



Arcola Christian Preschool

“Let the little children come to Me . . . for of such is the kingdom of God.”
(Luke 18:16 NKJV)

Parent Handbook 2024-2025

Barbara Ladany, Director
Arcola Christian Preschool
A Ministry of Arcola United Methodist Church
24757 Arcola Mills Drive
Dulles, VA 20166
703-327-7878 ext. 222
BarbaraL@ArcolaChurch.org

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Our History

Arcola UMC, founded in 1853, is a vibrant and growing church in the midst of Loudoun County's rapid development. We pride ourselves in reaching out to the many communities around us. Our preschool began operation in the fall of 2005 and has served many families in our community. Arcola Christian Preschool admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

Mission

The mission of Arcola Christian Preschool is to provide a loving Christian environment where each child's spiritual, social, emotional, physical and cognitive needs are met.

Philosophy

We believe that what is best for the child should come first in every decision that we make. Our decisions in this "child-centered" preschool are based on age- and developmentally-appropriate understandings.

We believe that all children can learn and that this learning should use the child's natural gift of language. Therefore, we will help the child learn about his/her world through many and varied learning experiences that are both play- and language-based. These learning experiences will enrich the child's world in the areas of oral and written language; science; math; and social studies.

Goals

- to deepen each child's sense of God and the wonders of His creation
- to help all children develop the capacity for prayer
- to help every child develop self confidence
- to encourage social interaction through cooperative work and play
- to help ensure each child's health and safety
- to enable children to grow and mature in a learning environment that enhances their individual growth and development
- to provide a developmentally-appropriate curriculum
- to provide learning experiences that will help all children to develop and use language skills
- to provide opportunities for each child to use problem-solving skills

Organizational Structure

Following the Virginia State Licensing standards, any parent has the right to contact persons on the organizational structure in the order listed below.

- Teachers
- Director
- Preschool Board of Directors

Arcola Christian Preschool Board

The role of the Preschool Board is to support the mission, vision, and philosophy of Arcola Christian Preschool and to develop policies that will guide the management and operation of the Preschool.

Enrollment

Enrollment in the program shall be open to any child, provided the school can meet the needs of that child.

Arcola Christian Preschool admits students of any race, color, religion, national, and ethnic origin.

All children entering the Twos Program must be two years of age on or before March 31. All children entering the Threes Program must be three years of age on or before September 30. All children entering the Fours Program must be four years old on or before September 30.

Enrollment in Arcola Christian Preschool is for one school year or for the balance of the current school year if enrollment takes place after the program opens in the fall.

A child may not remain in the program for the following reasons:

- The school is unable to meet the child's needs
- The child's adjustment to the program is unsatisfactory
- Delinquency in payment of tuition fees

Arcola Christian Preschool reserves the right to dismiss a child or family from the program at any time.

Enrollment of children may not exceed 75 children on site at any one time.

Registration Procedures

Registration will take place in January/February. The registration packet consists of an information sheet, the registration form, a fee schedule and a class schedule. Information and forms are available at the church and on our web site (www.ArcolaChurch.org).

All applications must be received by **the deadline given each year**.

Acceptance into the preschool is based on a lottery system. There will be a lottery for each of the following groups, in this order of consideration:

- Currently enrolled students and children of teachers
- Siblings of currently enrolled students
- Siblings of Alumni
- Children of active board members and church staff
- Children of actively involved members in Arcola United Methodist Church
- General Public

Registration forms may be mailed to the church, to the attention of the Preschool Director, or delivered in person to a staff member at the preschool.

All children, whose registrations arrive after the deadline will be placed on a wait list until all timely registrations are processed.

Registrations must be accompanied by **the non-refundable** registration fee. Checks should be made payable to **Arcola Christian Preschool**.

The Lottery Process

1. As registrations are received, they will be grouped in the categories listed above.

2. After the first group is placed, we will then place names from the next group into a hat and randomly select the registrations to be processed.
3. Children will be placed in a class based on the preference indicated on the registration form. If the first choice is not available, the student will be placed in the second choice and put on the wait list for the first choice.
4. We will follow the same procedure for each of the remaining groups.
5. Registrants will be notified by mail of acceptance or placement on the wait list.
6. Children will automatically be placed on the wait list unless parents notify the Director, in writing, that they do not wish to continue the process.
7. **We will continue to place students who apply after the deadline on a first-come, first-serve basis until all slots are full or add them to the waiting list.**

Although we will do our best to accommodate preferences in class placement, we must consider the boy/girl ratio in each class, as well as the need to place siblings in school on the same days.

Children who are not **offered** a placement will have their registration fee returned. However, those children will automatically be placed on a wait list unless parents notify the Director, in writing, that they do not wish to continue the process. In the event a space becomes available, parents will be contacted and given 48 hours to notify the Preschool Director of their decision and pay the registration fee.

Forms

We will email you a letter with enrollment information when you are offered placement. You will find the Arcola Christian Preschool Parent Handbook as well as the required enrollment forms on our website at www.ArcolaChurch.org, under “Ministries” and then “Arcola Christian Preschool”. **Please complete these forms and return them no later than the date stated in your enrollment letter.** The Health form can be turned in later in the summer, if necessary, but we must have it before the first day of school. You must also provide proof of your child’s identity and age, in person, before the first day of school. **A child who does not have these forms on record cannot enter into the program.** Parents are responsible for updating forms when changes occur.

Tuition and Related School Fees

See page 20 of this handbook for the current year’s fees.

