

FRIENDS IN FAITH HANDBOOK 2026 - 2027

MISSION

Friends in Faith Christian Preschool is an outreach of the Liverpool First Presbyterian Church to children of our congregation and the surrounding community. We welcome children ages 2 - 5 of all races, faiths, genders, and nationalities.

Our mission is to provide a well balanced, developmentally appropriate academic start for your child with opportunities to grow physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. We strive to meet the individual needs of each child, modeling God's love and Christian values in a caring community.

ENROLLMENT

ADMISSION - Entrance is available to children ages two, three, four and five without regard to race, religion, national origin, economic status or gender. All children must reach the program age by December 1st of the year enrolled. Applications are accepted on a first come, first serve basis.

We strive to have open communication with our families and we desire success for each child. In order to ensure success, we ask each family to advise the school of any special needs. A child is eligible for the program unless a special need is present or arises that the program is unable to accommodate. All pertinent documentation must be turned in before classes begin.

It is expected that all 3 and 4 year olds will be toilet trained. We offer scheduled use of the bathroom, and, of course, will take a child if he/she asks or shows signs that the bathroom is needed. Although we understand that accidents happen, families may be called to the preschool to change their child's clothing, and/or the child will be dismissed from the program until toilet training is accomplished. (Please see the "Changing Policy".)

REGISTRATION – A non-refundable fee of \$50 is required to secure a place in the program. This fee may be paid by cash, check, or money order and made payable to "Friends in Faith Christian Preschool".

WITHDRAWAL – Two (2) weeks written notice is required prior to withdrawing a child.

CLOTHING

Children should wear comfortable, washable "play clothes" that can get dirty. Many learning and outdoor activities can be "messy" and children should not be afraid to participate for fear of getting dirty. Clothing with an elastic waist is easiest for a child to manipulate and to pull down in a toileting emergency.

Please label all clothing that your child will remove at school, including hats and mittens, with your child's name or initials. **Children should wear supportive shoes.** Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are best. Please do not send your child with open-toed shoes for safety reasons.

Please make sure your child has an extra set of clothing including socks in their backpack.

DAYS AND TIMING

BEFORE CLASSES BEGIN – Prior to the beginning of the school year, **new children and families** will be invited to visit the school briefly at a designated time. The teachers will be available to greet your child. The children will have an opportunity to enter the building, see the classroom and become more comfortable with the preschool.

ARRIVAL – Please do your best to be prompt! The self-directed playtime at the beginning of our preschool day is an essential time for the children. It gives them time to acclimate to the school setting, socialize with their peers, choose what activities or toys they would like to play with, and practice life skills of sharing, waiting, and cooperating with others. This also gives the teachers the opportunity to spend time interacting and playing with the children. Children's play is their very important WORK!

The outside doors will remain locked at all times for your child's safety. Preschool staff and/or a vetted volunteer will be at the door to admit the preschool families from 9:30 to 9:35.

If you and your child arrive after the doors have been locked, please enter the outer doors and push the round button on the gray box to the right of the double doors. If you stand in front of that box, you can be identified; someone will talk to you and buzz you in.

DISMISSAL - Please do your best to be prompt! Preschool staff or a volunteer will be at the door from 11:30 to 11:35 for the toddler time class and 12:00 to 12:05 for all others. Children will not be allowed to leave with anyone except those individuals designated by the family on the written permission form. Please give a written note to the teacher if your child is to ride home with another student or anyone not listed as an authorized person on the permission form. For safety reasons, we will ask those we do not recognize to show identification.

In an emergency, please make arrangements for someone to pick up your child and notify the director immediately. The person picking up your child must have proper photo identification, preferably a driver's license.

If you are separated or divorced, please submit a copy of any court-issued documents referring to child custody. A child cannot be withheld from leaving with a parent unless there is a copy of such a court order in our files.

When dropping off or picking up your child, please watch your child carefully as vehicles cut through the parking lot to avoid the traffic signal. Also, do not leave your car running or leave young children unattended in your vehicle!

