



2019-2020 PARENT HANDBOOK

Philosophy

Stepping Stone Preschool is a service of the Whitinsville Christian School. Whitinsville Christian School believes that “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;” (Psalm 24:1). Our youngest students enjoy an environment of fun, warmth, security, exploration, and discovery. We’re teaching our students that their wider world is filled with God’s amazing handiwork and is a place where they can be confident of his unfailing love.

Statement of Purpose

The preschool’s purpose is to provide an atmosphere that encourages social, emotional, physical and intellectual growth and development of the child in a calm, fun, relaxed atmosphere of Christian nurturing.

Goals

Stepping Stone Preschool strives to meet the following objectives for children in the daily program:

1. make a successful transition to school
2. inspire confidence in a group setting
3. encourage joy and wonderment in learning
4. develop security and a feeling of success in activities
5. foster self-expression and creativity
6. cultivate self-control and responsibility
7. provide small group programs for optimal learning
8. provide a kindergarten readiness educational experience

Hours and Admission Policies

Students must be 3 yrs. old before Sept 1st and toilet trained to begin preschool in August. Students must be 3 yrs. old before Dec 31st and toilet trained to begin preschool in January.

Stepping Stone Preschool holds classes Monday through Friday. The class schedule is as follows:

➤ **3-year old classes:**

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| ○ Tuesday/Thursday | 8:30-11:30a.m. | Full Day 8:30-2:30 pm |
| ○ Monday/Wednesday/Friday | | Full Day 8:30-2:30 pm |
| ○ Monday-Friday | | Full Day 8:30-2:30 pm |

- A. Arrival and Dismissal** – You are encouraged to park in the parking lot in front (or on the left-hand side) of the building and walk your child(ren) to the preschool classroom. If it is easier for you, you are also welcome to drive to the parking area at the rear of the building and enter through the rear doors. Whichever entrance you choose, you are reminded that children must be accompanied into the building by an adult and “signed-in” for the session on the daily attendance sheet.
- B. Drop Off and Pick Up with Little Siblings** - To keep drop off and pick up running smoothly please make sure that all little siblings stay with you at all times. This will eliminate the possibility of children being injured, getting lost in the crowd or leaving the classroom unnoticed. Our classroom is not baby-proofed - we can only guarantee that the items in it are appropriate for children ages 3 and older.
- C. Field Trips** - An important part of the preschool’s curriculum is to expose the children to many varied experiences within the community. Trips into the community will be announced in monthly newsletters.
- D. Snacks and Lunches** - Parents are responsible for supplying a daily snack and drink for their child(ren). Each child will bring his/her snack into the classroom to put in the snack basket until snack time. There are two options for lunch – you may either pack your own or hot lunch may be purchased. The cost for preschool lunch is \$3.50 per lunch and may be paid using our ParentsWeb system or by cash/check payment at the Elementary Office. (NOTE: If your child attends the aftercare program, please pack an additional snack labeled for the aftercare time.)
- E. Food Allergies** – Parents will be alerted if there is a child in the classroom with food allergies. The WCS Food Policy is posted on our website and outlines foods that may be brought for birthdays and other special occasions.
- F. Authorization to Pick Up a Child** – Children **will not** be released at **any time** to a person not authorized by the parent/guardian. **WE MUST HAVE WRITTEN AUTHORIZATION** if anyone other than a person listed in the child’s file will be picking him/her up.
- G. Snow and Cold Weather Policy** – We believe that fresh air and outdoor play are important for healthy childhood development. When cold weather and snow arrive, we **do** still go out for recess! (We go outside as long as the temperature is 17F or above with the windchill.) All students must have boots, snow pants, and a warm jacket, as well as hats and gloves. We ask that you send snow pants and boots in a separate bag - large reusable shopping bags are ideal. The bag, boots, snow pants, coats and all accessories **must be labeled with your child's name on them**. A spare pair of socks is always useful to keep in backpacks as well.
- H. Snow Days** – In the event of a snowstorm or slippery road conditions, school may be cancelled. Stepping Stone Preschool follows the WCS cancellation schedule, which is the same as Northbridge Public Schools. If NPS or WCS is closed, Stepping Stone Preschool will not hold classes. In the event of a 2 hour school delay, classes will be held – dropoff will be between 9:30-10:00. (Dismissal time for 1/2 day classes will

remain 11:30.) Parents will receive notification of school closures or delays via the Parent Alert messaging system.