- You must pay a late payment fee of \$25.00 if we do not receive your tuition payment by the 5th of the month. A child may not return to the program after the third violation unless arrangements have been set up with the Director and the Treasurer of the Arcola Christian Preschool Board.
- We charge a fee of \$25.00 for all returned checks.
- Normal tuition fees shall accrue if we have to close the school temporarily due to a health precaution, weather conditions or any other reason beyond the control of the school. We follow Loudoun County Public School’s notification of weather closings.
- If a child is absent from school for an extended period for any reason, but expects to return, we charge tuition to reserve a place in the school. Otherwise, we will fill the vacancy.

Notice to Withdraw

Enrollment is for September through May. Arcola Christian Preschool will not issue tuition refunds for absences or weather days. Refunds will only be issued for withdrawal from the program as outlined below.

Arcola Christian Preschool must receive written notice from the student's parent or legal guardian thirty (30) days prior to withdrawal from the program. In the event of withdrawal from the program, no refunds will be issued for a partial month's tuition. In order to receive a refund of the prepaid May tuition, Arcola Christian Preschool must receive thirty (30) days prior written notice of withdrawal from the program as stated above AND tuition payments for the student must be current. If the effective date of withdrawal from the program falls after March 1 of the school year, only half (50%) of the prepaid May tuition is refundable, subject to thirty days prior written notice of withdrawal and a current account balance for the student as stated above.

Tuition Assistance Philosophy

Arcola Christian Preschool is an outreach of Arcola United Methodist Church. In keeping with the church's desire to provide services to the community, it is the goal of Arcola Christian Preschool to provide space and tuition funds for at least one child in each level of classes. These spaces will allow a child who would otherwise be unable to benefit from a preschool educational experience to attend Arcola Christian Preschool. It is the goal of Arcola Christian Preschool and Arcola United Methodist Church to nurture a child through two full years of early childhood education and Christian education.

You may give a donation to the Tuition Assistance Fund at any time. This is fully tax deductible. We greatly appreciate donations to this fund to help needy children.

Tuition Assistance

Partial or full tuition assistance is available for families in temporary or ongoing need. Arcola Christian Preschool and Arcola United Methodist Church provide the funds for financial aid.

We define temporary assistance as financial aid required for one to three months. Temporary assistance may consist of Arcola Christian Preschool waiving the full amount or a percentage of the monthly tuition.

We define ongoing assistance as financial aid required for four or more months. Ongoing assistance will most often consist of full or partial tuition assistance for an entire school year. Tuition assistance for an entire school year can include the registration fee.

The Tuition Assistance Subcommittee oversees the procedures for tuition assistance. This subcommittee will consist of the Preschool Board Treasurer, Preschool Board Vice Chair, and the Preschool Director. A board member who has a child currently enrolled in the preschool may not serve on the tuition assistance subcommittee.

Procedure for Tuition Assistance

- A family may verbally request tuition assistance or
- A family may be identified by: the Director's observation, the Arcola UMC Pastor, a church member, an Arcola Christian Preschool Board member, or another Arcola Christian Preschool family. The Director will discuss the tuition assistance policy with the parent or guardian.
- The Director and Treasurer have the discretion to waive a portion of or the full amount of one to three months' tuition cost.
- If more than three months financial assistance is needed, determinations shall be made by the Arcola Christian Preschool Tuition Assistance Subcommittee based on the information contained in a financial assistance application to be completed by the family.
 - The Director will supply this application. Arcola Christian Preschool uses the Federal Income Guidelines as one factor in determining households that qualify for financial assistance.
 - When the subcommittee has made a decision, the Director will notify the family.

- The Arcola Christian Preschool Board and staff shall maintain confidentiality of the children and families receiving tuition assistance.

School Hours

Arcola Christian Preschool will operate from 9:30am to 12:15 pm. The days of operation vary for each class.

Arrival time at school should be between 9:25 and 9:35 am. You may not drop off your child earlier than 9:25 am and must pick up your child at 12:15 pm.

There will be a late fee of \$10/per child assessed for every 15 minutes you are late. Your child worries if you are not there on time. Please call and let us know if you will be late. Your call will help us communicate with your child to let him/her know you are on your way. We **will** charge the late fee beginning with the second time you are late. You must pay late fees before your child's next school day. After the fourth late pick-up offense, we will consider your child for dismissal from the program.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Parents are always welcome to walk their children to and from their classroom. The teacher will not be able to have an individual discussion about a child at this time.

If you prefer to use the car line, please proceed as follows. A map and more details can be found on page 22.

Car Line - Arrival

Cars should enter the parking lot and follow the directions on the map located on the last page of this handbook. It is important that cars not line up on Evergreen Mills Road. A teacher or assistant will help the children out of the cars and into the building. **IF YOU ARRIVE WHEN THERE IS NOT A STAFF MEMBER VISIBLE, DO NOT DROP CHILDREN OFF AND LEAVE. PARK YOUR CAR, ESCORT YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN INTO THE CLASSROOM, AND MAKE SURE THE TEACHERS HAVE RECEIVED HIM/HER.**

Car Line – Dismissal

Departure times start approximately five minutes before the end of the class session. At dismissal time, we will help children into the back seat of their appropriate cars. Please follow the same procedure as arrival. Display carpool sign on your front passenger window or attach it to a hanger from your rear-view mirror to assist the staff in getting the right children into the right cars. You may pick up your sign at open house. Please display your sign all through the car line.

