimum of ten training hours of professional development), and annual on-going professional development, thereafter.
**Director/Lead Teacher**

Whitney Franke is our director/lead teacher. Whitney holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Elementary Education with an endorsement in Reading from Luther College and an additional endorsement in Early Childhood from Buena Vista University. Whitney and her husband, Brandon, have a daughter, Zuri (3.5 years old). They are members of St. John Lutheran Church.

**Assistant Teacher/On-Site Supervisor**

Carleen Laue is our assistant teacher/on-site supervisor. Carleen holds her Generalist Para-educator Certificate through the AEA and IBOEE. Carleen and her husband, Mike, have two children, Hana (22) and Joshua (20). They are members of St. John Lutheran Church.

**Foster Grandparent**

Grandma Cindy Kinney is our all-day Foster Grandma. This will be Grandma Cindy’s 4th year at SJCP. She is the mother of three children, grandmother of seven children and the great-grandmother to one little one.

**Registration**

Registration weeks for the upcoming school year are held in February at the preschool. The first week of registration is for families currently enrolled at the preschool. The second week of registration is open to the public. A physical form and the required immunization card are given out at registration time. The other required forms and information are distributed in late July.

A non-refundable $30 registration fee (3 Year Olds ONLY) per semester is required either at the time of registration and again in December or a one-time registration fee of $50 may be paid at the time of registration.

Students that are 4 years old and accessing SWVPP funds are NOT required to pay a registration fee.

**Program Evaluation, Accountability & Continuous Improvement (Standard 10.15)**

The program offers staff and families opportunities to assist in making decisions to improve the program. Collaborative and shared decision making is used with all participants to build trust and enthusiasm for making program changes. Staff and families meet at least annually to consult on program planning and ongoing program operations.

**Preschool Board**

The Preschool Board is a recognized part of the Parish Education Board of St. John Lutheran Church. The board is made up of 6 members with each member serving a 3-year term. You are greatly encouraged to share ideas, plan activities and express opinions regarding policies and goals to any of the board members and staff.

Current board members are:

- Brittany King  
  - President
- Jessica Hoeft  
  - Vice-President
- Leslie Trettin  
  - Secretary

**Area Education Agency 267 (AEA)**

We are very blessed to have access to our local Area Education Agency 267 (AEA) right here in Charles City. In the event that a parent may need reading assistance, the staff at SJCP would be happy to help. Any translation assistance would be referred to our local AEA.

AEA 267 supports educators, parents, and the communities they serve as we work together toward one ultimate goal—to improve student learning. AEA 267 provides support in the areas of quality instructional materials, curriculum planning, best practices in teaching and learning, safe and caring learning environment, appropriate educational opportunities for all
learners, technology planning, professional development, assessment, special education, leadership development, and more.

To learn more about our local AEA office, please visit their website at http://www.aea267.k12.ia.us.

Staff/Registration/AEA 267 (QPPS 6.1-5)

Parent Informational Meetings (QPPS 7.1)
A parent informational meeting will be held for each age group prior to the start of the school year. During this adults-only meeting, parents will have the opportunity to turn in the required paperwork and network with other parents within their child’s age group. A short informational meeting will be held highlighting the important policies and procedures for the preschool.

Family “Get-Acquainted” Open House and Year-End Events (QPPS 7.1)
Registered families are notified of the time and date of our "get acquainted" Family Open Houses that take place the week before the first day of school. Parents and family members are encouraged to attend. The purpose of this event is to ease the transition from home to preschool by allowing the children to explore the facility and meet the staff in the comfortable presence of mom, dad or other family members. School pictures will also be taken at this time. Special year-end events will be held for both the 3/4-year-old friends and 4/5-year-old friends. Watch for more information coming home later in the year.

Admissions-Eligibility
St. John Christian Preschool makes no discrimination in admission or determination of enrollment on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion or handicapping condition.

A child must be 3 years of age by September 15th (and toilet trained) to enroll in the 3 year-old program. and 4 years of age by September 15th to enroll in the 4/5-year-old program. (4 year old students are NOT required to be toilet trained.)