HOLIDAYS AND SNOW DAYS - The preschool will follow the Liverpool Central School District calendar. If Liverpool schools are closed due to weather, we will be closed. If Liverpool schools open with a one-hour delay, all classes will begin at 10:30 and dismiss at noon. If there is a two-hour delay, we will cancel classes for that day. The school's status will be shared on local news channels and the ClassDojo app.

SNACKS

Snack time provides a valuable opportunity for children to learn many social skills associated with eating among peers and adults. Good manners, taking turns, sharing, serving food, giving thanks to God and cleaning up afterwards are modeled and practiced. Friends in Faith will provide the snack.

HEALTH

A medical report form will be filled out by each child's physician and must be turned in to the director by September 10th. Otherwise, your child will not be able to attend school.

Children who become ill at school will be moved to a quiet area and will receive necessary attention until families can be notified. Please plan to pick up your child as quickly as possible for their comfort and the well being of the other children.

If your child is ill and will not be in school, please inform the director at (315) 457-4090 or through the Class Dojo app.

A child exhibiting the following illnesses should not be sent to school or will be required to be removed from the school: diarrhea, temperature elevation, vomiting, a severe cold (runny nose, runny eyes, cough, and/or congestion), any contagious disease or condition including Covid-19, ringworm, impetigo, lice, scabies, pink eye, etc., or any condition that keeps your child from feeling well enough to enjoy being and playing with the other children.

A child sick with diarrhea, vomiting, fever, or other contagious illnesses must remain at home until *symptom-free* for a MINIMUM of 24 hours.

The preschool reserves the right to request a physician's release for any medical/health condition before returning to the classroom. Please let us know immediately if your child develops a communicable disease so we can inform the other preschool families, if necessary.

With any young children, minor accidents (bumps, scrapes, scratches) will occur. We will attempt to let you know the circumstances if such an accident occurs. In the case of a serious accident, the school staff will render first aid while contacting parents. If needed, the school will call emergency personnel.

SPECIAL EVENTS

CONFERENCES – Parent/Teacher Conferences will be scheduled per request in the *Beginning Friends* Class (3 year old's) and will be offered for all students in the *Pre-K* class (4 year old's) in the spring.

BIRTHDAYS/SPECIAL DAYS – Family members (we may limit the # visitors) are strongly encouraged to attend their child's *special day* in the classroom. Please see the classroom teacher if you would like to bring in a special store bought snack that day.

The celebration must be kept simple so that the focus will be on the child – not the celebration. Please, no goodie bags!

In the Beginning Friends and Pre-K classes if you would like, your family may bring a book to share with the class. The children really enjoy when a family member or another special person reads a book to their classmates.

THE CALENDAR AND EVENTS MAY BE ADJUSTED WHEN NECESSARY

FAMILY EVENTS – *Happy Birthday, Jesus Party (December), Friendship Parade (Spring), Jump for Jesus Fundraiser (Spring), Graduation/Moving Up Day (June)*

HOLIDAYS - We will celebrate the following holidays in a Christian and child focused way, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter.

FIELD TRIPS – The staff will arrange family field trips during the school year. Families will be notified prior to all field trips and must accompany and drive their child. If this is not possible, please arrange for another adult to transport your child and inform the director in writing prior to the field trip. You will also be notified as to any fees and when they must be paid.

*Friends in Faith Families are also invited to attend intergenerational events at the church ie; WE Sundays and Hanging of the Greens.

TUITION

The tuition is figured on an annual basis and may be paid in full or monthly There is a 5% tuition discount for the youngest sibling enrolled in the FIF Christian Preschool. For those paying monthly, tuition is due by the **5th of each month**.

Tuition is to be paid with a check, money order or EXACT cash. An overpayment will be applied to the next month's tuition.

There is a \$20 late fee for any tuition payments received after the 5th of the month unless the director is informed prior to the fifth. We will distribute late notices and failure to fulfill the financial commitment will result in dismissal from the preschool.

Tuition may be given to the director or mailed to the preschool (603 Tulip Street, Liverpool, NY 13088). Make checks payable to "Friends in Faith Christian Preschool".

The first month's tuition and registration fee are non-refundable. We will not adjust tuition for school closures, holidays, inclement weather, or when a child is unable to attend for an extended period of time. If your child withdraws from the program during the school year and wants to return during the same school year, providing there is availability, another \$50 registration fee will be imposed.