- I. **Early Dismissal Days** – Occasionally WCS has “Half Days” where dismissal for K-12 is at 11:30. On these days **Extended Day will not be offered at the preschool**. Many of these days are Professional Development Days where our teachers have the opportunity to continue to improve and learn.

Parent Involvement

Children who are supported in educational programs by parents or guardians have statistically been successful when entering a regular school program. In view of this, as well as our own educational philosophy, we strongly encourage active parental participation in the program. All parents are encouraged to participate in areas such as field trips, and especially in performances and programs put on by the children.

- A. **Parent-Teacher Conferences** – Teachers will make daily observations as to how individual children are progressing. Parent-teacher conferences are held once a year (in November) and are arranged through a sign-up procedure. Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher directly, and at any time, should any concerns arise. Since a cooperative relationship between family and school is desired for the children, we suggest that any major changes or events in your child’s life that may impact behavior at school, be shared with the Lead Teacher or Preschool Manager. Parents are encouraged to visit the preschool at any time, however, advance notice is recommended. If the teachers are not free to talk with you, please understand that your children come first during class time, and the teachers will be happy to talk with you after the children are dismissed.
- B. **Parent Volunteer Opportunities** – During the school year, there are many ways for you to volunteer: laminating, cutting, copying, organizing Scholastic Book Orders, helping with special events and so on. At the beginning of August and at Back To School Night, you will have opportunities to sign up for ways that best fit your schedule.

Child’s Personal Items

- A. **Daily Clothing** – When dressing your child for preschool please think of your child’s comfort, rather than fashion!
- Please provide simple clothing that is free from complicated fastenings as this helps to promote independence.
 - Children work with messy art materials so it is best to provide clothing that is washable.
 - We use the outdoor playground so please provide clothing and shoes that are sturdy. **Children will not be allowed on climbing structures if they are wearing Crocs, “Jelly Shoes,” beach shoes or sandals, due to safety concerns.**
 - On PE days, children must have sneakers to wear in the gym.

- Sweaters or jackets should be worn to school on cooler days; children may “shed layers” as the days warms, if necessary.
- In preschool we go outside for recess even on cold days unless the temperature is below 17F (including the wind chill). Please dress your child for outside play according to the day’s weather.
- To avoid tears and/or the constant need for clothes shopping, **PLEASE LABEL ALL CLOTHING ITEMS, ESPECIALLY HATS, BOOTS AND MITTENS.** We try hard to make sure that everyone’s clothing gets back home again safely!

B. Extra Clothing – In case of an accident, your child should always have a complete change of clothes in his/her backpack. Please be sure to include socks!

C. Backpacks - All children need to bring a backpack (labeled with her/his name) to school daily. Even though it might seem big at first, please get your child a standard sized backpack without wheels. Parents should check backpacks daily for their child’s “work” as well as any important information coming home from the teachers.

D. Toys From Home - Toys may be brought into school for special days or in the Letter Bag and should be clearly marked with your child’s name. We ask that you **leave all other toys at home or in your car.** If your child would like to keep a stuffed animal at school to cuddle with during rest time, please make sure you label it. Guns and other toys that promote aggression **are not** allowed within our school. Please check your child’s backpack for stowaway toys before arriving at school.

Discipline Policy

Clear limits shall be set to ensure the safety and well-being of all children. Discipline is consistent and is based on an understanding of the individual needs of each child. Discipline is directed towards the goal of maximizing the growth, development and protection of the group and each individual in it.

1. No child shall be subjected to cruel or severe punishment, humiliation or verbal abuse.
2. Corporal punishment shall not be used, including spanking.
3. No child shall be denied food as a form of punishment.
4. No child shall be punished for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.

