

Larchmont United Methodist Preschool  
Parent Handbook



**Larchmont**  
United Methodist Preschool

# Larchmont United Methodist Preschool Parent Handbook

## Introduction

We warmly welcome you to Larchmont United Methodist Preschool. We are privileged to have you as a part of our school family and hope that your time with us will be one of growth and special blessings.

## History

In 1941, long before “Early Childhood Education” was the norm, the pastor of Larchmont Methodist Church and a committee of dedicated people, shared an interest in educating young children and a desire to see a program started. With the encouragement and blessing of the Church Trustees, they began a school for four-and five-year-olds children.

When the Norfolk Public schools added a kindergarten program, Larchmont Methodist experienced low enrollment and decided to close its kindergarten class. At that time Larchmont Methodist added a class for three-year-old children to its program.

Along the way a two-year-old program was added and the name changed to what is familiar today, Larchmont United Methodist Preschool. Thanks to the dedication, love and caring of many people over the years, the preschool has grown to a staff of 11 with a full time director, and reopened Kindergarten in 2017. The preschool can serve up to 72 students.

## Mission Statement

The Larchmont United Methodist Church Preschool offers a program consistent with the best principles of early childhood education. The school provides an atmosphere of love and acceptance

combined with a variety of experiences in

which children grow and learn to play and work with others. The children’s experiences reflect Christian values and interpretations.

## Accountability

The preschool is a ministry of Larchmont United Methodist Church, Norfolk, Virginia. The development of policy and supervision of the preschool is the responsibility of its Board of Directors.

## Philosophy

Larchmont United Methodist Preschool is concerned with the whole child. We provide opportunities for social, cognitive, emotional, physical, and spiritual development. We encourage good communication and a close relationship between the family and school.

The preschool strives to provide children with a nurturing, supportive and safe environment so that they feel secure and loved.

Children learn at their own pace when the teachers provide stimulating and imaginative age-appropriate activities. Teachers emphasize the joy of learning and application of newly acquired skills.

Learning involves exploring, questioning, experimenting, and relating to the world through activities, field trips, and resource people. The children also develop good health habits and the ability to make good decisions.

Children develop healthy feelings about themselves when they are valued and treated

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with respect. When they work creatively with a variety of materials and master new skills, they develop a feeling of competence and satisfaction with their learning.

The school experience helps children to learn and practice socially acceptable behavior in order to relate to their peers and adults outside their family circle.

The children also develop their large and small motor skills and motor coordination through active play and use of play equipment.

### **Staff**

Our staff is of the highest caliber, both academically and morally. Our teachers have a college education and/or experience in early childhood education. Participation in workshops, in-service training and conventions augment this knowledge and capability.

Staff members must have a signed doctor's certificate stating that they are free from any disease which would prevent them from working with children. They are also required to maintain certifications in CPR and First Aid.

All persons hired in any capacity in the preschool also have had a criminal background check from the Virginia Department of Social Services verifying that they have no criminal record, as well as having a finger print investigation.

### **Public Liability Insurance**

The preschool is carried under the umbrella coverage of the Larchmont United Methodist Church.

### **Licensing**

The preschool is a non-profit ministry of Larchmont United Methodist Church and is housed within the church building. The Preschool maintains a Religiously Exempt status through the Virginia Department of Social Services. Under this exemption the Preschool must comply with required standards, including classroom ratios, Fire Inspection, Sanitation Inspection and Building Inspection. This is done on a yearly basis.

### **Facilities**

The preschool is located in the educational wing of the church. It consists of six rooms and an office. We have five bathrooms on the wing and have the use of the church kitchen, social hall and the great room. The preschool also has an age-appropriate playground immediately adjacent to the building. Equipment has been selected with an eye to developing physical coordination, muscle skills and free social interaction. Each class has access to the play space daily, weather permitting.

### **Admissions**

The preschool is open to all of God's children between the ages of two and 1/2 and five years old.

### **Enrollment Policy**

Larchmont United Methodist Preschool classes are structured according to age. A child must be two years old before s/he is admitted into the preschool. Enrollment for the upcoming school year begins in February.

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Children are admitted in the following manner:

- Children and siblings enrolled in the preschool the previous year.
- Members of the community

### Requirements

The following documents are required for enrollment. All forms must be submitted, along with the appropriate fees, to be considered enrolled into the preschool.