Dismissal – Security Procedures

If someone other than a person listed on the Transportation Form comes to pick up the child, then that person must have his/her ID checked. **Additionally, the parent must send in a note if someone else will pick up his/her child.** We will use this note to verify the driver's identity. Without written permission, we will not release the child, and the parent or a designated driver will be required to come for the child. **If it is for a play date, the parents of both children must send in a note. If this is a last-minute change, the parents must email or call the school before we can release a child to someone other than those on their Transportation Form.** Teachers will put children into cars. **However, it is the responsibility of the driver to fasten safety belts.** If a child requires assistance in fastening his/her car seat belt, please pull into a vacant parking space and secure him/her properly. According to Virginia State Law, children under age 8 must be in an appropriate car seat or booster seat.

NOTE: We take children out of and place them into cars on the curbside (passenger side) of the vehicle only. **Teachers will not walk children between cars. When stopped in the car line, PLEASE put your car in park. With distractions, it is too easy for your foot to slip off the brake and for the car to move forward.**

Typical Preschool Class Day

Each classroom will have posted a general schedule specific to that group of students. The teacher may change this schedule as activities change. It is the teacher's discretion to make accommodations based on need. One example may be:

Schedule

Welcome and Child Initiated Time

Wonder Time/Circle Time

- thematic activities
- stories, finger plays
- music
- Praise/worship time

Small Group learning activities

Hand Washing, Grace, Snack

Outdoor/gross motor activities

Active work and play period; self-selected activities/interest centers including:

- Dramatic Play
- Blocks
- Manipulative/Small Motor Activities
- Housekeeping
- Books
- Art Activities

Evaluation and Review of day; Goodbyes

Praise/worship time occasionally includes chapel time or a special music program.

Chapel Time

Throughout the school year classes will occasionally go into the sanctuary for story time with the Pastor. Themes work in conjunction with the themes taught in the classroom. Activities are simple and appropriate for the children's ages. Teachers and their assistants will stay with the children during this time.

Health and Safety Policies

Health Regulation

According to the State of Virginia, each child must have a current Health Form on file. A physician or a Health Department Official must sign this form to verify that the child has the required immunizations and is in general good health. The Health Form is due prior to the first day of school attendance, each year. **A child may not attend school until the Health Form is on file.**

Medication Administration and Authorization

The giving or application of medication, including special medical procedures shall be administered by the preschool only on written order or a prescription from a physician to the child's parent(s) or guardian(s). We do not give over-the-counter medication unless provided with a written prescription from a physician. This includes (but is not limited to)

cough syrup, aspirin/Tylenol, allergy medication, etc. All prescribed medication must be in their original containers. The parent/guardian must sign the Authorization to Administer Medication Form indicating dosage and length of prescription term including a release of liability. **Under no circumstance will the preschool administer the first dose of any medication to a child.** Authorization to Administer Medication Forms can be obtained in the preschool office. Parents must hand deliver medication to the school office in the original container with the label intact. Expiration dates must be clearly indicated. Within one week after expiration date of the effective date of the medication, the parent or guardian must personally collect any unused portion. (The Director will destroy medication not claimed within that period.) The medication and the record of administration are kept in a locked cabinet in the Director's office where access is limited to staff members.

Sick Policy

The health of your child is very important to us. Please keep him/her home from school if he/she:

- Has green or yellow nasal discharge
- Has a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Has severe coughing
- Has pinkeye or conjunctivitis
- Has a sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Has shortness of breath
- Has a rash
- Has been on antibiotics for less than 24 hours
- Has had vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Is too ill to play outside

If your child exhibits any of these symptoms during the school day, we will call you to take him/her home. If we cannot reach you, we will contact the persons listed on your emergency form.

If a child is seriously ill, the Director will call 911 as needed and then notify the parent. The child's well-being and safety are of primary concern. Please do not send your child to school if s/he is ill.

Please keep your child home from school for a minimum of twenty-four hours after the last episode of any of the above conditions.

Remember, the best place for a sick child is at home in his/her own bed!

Head Lice

If there is a reported case of head lice in any classroom, the teacher will notify the director immediately. We check each child in the class carefully. We strip the room of all cloth materials to include stuffed animals and cushions. We seal these items in plastic bags for 2 weeks. We vacuum and shampoo the carpeting at the end of that day.

We will isolate a child who has head lice from the rest of the class and send him/her home immediately. A proof of treatment and no nits will be requirements for a child to return to school. The Director or her assistant are responsible for checking the child's head for nits before he or she may return to the classroom.

Contagious Diseases

Please contact the school if your child contracts a communicable disease such as chicken pox, strep throat, flu, head lice, hand foot and mouth disease, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, tuberculosis, etc. Communication and cooperation among parents are of great importance in helping to prevent the spread of disease. Please be sure that your child is no longer contagious when he/she returns to school.

If your child has been exposed to any contagious disease, we will notify you.

Injured Child

If a child is injured during his/her preschool day, staff will administer first aid that includes washing the wound with water and applying a band-aid. We cannot use antiseptics, soaps, or creams. We will also call and notify parents of the injury. If a child falls and bumps his/her head, we will notify the parents immediately, even though an injury is not evident. In the case of a serious injury, we will fill out an accident report and the teacher and director will sign it. We will ask the parent to sign the form to verify we have informed them of the injury.

We will implement the following procedure in the event of a serious illness or injury.

1. We will contact the parent/guardian or the child's emergency contact if we cannot reach the parents/guardians.
2. In an extreme emergency, we will call 911.
3. If the child is transported to an emergency room, we will give the Emergency Information and Authorization Form to the paramedics on duty and to hospital personnel.
4. A staff member will stay with the affected child for the child's comfort at all times. The Director will also be available to help the child as needed.
5. Parents are responsible for the expenses related to the transport and treatment of the child.