When a child continually expresses inappropriate behavior, the following steps will be taken:

1. Eye-to-eye contact with the child, while explaining why his/her actions are not acceptable.
2. Diverting his/her attention to a different activity.
3. Removal from the group for a quiet time. A quiet time situation shall be used until the child is ready or able to return to the group activities. In such cases the child will be escorted to the quiet chair by a teacher. The teacher shall explain to the child the reason for the quiet time, and shall remain in the immediate area until the

child is ready to come back to the group. Our quiet time chair is within the classroom and no child will ever be in an area by him/herself.

Transportation Policy

Stepping Stone Preschool does not provide transportation to and from preschool. It is the parents' responsibility to arrange transportation to and from school.

Parent volunteers may be asked to drive when a field trip is scheduled. All parents are responsible for providing a car/booster seat for the child/children. No child will be transported without a proper car/booster seat. All parents will sign a permission slip stating that their child has permission to attend the trip and that they understand children are being transported in private cars.

In an emergency when a child needs to be transported by an ambulance, if the parents are not available, the Preschool Manager or Lead Teacher will accompany the child in the ambulance. The WCS school nurse will contact the child's parents immediately to determine the appropriate medical facility to which the child should be transported. The parents will make arrangements to meet the child at the hospital.

Health Procedures

- A. Requirements for Health History** – Under Dept. of Public Health requirements, a complete health history must be submitted at the beginning of the school year. This will include a physician's report from a physical exam, including up-to-date immunizations and the results of a lead screening test. All health forms will be kept on file in the WCS nurse's office.
- B. Removal of a Sick Child From Class** - In those circumstances in which a child may need to be sent home due to illness, the child will be brought to the WCS nurse's clinic until the parent or emergency contact is able to pick up the child. This is done to minimize the spreading of a contagious illness.
- C. Emergency Procedures** – In case of accidental injury, we will immediately contact a parent. If we cannot reach a parent we will call the listed emergency contact person and the child's physician. If necessary, we will also call an ambulance. Until the arrival of a parent, or an ambulance, the WCS school nurse will be in charge of the child's care. Parents will assume responsibility for any resultant expense not covered by our insurance. The school keeps a parent/guardian signed medical form for each child, agreeing to this provision. It is to the child's benefit that parents keep the school notified of any changes of phone numbers, emergency notification and other pertinent information.
- D. Medication** - If a child is taking regularly-scheduled medication, parents must administer it before school begins and/or after the school day ends. If emergency medication is necessary (i.e. for allergies to bee stings, asthma, etc.), parents must have completed the appropriate medical information for the WCS nurse who will

advise and administer medication as necessary. **Stepping Stone Preschool staff will not dispense medicine at any time.**

- E. Insurance** - Stepping Stone Preschool is insured through the Whitinsville Christian School's general policy.

Plan for Emergency Situations

In the event of fire, loss of power, heat, water or any other reason that would call for evacuation of the building, the children will follow the emergency evacuation plan, exiting the building onto the playground until parents can be contacted to pick children up. In case of inclement weather, the children will proceed to the Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church.

In the event of a fire, the Emergency Evacuation Plan that is posted by all exits will be followed in order to evacuate the building. Once everyone has been safely evacuated, parents will be contacted to arrange for pick-up of the children at school. In case of inclement weather the children will proceed to the Pleasant Street Christian Reformed Church to wait for parents to pick them up there.

Tuition

- 1. Application/Registration/Enrollment Fees** - A non-refundable application fee and registration deposit of \$150.00 will be due upon receipt of your completed registration form. (This fee increases to \$175 after March 15.) In mid-April, you will receive an online invitation to complete the enrollment process for your child. A \$100 non-refundable enrollment deposit will be due upon submission of your enrollment package. (NOTE: The \$100 registration and enrollment deposits will be credited to your September 1st family tuition statement.)
- 2. Payment of Tuition** - Tuition may be paid in full at registration or in nine equal installments due by the 1st of each month beginning in September and ending in May. Tuition invoices will be issued and emailed before the 1st of each month. If financial difficulties arise, please contact Thalia Towle, WCS Business Manager, at 508-372-3277. Proactive communication is encouraged.