- Enrollment application
- Proof of Birth
- Tuition and fees agreement
- State Health Form
- General and Health Information Form
- Permission/authorization form

The registration fee is paid on a yearly basis and is set by the Preschool Board of Directors. **This fee and the first month's tuition are due at the time of enrollment and are both non-refundable fees.** A child is not enrolled at Larchmont United Methodist Preschool with a reserved space until all of the appropriate documents and fees are completed.

### Withdrawal Policy

When a child is admitted to Larchmont United Methodist Preschool, it is assumed that the child will be enrolled for the school year. If it is necessary to remove your child, we ask that you inform us four weeks prior to withdrawal. The next month's full tuition is expected if your child withdraws at any time during a school month.

### Tuition and Fees

**Tuition fees are figured at a yearly rate.** For parent convenience these fees may be

paid in one lump sum, by the semester, quarterly, or monthly. If a parent chooses to pay monthly, the tuition fee must be paid by the first day that the child's class meets each month. **If tuition is not paid in full by the fifth of the month, a \$15.00 late payment fee will be assessed to the month's tuition.** The registration fee and first month's tuition paid at the time of application are non-refundable fees. Any Stay and Play payments must be made separately from tuition. All statements will be issued directly through the Brightwheel app. If you are unable to pay your account electronically through Brightwheel arrangements must be made with the Director. Any fees incurred by the preschool for returned checks will be the responsibility of the parent.

### Preschool Programs – Capacity 62

Two ½ Year-Olds 8:1 ratio

The two-year-old children are introduced to social interaction while learning to play and share in a group situation. The children enjoy active play, art, music and snack time. The teachers place an emphasis on helping the children to develop independence and a positive self concept.

Younger Three-Year-Olds 15:2 ratio

The three-year-old children enjoy play while developing their abilities to listen and follow directions. They are introduced to colors, shapes, alphabet letters and sounds. Creativity and verbal skills are developed through music, art, and story time. The teachers also work with the children to develop their socialization skills, independence, and self-confidence.

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### Older 3 Year-Olds 10:1 ratio

The older 3 year old children are challenged in language arts (recognition of the alphabet and phonics) and basic math concepts. They explore science through hands-on activities. Children develop their fine motor skills including pre-writing skills, the pencil grip, and cutting with scissors. Physical needs are met by daily play on a safe, well-equipped playground and during classroom activities. The children enjoy creative art and music and activities. PreK and Kindergarten will have two educational field trips.

### Pre-Kindergarten 10:1 two classes 1 assistant

The PreK classes focus on pre-literacy and literacy skills, utilizing The Science of Reading curriculum, while continuing to develop a love of learning. The children work individually and in small and large groups while exploring concepts of math, science, and history all within the context of a preschool environment. Fine motor skills are refined through writing activities and art projects. Children play outside daily to enhance their gross motor development. These children also participate in music classes and field trips.

### Kindergarten 10:1 ratio

Our Kindergarten program follows the Virginia SOL guidelines for academic standards. Each day will focus on literacy development through small group guided reading and writing concepts, utilizing The Science of Reading curriculum. Our Kindergarten will encourage STEM development (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) through center-based learning, creative play and individual supported instruction. Fine arts education will be broadened through classroom arts & crafts, weekly music

instruction, and dramatic play.

Students will receive personal attention and instruction from Ms. Amy. Ms. Amy is a VA licensed elementary teacher who is a National Board-Certified teacher (early childhood generalist ages 3-7) with a Masters in Education.

Class size is limited to ten students. Children must be five by September 30 to follow NPS enrollment guidelines, exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Kindergarten meets daily from 8:45am – 1:30pm.

### Stay and Play

“Stay and Play” may be offered for a period of time after school. During this time the children enjoy supervised play. More information will be provided during the school year.

## Transportation

Parents must arrange for their child’s transportation to and from school. Many parents work with others to form carpools. If you wish your child to be picked up by someone other than a parent or your regular carpool driver, please inform the teacher in writing. We will not release your child without proper authorization. If someone we do not know picks up your child, we will ask that they present proper photo identification.

## School Calendar and Schedule

The school calendar closely follows NPS. LUMPS academic year ends roughly one week prior to NPS. Orientation appointments will precede the first day of school scheduled though your assigned Teacher.