A \$35 fee will be charged for all checks returned by the bank.

SOCIAL MEDIA & PHOTOS

Throughout the year we take pictures and or video recordings of school projects and activities. Sharing these with parents helps to connect families with the activities at the preschool. At times we share information, news, events, activities and pictures with the community through our website and "social media" (facebook, instagram). **We will never reference your child by name or provide any specific information regarding your child.** A parent who does not wish to have their child's photos shared on social media must provide a written notice of no-publicity to the director otherwise the lack of written notice will be seen as giving permission to take and share photos.

CHANGING POLICY

Toddler Time Class

In our toddler class, authorized teachers will change pullups and or diapers. We will encourage use of the bathroom when an individual child indicates interest in toilet training.

Beginning Friends and Pre-K Class

We expect that all 3 and 4-year-olds will be toilet trained. We understand that accidents happen, however in our 3- and 4-year-old classes, if there is an ongoing inability to use the bathroom, families may be called to the preschool to change their child's clothing, and/or the child may be dismissed from the program until toilet training is accomplished. Parents shall bring a change of clothing in the child's school bag (including shoes & socks) in case of an accident.

The church's "Child and Youth Protection Policy" states:

"A 'two-adult' rule shall be in effect meaning that no staff member or volunteer is to be left alone with any child at any time without a 'justifiable reason' pertaining to the child's well-being. If alone, every effort shall be made to meet in an open room with a window and another person nearby.

Following these guidelines, we are giving you the opportunity to grant permission for our staff members to change your child's clothes or to assist him/her, if necessary, with personal hygiene. Please see the last page to indicate permission.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

We believe children learn by example. Our teachers model and teach behavior that is courteous and compassionate. Our example of honest and fair action with all children, loving and calming words, and gentle hugs of encouragement are the most powerful ways that we teach children how to live in the world. Our discipline plan teaches children to respect themselves and the rights of other children and staff. Children are encouraged to develop self-control over their behavior.

Teachers encourage positive behavior in the following ways:

- Defining boundaries clearly and consistently
- Praising specific behaviors
- Redirecting children whose behavior is inappropriate to another activity
- Providing "time out" for children who are endangering themselves, endangering others, or repeatedly disrupting activities

If there ever is a situation that cannot be resolved in the classroom, the teacher(s) will initiate contact with the family to discuss concerns. If the problem continues, a conference will be scheduled with the family, teacher(s), and director. A plan will then be developed to determine the course of action to be taken. Please keep us informed of any changes in your family life that may affect your child's emotional responses and behavior.

In addition, any child whose behavior is observed to be overly disruptive and/or physically aggressive (determined by teachers and director) towards classmates or teachers and/or requires teachers to physically lift or guide the child in order to keep them and/or others safe will not be allowed to stay enrolled at Friends in Faith.

The teachers, steering committee and myself are here to provide the best preschool experience for you and your child. If you have any questions I will be happy to answer them for you. We look forward to growing together and are honored that you have chosen to be part of this special preschool community.

In Jesus' name,
Tracie Folley
Director of FIFCPS

Friends in Faith Christian Preschool, First Presbyterian Church, 603 Tulip Street Liverpool, NY 13088

Telephone: (315) 457-4090

E-mail: fifcps@gmail.com

Website: www.friendsinfaith.org

Like us on Facebook and follow us on Instagram!

Please fill out the next page and return to the preschool.

Sign, initial, and return this page to Tracie Folley, Director

I give permission to Friends in Faith preschool to list my name and phone number on the class list which will be distributed to parents.

Yes No **Initial:** _____ Date: _____

Permission for Changing & Personal Hygiene

I as the parent/guardian give the staff at Friends in Faith Christian Preschool permission to change (child's name) _____ clothes or to assist him/her, if necessary, with personal hygiene. **Initial:** _____ Date: _____

Under certain circumstances I may be called to come to school to assist my child with personal hygiene.

Friends in Faith staff have my permission to escort my child to the bathroom.

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

I have read and understand The Handbook and will adhere to the policies of Friends in Faith Christian Preschool.

Child's Name: _____

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____