Your child may experience a period of adjustment when beginning preschool. If this adjustment is difficult, the staff and family can meet to discuss any special considerations related to special needs, goal setting or other concerns that may influence success for your child. If your child is not yet ready for the group experience or if his/her needs are not met in the group setting, we may ask to dismiss your child. We believe the child should not remain in school unless he/she derives some benefit or positive experience from the program.

Student/Teacher Ratio
The preschool must follow the Iowa Department of Human Services’ guidelines for student/teacher ratios. Currently, the State of Iowa’s guidelines are one adult to every ten 3 year olds and one adult to every ten 4 year olds.

Attendance
In the event of an extended illness or family vacation, full tuition will be expected so that a position in the class can be held for your child. Please notify the preschool if your child will be gone for the day, an extended length of time or if it becomes necessary to withdraw your child for any reason.

Meetings/Open Houses/Admissions-Eligibility/Ratios/Attendance
**Class Supplies - 3 Year Olds ONLY**
4 Year Old Students are NOT required to provide supplies.

Your child should bring the following items:
- a box of **8 basic color** crayons in the original box
- a change of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear and socks) for any accidents or spills – Please make this spare outfit all-season appropriate.
- backpack that is at least 9”x12”

Please label all items with your child’s name. You need only label the crayon box – not each individual crayon and the backpack may be labeled toward the top on the inside if you prefer not to write your child’s name on the outside.

We are also asking each family to contribute **ONE-to-TWO** bottles of Clorox Anywhere Hard Surface Sanitizing spray (white bottle, blue label) and one other item from the following list:
- 2 rolls of Paper Towels
- 2 large pack of Napkins
- 1 pack of Markers

*These items do not need to be labeled with your child’s name.*

**Giving Tree**
The St. John Christian Preschool Giving Tree can be found in the hallway outside of the preschool center. Often some of our art projects or cooking projects require “extra-special” supplies. Some items can be purchased on a trip to the grocery store or discount store (i.e. sequins or 1 dozen eggs) and some items you may already have lying around your house (i.e. wrapping paper scraps or paper towel tubes). If your family is inclined to help purchase or donate an item, please pull that item off the giving tree and return it by the date listed. The teachers are very appreciative of any donation made to the preschool, but we do not want anyone to feel obligated to donate at any time.

**Classroom Visits**
We encourage you to visit the classroom any time. We do ask that you wait until the 3rd week of school in order to allow your child time to feel comfortable with the routine. If you would like to share a special occupation, interest or skill, please let us know!
Class Schedules
Monday-Wednesday-Friday AM - $105.00 per month
This class is for 3-4 year olds who will not be going to kindergarten the following fall. This class meets from 8:30-11:30.

**The above class supports a class size of 20 students.

SWVPP (FREE 4-yr-old Preschool) Tues-Wed-Thurs-Fri PM - $0.00 per month
This class is for 4 year olds who are age-eligible for kindergarten the following fall. This class meets from 12:30-3:30.

5-Day Program PM (Mon through Fri) - $50.00 per month
This class is for 4-5-6 year olds who are age-eligible for kindergarten the following fall. This class meets Monday through Friday, from 12:30-3:30.

**The above two classes support a combined class size of 20 students.

Tuition - 3 Year Olds ONLY
Tuition is due the first class day of each month. Your child’s tuition envelope will be sent home with your child at the end of each month within his or her Communication Folder. Please return the envelope with the tuition enclosed by the first class day of the following month. You may either send it with your child in his or her Communication Folder or personally bring it to the preschool or church office. If tuition is not received within two weeks, a letter will be sent stating that your child will not be allowed to return to school until payment is received. Tuition payments must also be current before registration for the upcoming semester will be accepted.

We understand that there may be unusual circumstances that make it difficult to pay at the stated time. If so, PLEASE visit with the director to designate an alternate date.

Tuition Assistance and Scholarships
Information concerning the Floyd-Mitchell-Chickasaw Early Childhood Iowa (ECI) funding and our preschool scholarships can be found in the summer packet.