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### Arrival and Departure

The Preschool programs begin promptly at the designated drop off times. Children should be escorted to the Preschool entrance on Jamestown Crescent. Please exercise great care, as Jamestown Crescent is a busy street.

**Do not drop children off at the curb.**

Two Year Olds	9:05am
Younger 3's	9:00am
Older 3's	8:55am
PreK4	8:50am
Kindergarten	8:45am

We expect the children to arrive on time, well rested, fed and ready to start the day. Children will be signed in by their teacher. Parents or authorized person will sign out children at pick up. Our entrance will be open at 12:00pm, 1:00pm and 1:30pm for individuals to pick up at your child's classroom.

Dismissal is at 12:00pm, 1:00 pm for the PreK classes and 1:30 for Kindergarten. Please be prompt. **If a parent is more than 10 minutes late, the child will be placed in Stay and Play and the appropriate Stay and Play fee will be assessed, regardless of pick-up time.** If a parent is late three times, a conference will be scheduled with the Director to discuss resolution of the problem.

### School Closings

**IF NORFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE CLOSED DUE TO WEATHER CONDITIONS, THE PRESCHOOL WILL BE CLOSED.**

**IF NORFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS ARE DELAYED, THE PRESCHOOL WILL BE CLOSED FOR THE DAY.**

Notice of closing will be posted when possible, on the Facebook page, Brightwheel and email. Information about public schools can be heard on local radio & TV stations. No refunds or make-up days are given for days missed due to inclement weather; however should the school be closed **MORE** than 5 consecutive days, we will add a day to our calendar based on NPS.

### State Health Form

Each child is required by state regulations to have on file a health statement, which includes a record of up-to-date immunizations. **If a child's health care summary is not complete within 30 days after school starts, the child cannot continue at school until his/her state health form is on file.**

### Student Illness

For the protection of every child attending Larchmont United Methodist Preschool, we have rules regarding sick children. No child who arrives at school noticeably ill will be admitted for that day. Should a child become ill during the morning, we will contact the parents and ask that arrangements be made to pick up the child. (It is important that we have current telephone numbers, including emergency numbers.) **If your child goes home with a fever, he/she cannot return the following day unless there is a doctor's note indicating the child is not contagious.** In the absence of a doctor's note, the child should remain at home until he or she has been fever free, without the aid of temperature reducing medications for one

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**full day. Example: If a child leaves school with a fever on Monday, the earliest he/she can return to school is Wednesday. \* New Health Recommendations. LUMPS recommends that all students become vaccinated for Covid-19. The CDC recommends vaccines for children 6mo and older and a booster for 5 years and older. Should your child test positive for Covid-19 a 5-day isolation period followed by 5 days of mask wear will be required per CDC guidelines.**

### **PLEASE KEEP CHILDREN AT HOME WHO EXHIBIT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:**

- ◆ FEVER
- ◆ SORE THROAT
- ◆ VOMITING
- ◆ RASH
- ◆ NASAL DISCHARGE\*
- ◆ CONSTANT COUGH\*
- ◆ HEADACHE
- ◆ DIARRHEA
- ◆ EYEDRAINAGE

\*If your child is at school with persistent nasal discharge (green or yellow) or cough, LUMPS teachers may inform you that we have masked your child until you are able to pick them up from school.

### **Allergies**

If a child has food allergies, please provide a list of them for the teacher. If a child is anaphylactic, it is very important that the teacher and the Director have medications and instructions for administering treatment. State forms are required for any medications on the preschool premises. The preschool will not administer any non-prescription medications. Please DO NOT send in medications in your child's lunchbox or backpack. It is against

state regulations. Any child with food and/or insect allergies may not attend school unless the proper medications are on site.

### **Fire Safety**

Larchmont United Methodist Preschool has the required safety equipment located in the preschool hallway. We have an annual fire inspection and hold monthly fire drills in compliance with Norfolk Fire Code.

### **Field Trips**

The teachers and director plan field trips away from school to enrich the children's learning experiences. Parents must sign the permission form included in the enrollment application for your child to participate in field trips. Parents will be notified in advance of the trip. Please note any special instructions regarding time, date, clothing, etc. Walking trips around the school are also covered by the signed permission form.