Allergies

Prior to the start of school, parents are responsible for notifying the school of any allergies or other medical conditions pertaining to their child. This information is listed on all pertinent enrollment forms required for registration. The Director or Assistant to the Director is responsible for noting this information and passing it along to the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher is responsible for posting a list of students' allergies in the classroom.

If a child has a severe allergy and the child's physician has written a prescription for an EpiPen Jr., the parent must provide one for Arcola Christian Preschool so that it is available for the child at all times. Parents must document this medication on an Authorization to Administer Medication Form. If a physician's orders include a repeat EpiPen injection, then the parent/guardian must supply the school with two EpiPens. Non-health professionals, trained by a public health nurse, give EpiPen emergency injections at Arcola Christian Preschool.

If there is a food allergy that can cause extreme reaction or requires special medication, we will ask the parent to supply a snack from home each day for their child. It is the parent's responsibility to consult with the teacher and the Director to determine if an allergy warrants restricting certain snacks from being sent into the classroom. **Only upon verification of an allergy by a physician**, will we ban any snack from the classroom. In such a case, information will be included on each month's snack calendar stating that, *"A child with a (type of) allergy is in this class. Please refrain from sending in the following items for the snack: (specifically list items)."*

Although the child with the allergy may not consume the snack, some allergies are so severe that the smell or residue of certain foods can cause a severe reaction. **We ban peanut and tree nut products from Arcola Christian Preschool because some children have severe nut allergies.** We appreciate the support and cooperation from parents and ask that any concern regarding food allergies is brought to the attention of the classroom teacher and Director. The health and safety of each child is most important, and our current snack procedure requires the cooperation of all.

Parents should notify the classroom teacher if they do not see the appropriate information concerning their child's allergies posted in the classroom. During the school year, parents should notify the Director and teacher immediately if they find out that a child has an allergy. This notification must be in writing and the parent must speak directly to the teacher.

Record Keeping Policies

General

We treat all children's records and personnel records confidentially. Access to children's records is restricted to the Director and the child's teaching staff. Access to personnel records is restricted to the Director, chairperson of the Arcola Christian Preschool Board, chairperson of Arcola UMC's Staff Parish Relations Committee, and officials under the authority of the Code of Virginia.

We keep records, logs, and reports current. Records and reports on children and staff shall be maintained and accessible to authorized persons for two years after termination of enrollment or employment, unless current Loudoun County Department of Health Code requires a longer time span.

Children's Records

We maintain a separate file for each child for the current school year in the Director's Office. The file may contain, but is not limited to:

- **Personal Information Form** which contains the name, nickname (if any), sex, and birth date of the child; name, home address, and home phone number of each parent who has custody; when applicable work phone number and place of employment of each parent who has custody. (The distribution of child's name, address and phone number on Arcola Christian Preschool class lists and directory is restricted to those in our program, Board members, and church staff. We forbid any other distribution.) In addition, we ask for information about toilet habits and specific details, which will assist the child in adjusting to the classroom. The form also includes information relating to referrals for special services for the child, as well as identification of any additional programs or schools the child may be attending.
- **Current Standard Health Form** authorized by the State of Virginia, completed and signed by a physician.
- **Emergency Treatment Information and Authorization Form** with names, addresses and phone numbers of two designated people to call in an emergency if the parent cannot be reached, doctor's name and phone number, child's allergies and intolerance to food, medicine, and other substance(s). **This form is required so that we can have a child transported to a medical care facility to receive the required medical treatment by a physician.**
- **Transportation Form** listing persons authorized to pick up the child. Appropriate legal paperwork shall be on file when the custodial parent requests the program not to release the child to the other parent.
- **Parent-School Contract** signed by parent or guardian.
- **Accident Report** documenting any accidents or injuries, including minor ones, sustained by child at school and any first aid administered by the staff.
- **Authorization to Administer Medication Form** that documents medication necessary for a life-threatening situation and signed by parent/guardian and physician.
- **Reports of Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect** and the required notification procedures, if necessary.

The file may also contain reports of a missing child when local authorities are contacted for help. In the unlikely event that a death occurs while a child attends Arcola Christian Preschool, we will report to the VA State Licensing Office within 24 hours and will include this information in the office files.

The main office of Arcola United Methodist Church maintains files of reports of all fire and safety inspections done by Loudoun County, and records of inspections of asbestos containing materials.

The Director of Arcola Christian Preschool shall maintain reports of inspection by the Loudoun County Health Department and/or VA Department of Social Services and keep the current Certificate or Approval on display.

Financial Records

The Director maintains individual financial records for each family enrolled in Arcola Christian Preschool. These records are confidential. Access to financial records is restricted to the Director, the Church Board Treasurer, and the Preschool Board Treasurer. The Preschool Director has responsibility for collection of overdue funds. In the event tuition assistance is applied for, the members of the tuition assistance sub-committee will also have access to the necessary records.

Policies on Staff-Parent Interaction

Assessments

Teachers do formal student assessments at least once during the school year to communicate the child's progress and well-being. The parent, teacher, or Director may request a conference at any time.

Parents should refer all questions pertaining to policies and procedures, school schedules, and finances to the Director.