Snacks
Your child will be asked to bring a nutritional snack and drink to share on a rotating basis. The federal government has established specific guidelines for preschool snacks that we must follow. If furnishing a snack is a hardship for you, please let a teacher know. Details will be provided with the monthly snack calendar. Please note any dietary restrictions on your child’s information form. One of your child’s snack times will be scheduled as closely as possible to his/her birthday or half-birthday. A monthly calendar will be sent home at the end of each month for the upcoming month. **4-yr-old classes (SWVPP) – Please see additional handout referring to your specific snack regulations.

Field Trips
You must sign the permission statement on the Children’s Information Form to allow your child to leave the church property. You will be notified prior to each activity.

Clothing-Personal Belongings
Please dress your child in play clothes that he/she can manage by himself/herself and are comfortable, sturdy and washable. Even though we take precautions during our creative times, we may still have messes. Clothing should be appropriate for the weather. All outerwear (coat, sweatshirt, mittens, boots, hats, etc.) MUST be marked with your child’s name.

We ask that your child not bring toys or other items from home. Each child will have an opportunity to bring a toy from home when they are the “Star Student”. However, we WILL NOT allow any real and/or toy guns, knives or other items that could be considered weapons. This is to discourage aggressive behavior and is in agreement with the policy of the Charles City public schools.

Class Schedules/Tuition/Scholarships/Snacks/Field Trips/Clothing-Personal Belongings
Arrival
Children will be greeted by a teacher at the top of the stairs starting NO SOONER than 5 minutes before their class time (8:25 for AM and 12:25 for PM). Please DO NOT drop off your child before this time. Children will enter the preschool by the church office door that faces the parking lot and is just east of the sanctuary entrance. The adult dropping off the child will be asked to sign-in the child leaving an emergency number for the day and also the information on whom will be picking up the child that day.

You may choose to drop off your child using our drive-through method or you are welcome to walk your child down to our preschool center. If you choose to drop off your child using the drive-through method, please pull up alongside the curb near the church office door and walk your child into the building, where a teacher will meet you. The teacher will also collect the sign-in information at that time.

Dismissal
We ask that your child’s pick-up person be at the preschool to pick up your child 5 minutes prior to the end of our preschool class time. This will ensure that dismissal goes quickly and efficiently. Your child can be picked up using the drive-through method or you may wait in the hallway outside of the preschool center to personally pick up your preschooler. If you choose to pick up your child using the drive-through method, please pull up alongside the curb near the church office door. Please pass on this information to any carpool drivers you may have.

The person listed on the sign-in sheet MUST pick up children. This person should also be listed as an authorized adult on the Children’s Information Form. We WILL NOT release a child to anyone who is not listed on the form, unless a parent advises us otherwise. If there is a change in the pick-up person for the day, please call the preschool before dismissal time to let us know of the change so our dismissal procedure can go smoothly.

Transportation
St. John Christian Preschool does not provide transportation for the children. However, we often use the city taxi for drop-off and pick-up. We also have the church bus and/or taxi for use on field trips throughout town. Transportation for emergencies will be handled after calling 911. The local ambulance will take the person(s) in need of assistance.

Weather Closings and Delays
If the Charles City public school cancels classes prior to our 8:30 starting time, we will also cancel classes. If the public school’s starting time is delayed up to 1 ½ hours, we will begin at our regular time. However, if it is delayed 2 hours or more, we will cancel our morning class only.

If an early dismissal announcement occurs prior to 12:00, we will cancel our afternoon class. (The exception is dismissal due to heat.) However, if it is announced after 12:00, we will remain in session and it will be your decision as to your child’s attendance. Appropriate announcements will be made on our Facebook page and the local radio station KCHA (95.9).

Snow Days
We do not make up snow days, unless it is over the allotted “free” days amount. We do not charge for the classes in August, so those days are considered “free.” If we have snow days over that “free” amount, we will first use the next scheduled “No School” day and then add them on to the end of the year, in May.