The PreK and Kindergarten classes participate in several trips away from the school. Parents are responsible for driving their own children to field trips. On field trip days there will be no class at school for that day, all teachers will be off site with their classes.

### **Lunch**

We encourage parents to send food that is nourishing and healthy as well as delicious to your child. Suggested items might include but are not limited to:

- ◆ A sandwich
- ◆ Yogurt
- ◆ Fruit wedges
- ◆ Vegetables
- ◆ Graham crackers
- ◆ Pretzels
- ◆ Cheese cubes

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- ◆ Bagels
- ◆ Granola Bars
- ◆ Water Bottle/Drink

Lunch boxes make useful containers in which a child can carry his/her items to school. Each child has his own space in which to keep his/her lunchbox.

### Communication

Good communication between family and school are important to a child's growth and development. Preschool uses several different tools to enhance communications. Should your address, telephone number or email address change during the school year, please contact the preschool immediately with the correct information.

### Backpacks

A backpack is an important means for transporting items of communication (notes to and from the teacher, newsletters, parent letters, etc.). It may also contain those delightful treasures of art created by a child that have a special place on the refrigerator door! Each backpack should have a name in it to minimize any confusion as to ownership. Please provide a standard size backpack for 3y/o and older.

**Please check your child's backpack daily.**

### Newsletter

A monthly newsletter is available to keep parents informed about school events. The newsletter also includes information about the individual class activities.

### Conferences

Conferences are an excellent way for teachers and parents to discuss a child's adjustment and progress. Conferences will be scheduled as needed during the year. Notices will be

sent out in advance. Parents are welcome to schedule an appointment with the teacher, and/or the Director anytime during the year.

### First Days of School

Starting school is an exciting event for all ages. For the very young, separating from parents can cause anxiety for both parent and child. Often a child experiences some distress when a parent departs. This is not unusual behavior for pre-schoolers. The teachers are aware of this and make every effort to divert a child's attention away from the fact that he/she is being left. Helping ease a child's transition from home into the classroom requires cooperation and support. Parents are encouraged to walk their child to the entrance, give a big hug and kiss and then wave as we enter as a class. We have found that this drop off routine results in happy students who are excited to walk in with their friends! Parents are always welcome to call for information and updates.

### Clothing

**All clothing, particularly jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, mittens and hats, should be labeled. The preschool is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing.**

Mornings are full of a variety of activities, including outdoor play. Please dress children in appropriate clothes and safe footwear for playing, climbing and running. **Flip flops are not allowed.** Difficult zippers, snaps, buttons, and suspenders can get in the way of one's independence in the restroom.

A coat hook outside the classroom is provided for each child. We encourage students to hang their own coats and bags in order to foster independence.

**Each child should have at school a complete change of clothes, appropriate for the season.** This should include a mask,



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socks, underpants and outer garments. A zip lock bag with the child's name on the outside works well. 2's and Younger 3's students should include a pair of shoes in case of a potty accident. Please remember to send in another set when the clothing is used.

### **Potty Training**

The two and three year old teachers are happy to assist in potty training when your child is ready to take that leap. We encourage you to let us know what routines you are taking at home so that we may do our best to help your child be successful at school. Please help us by supplying plenty of clothing to support the possibilities of accidents during the training period.

Your tuition rate will be reduced once your child has successfully potty'd at school for four weeks accident free. We understand that they may still need help with their clothing and possibly getting themselves clean, but we expect them to let us know when they need to go.

### **Show and Tell**

Each teacher has a special routine for Show and Tell. Children are encouraged to bring in objects that are interesting and related to what is being studied. This time is an excellent opportunity for the development of language skills.

### **Parties**

Each class has several parties during the school year. The teachers organize these events. Parents may be asked to contribute a snack to be shared.

### **Birthdays**

Birthdays are very special days, which we

like to celebrate. If you wish to provide a special snack for your child's birthday, please make arrangements with the teacher. Unless all classmates are included, party invitations may not be handed out in the classrooms.

### **Christmas Program**

Families and friends are all invited to join us in the beautiful Church Sanctuary to share in the joy & celebration of this wondrous season. The children will perform a musical program and Nativity Story.

### **End of Year**

Following a musical program in the Church Sanctuary, the PreK and Kindergarten students will be recognized for their promotion. All family members & friends are welcomed.

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