Visitation

While, parents are welcome to visit the school at any time, please remember your presence can be disruptive to your child or other children who are having difficulty with separation. September is a time for children to become familiar with one another and to become comfortable separating from their parents, so we ask that you do not visit during September. After this period, we invite you to look into our busy, happy, creative classrooms and see your children in action. It is not necessary to call ahead; however, it is required to sign-in with the Director or Assistant to the Director and when entering the building. **We will not allow a visitor to enter the classroom area without checking in with the Director.** The teacher will not be able to have individual discussions during class sessions but will be available by appointment. If any visitor is disruptive to a class in any way, we will ask her/him to leave. Additionally, we ask that you do not bring siblings (to include infants) to the class during a visit.

Confidentiality

Arcola Christian Preschool stresses the importance of protecting the rights of privacy of children, their families and our staff members. The practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written record is a basic policy of our program. It is critical that the confidences of children and their parents and those of Arcola Christian Preschool staff members are not shared with other parents, staff members, friends, family members or other students. We reveal the identity of children and their families only in cases of professional necessity. We protect staff members' rights also.

General Policies

Absences

If your child is going to be absent, please call the preschool or email the Preschool Director and leave a message with your child's name and reason for absence before the beginning of the school day. The Director will then notify the child's classroom teacher of the absence. If a parent does not notify us, preschool staff will contact you to check on the

child's whereabouts. This is very important for your child's safety. We will not grant refunds in tuition for student absences.

Arcola Church

While we realize you may not be a member of our church, you are a part of our outreach mission and therefore, will occasionally receive correspondence from the church.

Attendance Sheets

Each class shall have a class attendance sheet posted by the door on the inside of the classroom. It is the teacher's responsibility to take attendance each day at the beginning of the class period. In the event of an evacuation (fire drill or otherwise), the teacher and assistant must take the attendance sheet out with the class. The teacher will account for all children during the evacuation.

Book Bags

Each child will need a book bag to carry back and forth from home to school. We recommend an open topped book bag. Open top school bags with the school's logo will be available to purchase. Please let the director or your child's teacher know if you are interested. (We highly recommend these because they are MUCH easier to use than backpacks.) The teacher will put any communication that is to be sent home in to the child's school bag. Parents can also send communication back to the school in their child's school bag.

Clothing

School activities will involve painting, outdoor play, active and on the floor play. Therefore, children's clothing should be durable, casual and washable. Rubber soled shoes are required for school. For your child's safety, please do not send him/her to school in clothing with drawstrings, or in sandals or party shoes. We will go outside every day unless it is raining, icy, or conditions make it unsafe. Therefore, dress your child appropriately each day. This may include hats, hooded jackets, mittens, and boots. To aid in the development of self-help skills, it is important that your child wear clothing that s/he can manage at restroom time, e.g., elastic waist vs. belts or overalls. Please label all extra clothing with your child's first and last name.

Each child needs to have a complete change of clothes (including socks, underpants, shorts or slacks, and a top) in a plastic bag with his/her name to be stored at school. If the change of clothing is used, we will send the soiled clothing home with the child. Please replace the extra clothing on your child's next school day.

Communication

Each teacher will communicate information about classroom activities and lessons to parents on a regular basis.

We encourage parents to come in and talk to the Director or schedule an appointment as needed. You can reach the Director by phone or email during school hours, Monday through Friday. If the Director is not available, please leave a message, and she will reply as promptly as possible.

Parents may leave a note with the Director or teacher requesting that the Director or teacher phone them to answer questions or discuss concerns.

Curriculum

The curriculum at Arcola Christian Preschool provides for children to learn through active learning experiences. They will have many opportunities each day to pretend and role-play based on their experiences. They will have fun using

their language, building relationships with other children and adults, and expressing their creativity through movement and art. They will count objects, sing, read along with the teacher, sort and match, put things together and take things apart, build towers with blocks and predict when they will fall. They will explore the beauty of their wonder-filled world.

Developmental Concerns

All staff members are required to seek training in the field of child development and to keep up-to-date in this area. Based on this knowledge, if a teacher recognizes an irregularity in a child's behavior, the teacher will notify the Director who will notify the child's parents. When deemed necessary, the Director and/or teacher will pass on information about Loudoun County's Child Find program to parents.

The staff will cooperate with an outside service professional who would like to confer about a specific child. We do this only with the parent's request and permission in writing.

Diaper Policy

Children must be fully potty trained to attend the Threes or Fours programs at Arcola Christian Preschool. Potty trained means no diapers, pull-ups or training pants of any kind. It also means that the parent is confident that his/her child can make it through the entire class without having an accident. There is a scheduled restroom break each day, but children may use the restroom at any time.

If a child has an accident more than once in a session, the parent or guardian will be called to come and change the child. If a child has a bowel movement accident, we will call the parent or guardian immediately. The child will wait in the Director's office with books, toys, and adult supervision until someone arrives. We will ask the parents of a child who is not potty trained or regresses during the school year to explore the possibility of delaying enrollment.

Fundraising Activities

We will have fundraising activities in accordance with Arcola United Methodist Church fundraising policies. We will use the proceeds for specific needs as designated by the Arcola Christian Preschool Board.

The Arcola Christian Preschool Board established a Fundraising Committee to plan and implement fundraising throughout the year. Although parent participation in fundraising activities is voluntary, we strongly encourage interested parents to join in these efforts.

Hand Washing

The VA State Licensing guidelines require staff to wash their hands with soap and water prior to the start of class, before handling any food, after toileting, after wiping a child's nose, as well as other times during the day. These guidelines shall be the standard for Arcola Christian Preschool.