Communication
We strive for open communication between parents and the school. The teachers will keep you informed of classroom happenings through notes sent home within the Communication Folder. Please feel free to use the Communication Folder to send any notes to the school. We will check it daily and hope that you can do the same. We also encourage phone calls and we enjoy visiting at arrival and dismissal times. Parent/teacher conferences will be held in September for first-time students’ parents and in February/March for the 4/5 year old’s parents. Assessments will be sent home in the fall and spring for all classes. If at any time you have a question, concern or comment, please contact one of the teachers. We are very interested in your viewpoint.

Arrival/Dismissal/Transportation/Weather Closings/Snow Days/Communication
**Discipline**
We believe that discipline is the process of encouraging children to learn self-control and guide them to socially acceptable interactions with other individuals and materials. Kind, consistent, but firm discipline with positive redirection will be used. If necessary, children will be asked to take “a break” and change their heart before coming back to a group or play setting. There will be NO physical punishment such as spanking or any punishment, physical or verbal, which causes humiliation, fear, pain or discomfort.

**Preschool Board**
The Preschool Board is a recognized part of the Parish Education Board of St. John Lutheran Church. The board is made up of 6 members with each member serving a 3-year term. You are greatly encouraged to share ideas, plan activities and express opinions regarding policies and goals to any of the board members and staff.

Current board members are:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brittany King</td>
<td>President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Hoeft</td>
<td>Vice-President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leslie Trettin</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
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**Health-Illness**
A physical form or medical update form that has been signed by a physician must be returned on or before the first day of school. Also, an immunization certificate must be returned on or before the first day of school with the physician/health official’s signature and date; child’s name and birth date; vaccine type and date administered. By law, we can only accept an Iowa Department of Public Health Certificate of Immunization card with all the information filled in completely. Please refer to our full Health Policy (separate pamphlet) for further information.

Please call the school if your child is sick and unable to attend.

**Special Health Needs & Food Allergies**
For each child with special health care needs or food allergies or special nutrition needs, the child’s health provider gives the program an individualized care plan that is prepared in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child’s care.

The program protects children with food allergies from contact with the problem food. The program asks families of a child with food allergies to give consent for posting information about that child’s food allergy and, if consent is given, then posts that information in the food preparation area and in the areas of the facility the child uses so it is a visual reminder to all those who interact with the child during the program day.

**Maintaining a Healthful Environment**
The following standard precautions will be put in place to ensure we maintain a healthful environment for students:

*Procedures for standard precautions are used and include the following:*

a. **Surfaces that may come in contact with potentially infectious body fluids must be disposable or made of a material that can be sanitized.**

b. **Staff use barriers and techniques that minimize contact of mucous membranes or of openings in skin with potentially infectious body fluids and reduce the spread of infectious disease.**

c. **When spills of body fluids occur, staff clean them up immediately with detergent followed by water rinsing.**

d. **After cleaning, staff sanitize nonporous surfaces by using the procedure for sanitizing designated changing surfaces described in the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table.**

e. **Staff clean rugs and carpeting by blotting, spot cleaning with a detergent-disinfectant, and shampooing or steam cleaning.**

f. **Staff dispose of contaminated materials and diapers in a plastic bag with a secure tie that is placed in a closed container.**
Medication
You are required to fill out a Medication Release form if your child is to use any medicine during school hours. The prescription MUST be in the original container with your child’s full name, birth date and dosage information on the pharmacy's label.

Emergency
In the case of serious injury, appropriate medical attention will be sought and given immediately, following the information given on the Medical Consent Form. You will be notified as quickly as possible. Accidental minor bumps or bruises will be reported to you when your child is picked up. Each child will be covered in case of accidental injury through the preschool's insurance. There will be no cost to you for this coverage.

If there is a need for evacuation of our building (damage from fire, tornado, or other situations) we will take the children down Gilbert St. to the museum (phone # 228-1099). Please tune to KCHA (95.9 FM) for updated information.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this handbook. If you have any questions that have not been addressed or there is something you are unsure of, please feel free to call.

Thank you for choosing St. John Christian Preschool for your child’s earliest educational experience! We feel honored and blessed to be part of this special journey with your child and with your family.