3. Monthly Fees

P3 Morning Only (Tuesday/Thursday 8:30-11:30)	\$230/month*
P3 Full Day (Tuesday/ Thursday 8:30-2:30)	\$390/month*
P4 Morning Only (Monday/Wednesday/Friday 8:30-11:30)	\$310/month*
P3 or P4 Full Day (Monday/Wednesday/Friday 8:30-2:30)	\$550/month*
P3 or P4 Full Day 5-Day (Monday-Friday 8:30-2:30)	\$840/month*
A La Carte Extended Day: \$25.00 per day	

4. Withdrawal Policy

WCS carefully plans for anticipated enrollment and is obligated to meet costs it cannot cancel due to student withdrawals. Any student who withdraws for any

reason will be responsible for payment of their tuition and fee obligation based upon their date of withdrawal.

<u>Date of Withdrawal</u>	<u>Amount Due to WCS</u>
July 1- Day before first day of school	25% of annual tuition and fees
First Day of School - December 15	50% of annual tuition and fees
After December 15	100% of annual tuition and fees

- 5. Insufficient Funds** - There will be a \$25.00 charge for each returned check to cover bookkeeping costs. Allowing this to happen more than once during the school year will result in your having to pay tuition with cash or a cashier's check.
- 6. Tuition Reduction Incentive Program (TRIP)** - TRIP is a way for parents to help reduce their family tuition costs. Get more information regarding TRIP by visiting www.whitinsvillechristian.org or by calling Dawn Lefrancois in the Elementary Office, 508-372-3246.
- 7. Credit Days** - When a child is absent from school, financial credit cannot be given for missed days. Missed school days may not be made up.

Toileting Policy

Children are allowed to use the toilet at any time during class and are accompanied to the bathroom by a staff member, if needed. The following policies apply:

1. Children will be supervised during toileting.
2. No child will be punished, verbally abused or humiliated for soiling, wetting or not using the toilet.
3. Children will wash their hands with soap and running water after toileting, before snacks and before handling food.
4. Staff members will also wash their hands with running water after assisting children with toileting.
5. Individual paper towels will be used to dry hands.
6. Clothing soiled at school will be placed in a plastic bag and stored apart from other items.
7. If a child is consistently having accidents at school, a meeting will be scheduled with parents to determine a plan of action.

Social Service Referral Plan

If through continued observation of children in the program the need for social, mental health or medical intervention appears necessary, the following procedures shall be implemented:

1. Specific dates and times of the observed behavior or condition shall be documented and brought to the attention of the Preschool Manager and placed in the child's file.
2. Following discussion between the Preschool Manager and the Lead Teacher of the identified child, the Preschool Manager will notify the parent/legal guardian to arrange a meeting as soon as possible.
3. Should the situation be one in which outside intervention has already been sought/secured by the child's parent/legal guardian, the Preschool Manager will request an update from the parent/legal guardian and, if possible, outline a plan in which the program might deal with the identified behavior/condition in an appropriate and consistent manner.
4. Should the behavior/condition be one that has not yet been addressed, the Preschool Manager will suggest to the parent/legal guardian a meeting with the WCS Health and Wellness Counselor. All meetings between the Preschool Manager and the parent/legal guardian will be documented in writing and placed in the child's file.
5. The Preschool Manager will conduct a follow-up call after the initial meeting to see if he/she can be of any further assistance, and the child's behavior will continue to be documented.

Termination Policy

Stepping Stone Preschool will use the following procedure for terminating a child from the program. A child may be terminated under the following circumstances:

1. The health and safety of the child cannot be assured.
2. The child's developmental needs cannot be met. Parents will be notified in writing and at a conference, when possible, about the circumstances, including the reasons for termination. A copy of the letter will be placed in the child's file. The Preschool Manager will inform the parents of the availability of information and referral for other services.

When a child is terminated from the program, whether initiated by the school or the parent(s), the teachers will talk to the child and his/her classmates about the child leaving the program. The discussion will be done in an age appropriate manner and include simple reasons for the departure.

Affirmative Action Statement

Stepping Stone Preschool will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin, sex, disabilities, family marital status or political beliefs in the administration of its educational policies or other school programs or activities.