Children will have their hands washed with soap and water or hand wipes upon arrival, before handling any food, after toileting and at any other times deemed necessary during the school day.

Head Room Parent

Each class shall have a designated head room parent. This parent will be the coordinate with the teacher to plan classroom parties, arrange for volunteers as needed, and will make the initial effort to set up parent coffees. It is up to each teacher to designate the head room parent and pass on the duties that are expected for the parent in that position. The Director will be given a list of all head room parents. The teacher will also notify all parents of children in his/her class of the head room parent's name and phone number so that they can call this person with questions about volunteering or volunteer events.

Ratios

During the annual budget discussions, the Arcola Christian Preschool Board will determine the Arcola Christian Preschool class ratios (student-to-teacher). The ratios will comply with the State Licensing Standards.

Photographs

We may only photograph children whose parents have given permission. The permission consent is located in the Parent-School Contract and we will keep it in the child's file. The staff is responsible for checking each child's file prior to the start of school and identifying anyone who does NOT have permission to have their picture taken in the class. If there is a need to take a child's picture for a classroom job chart, those parents who have requested that their child NOT be photographed may be contacted by the teacher for that specific purpose. A professional photographer will take both individual and group photographs during the school year. We will distribute the photo package information to parents in advance.

Prayer

Children will pray during chapel time, before eating snack, and at any other time of day deemed appropriate.

Snack

Parents will be asked to send a nutritious snack for their child's class on a rotating basis throughout the school year. Teachers will send home monthly snack calendars. On your assigned day, please send enough snacks for the whole class. Do not send beverages (i.e. juice, milk). Please send a small, reusable water bottle for your child each day. We will fill it with water to drink.

Snacks must be in the original, unopened package with a label or be fresh fruits or vegetables that we can wash. We will not serve any foods at Arcola Christian Preschool containing peanut or tree nut products or that were processed/manufactured in a facility that processes nuts or peanuts. Also, please do not send candy, cookies, donuts, cake or brownies. Nothing can be homemade!!!!

If you would like to recognize your child's birthday, we suggest you send in special birthday napkins, cups, or plates or a pencil or another small simple item for the children instead of treats. No balloons; they pose a choking hazard.

The following is a list of some snack suggestions. Brands are not listed because sometimes ingredients change. Ingredients also vary among brands. Please check the label when you purchase the items.

- Applesauce
- Raisins
- Graham crackers or graham sticks
- Goldfish crackers
- Pretzels
- Yogurt
- Cheese cubes
- Canned diced fruit (also comes individually packaged)
- Vegetables and ranch dressing for dipping
- Cereal
- Jello
- Pudding
- Rice cakes
- Veggie Straws

- Fresh fruit (we will cut)

If your child has an allergy, please talk to the teacher and the Preschool Director to create an acceptable plan for his/her safety.

To assist in preventing choking, please do not send grapes, raw carrots or popcorn.

Special-Needs Children

If we can reasonably accommodate a child's special needs at Arcola Christian Preschool, then we will consider the child for enrollment. The Arcola Christian Preschool staff is not certified or trained in the area of Special Education but is willing to accept guidance by special education professionals who may already be working with a family. Any accommodations agreed upon will take into consideration the needs of all children in the classroom. These accommodations will be agreed upon in writing to ensure that all parties understand the needs as well as the parameters.

If a large portion of any staff member's time is spent dealing with any one child, the staff will notify the Director. It is the policy of Arcola Christian Preschool that all children shall receive equal amounts of time from the teachers. If the child with special needs is preventing this balance of staff and child interaction, we may ask the parents of the child with special needs to look for another program that better meets the needs of their child.

Staff

Criminal Record checks are required for all staff members who work directly with the children on a part time or full-time basis. Volunteer parents who work occasionally with the children and who are never alone to supervise the children do not require Criminal Record checks.

Supervision of Children

The Arcola Christian Preschool staff assumes responsibility for children when they enter the classroom or when a staff member escorts them on Arcola Christian Preschool property. During designated class times, the staff members in charge of the class will supervise the children. Teachers and their assistants are responsible for the class during music, chapel time, indoor or outdoor playtime, as well as during any special activities.

Children must be within hearing and vision range of the staff at all times. The exception to this is when a child is in the restroom. If a child is in the restroom more than a few minutes, a teacher will check on him/her. If a child is being evaluated or tutored by Child Find personnel or another private resource person that has been pre-arranged by the parents, the teacher will know the child's whereabouts during the entire session. The Director will be notified of any person who is working with any of the children at Arcola Christian Preschool.

Policy for Discipline and Guidance of Children

General

We apply the concept of developmental appropriateness to the discipline and guidance of children at Arcola UMC Preschool. Guidance and discipline will be age-appropriate and appropriate for the individual.

Procedures

Staff members of Arcola Christian Preschool will treat all children with respect and acceptance regardless of race, religion or culture. Children of both sexes will have equal opportunities to engage in all activities.

Understanding the behavior of children in the age range we serve (2 ½ through 5 years) is the basis for appropriate guidance and discipline. Young children will occasionally be messy, show interest in body parts, experiment with new words that may not be acceptable in the classroom, cry, resist guidance, occasionally be aggressive and disregard rules. Our staff members understand why these behaviors occur and will respond to the child with love and patience in these instances.

Our goal is to facilitate the development of self-control in children. Some techniques to achieve this goal are:

- To set clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom and playground behavior;
- Redirect children to more acceptable behavior or activities;
- Listen to the children talk about their feelings;
- Guide the children to solve their own problems and resolve their own conflicts;
- Remind children of rules only as necessary, and with patience;
- Use the word NO only when safety is an issue;
- Use positively worded direction (“Use indoor voices.” Instead of “Don’t shout.”);
- Encourage expected behavior and Model expected behavior; and
- Arrange classrooms in a way that promotes desirable behavior.

The Virginia Department of Social Services requires that a list of unacceptable methods of discipline be available to parents.

Unacceptable Methods of Discipline

- A staff member shall not shake a child at any time.
- A staff member shall neither force nor withhold food from a child.
- We will not punish a child for a toileting accident.
- Verbal abuse of a child or the child’s family is not acceptable.
- Physical punishment or disciplinary action to the child’s body such as, but not limited to the following actions are prohibited: spanking; forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position; standing on one foot; keeping arms raised above or horizontal to the body; restraining to restrict movement through binding or tying; using exercise as punishment.

Unacceptable Adult Behavior Toward Children

The following are adult behaviors that are never acceptable toward children:

- Screaming
- Neglect
- Inflicting physical or emotional pain
- Blaming, teasing, insulting, name-calling, threatening
- Using frightening or humiliating punishment
- Laughing at children’s behavior
- Discussing children’s behavior with other staff members in the presence of children

Policies and Procedures Relating to Behavioral Issues

Using basic principles of early childhood and Christian education, we always strive to provide a safe, friendly environment where children experience and learn love and acceptance. We make every effort to teach acceptable behavior choices. However, we do not have training or staff to manage ongoing behavioral issues related to separation, safety, and aggression. Since we believe that all children can learn, we will assist families whose children are experiencing difficulties by providing referral information to county agencies who may be of assistance.

Aggressive Behavior

We understand that incidents of aggressive behavior will occur in the preschool setting. This negative behavior may be one way a toddler or older non-verbal child expresses frustration, impulsivity, fatigue, illness, or difficulty sharing. These behaviors may include kicking, hitting (with hand or objects), screaming, shouting, and/or biting.

When an incident of aggressive behavior occurs, we will use the following procedure:

1. A staff member notifies the Director as soon as possible when an incident of aggressive behavior occurs.
2. If a child deliberately hurts or bites another child or an adult, the adult response will be as follows:
 - a. Calm the child who has been hurt. If there is a wound, take appropriate actions and administer first aid. If there is a bite, or if the child hit his/her head, we will notify the parents immediately.
 - b. Talk to the child who demonstrated the aggressive behavior. Explain calmly, but firmly, that we do not allow that behavior, which rule was broken and give an appropriate alternative behavior. Encourage an apology when both children are calm.
 - c. Examine the environment to see if external factors might have contributed to the aggressive response. Document the circumstances surrounding the incident gained from the teacher and/or adult in charge.
 - d. The teacher or assistant will record the incident and file it appropriately.
 - e. We will provide a copy of the report to the parent of the child who demonstrated aggression. We will not give the name of this child to the parent of the hurt child. This is confidential and is not included in the report.
3. The teacher and/or the Director will talk to the parent of the child who demonstrated aggression. To determine the possible causes of the behavior, we will work with the parent to try to understand what might be causing the aggressive behavior with an emphasis on class rules and the need for setting clear limits with the preschooler. The staff may also make recommendations for follow up at home by encouraging appropriate alternate behaviors.
4. We will handle a child's second episode of aggressive behavior by calling the parents and having them take their child home from school immediately. We may impose a time of suspension for multiple instances of aggressive behavior and refer parents to the appropriate county agencies for assistance. The parent is responsible for tuition payments during the time of suspension.
5. If a child's behavior is continually disruptive or endangers the safety of others in the class, we will provide written notification to the parents of the child's removal from the program. NO REFUNDS will be given for the month that the child is removed, nor will the Registration and Supply Fee be refunded.

Child Abuse and Neglect

According to Virginia State Law, ". . . any teacher or other person employed in a public or private school, kindergarten or nursery school, any person providing full or part-time child care for pay on a regularly planned basis, . . . any person associated with or employed by any private organization responsible for the care, custody or control of children" who has reason to suspect that a child is an abused or neglected child, shall report the matter immediately to the local department of the county or city wherein the child resides or wherein the abuse or neglect is believed to have occurred or to the Department's toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline. The Staff is aware of the definition of an abused or neglected child and the signs of child abuse or neglect.

We keep written records of any complaint from a child or any eyewitness accounts to abuse or neglect.

Signs of Child Abuse and Neglect

- Repeated injuries such as bruises, welts, or burns, or an angry, depressed, aggressive, or withdrawn child, or a child who is afraid to go home.
- A malnourished, unhappy child, inadequately dressed, physically dirty, tired, left alone frequently.
- A child whose health needs are ignored.

- If any staff member of Arcola Christian Preschool suspects that a child is being neglected or abused, the incident will be documented and reported to the Social Service Department of the State of VA. The staff, as required by law, will report any suspected cases of child abuse in accordance with the Code of Virginia.

The following procedures are in place at Arcola Christian Preschool:

1. If a child tells a staff member that someone has hurt him/her, the staff member will immediately report to the Director and write a report to put in the child's file.
2. The Director will talk to the child.
3. The Director may consult with the Arcola Christian Preschool Board and/or the Pastor.
4. The Director may consult with the involved parent.
5. If deemed necessary and there is true suspicion of child abuse or neglect, the Director will contact the Protective Services Unit of the Department of Social Services.

Missing Child

In the event a child is missing from Arcola Christian Preschool the following procedures will be followed:

1. The Director and the Teacher's Assistant of the class that has reported a missing child will make an immediate search of the classroom area.
2. The teacher will remain with the class while the assistant reports the child as missing.
3. The Director or her assistant will notify the parents or guardians.
4. The Director or her assistant will notify the church staff of the situation.
5. The Director or person in charge will notify the police and report all information upon their arrival.
6. The Director will notify the state Social Services Department within 24 hours.

General Safety Plan

Arcola Christian Preschool seeks to provide a safe and protected environment for the children, parents and staff.

Classroom and Playroom

- Staff is alert to the activity of all children at all times.
- Toys and learning activities are age-appropriate, kept clean and in safe, working condition.
- Children may not climb on top of tables, furniture or counters.

Playground Safety

- Two adults will be in the play area with each class.
- One adult will be next to the climbing apparatus any time a child is on that piece of equipment.
- The gate will remain closed and latched when any children are in the play area.
- Children may not throw mulch, sand or toys.
- Staff will be attentive to children while in the play area.
- Children may not climb on the fence.
- The preschool staff will not tolerate the improper use of any of the play equipment.
- Children must climb one at a time on the slide. Children must go down the slide in a sitting position with only one child going down the slide at a time.
- Children will be encouraged to walk, not run, when entering and leaving the play area.
- Staff must report broken or unsafe equipment in the play area to the Director immediately.
- We will periodically monitor the depth of the protective ground cover in the play area to ensure that it is in accordance with Virginia State Licensing requirements.

General Policies

- A telephone is available to the staff.
- The furnace and air conditioning equipment is isolated from the children.

- Carpets are flame retardant.
- Windows have adequate protection – sturdy screens and safety locks.
- We supervise children at all times.
- The outdoor playground is fenced and has gates that latch closed.
- All paint and art supplies are non-toxic.
- Cleaning supplies for classrooms are out of reach of children and storage rooms are locked.
- Childproof covers must be on electrical outlets when they are accessible to children. There are no power cords or extension cords exposed to children.
- Batteries and flashlights are available in the building.
- Arcola Christian Preschool is equipped with a sprinkler system.
- A battery-operated radio is located in the building.
- We will carry mobile phones to the playground, and any emergency is immediately communicated to the preschool office.

School Closure Policy

We will generally follow the LCPS for unscheduled closings; however, parents should be aware that due to organizational and operational differences, Arcola Christian Preschool reserves the right to act independently of LCPS in making operational decisions.

It is your responsibility to know when the Loudoun County Public Schools will be closed.

Announcements of school closings are communicated via television on most news channels or on radio stations like WTOF at AM 1500/ FM 103.5. You can sign-up for e-mail and/or cell phone notification through Alert Loudoun at www.Loudoun.gov. You can also get the LCPS app for your phone that will send you alerts. We do not make up cancelled days.

If Arcola Christian Preschool makes a different decision, we will send an email to all families and leave a message on our outgoing voice mail.

Late Openings and Early Closings

If Loudoun County Public Schools open one or two hours late, Arcola Christian Preschool will begin **one** hour late and **will dismiss at the regular time**. Early closings DO NOT affect our dismissal time.

Emergency Plans

Licensing Standards require that each month the Arcola Christian Preschool conduct an emergency evacuation drill with the staff and children. During these drills, we will evacuate the building and act as if there is an actual call for emergency. The Director will keep a record of these drills on file in her office. Emergency evacuation charts and procedures will be on the wall in each classroom where they are accessible to the staff and children.

Each classroom will be equipped with the following:

- Evacuation chart and procedures
- Emergency contact information for all children along with a recent photo
- Daily class attendance
- Wipes
- Single use gloves

The Director will have the following items in her office:

- First Aid Kit and Supplies to include:
 - Scissors
 - Gauze pads
 - Adhesive tape
 - Band-aids, assorted types and sizes
 - Antiseptic cleansing solution
 - Syrup of ipecac
 - Thermometer
 - Triangular bandages
 - Single use gloves
 - Ice Pack
 - First aid instructional manual
- Battery operated radio
- Working battery operated flashlight
- Walkie-Talkies

THE STATE OF VIRGINIA CODE COMPLIANCE

1. **Arcola Christian Preschool** is religious exempt from licensure.
2. **Staff Qualifications**
Teacher-- Bachelor's Degree from an accredited college or university, with emphasis in Early Childhood Education and/or significant experience in teaching within an early childhood educational program
Teacher's Assistant--Associate's Degree (60 credit hours or more) from an accredited college or university with emphasis in early childhood education or child development and/or experience working with young children in learning situations
3. **The preschool is located within Arcola United Methodist Church.** Six classrooms are in use with a toilet and sink shared between two rooms. There is a kitchen available for cooking projects. A fenced playground is available with appropriate playground equipment. A large, open, indoor room is available for use when there is bad weather.
4. We can accommodate **seventy-five students** on location at one time.
5. The parents of the preschoolers will provide **snacks**. There are guidelines provided in this handbook. Arcola Christian Preschool is a nut-free facility.
6. **Health requirements for the staff** include an annual statement for each person by a physician that he/she is free from any disability that would prevent him/her from caring for children. Staff members also have to present proof of a negative tuberculin test or chest x-ray.
7. **A Public Liability Insurance policy** covers employees, children, and parents of Arcola Christian Preschool. This policy does not cover accidental injuries.
8. **The staff and children must use specific procedures for hand washing at** the beginning of the school day, before eating, after toileting, upon return from outdoor play, and when they use a tissue to clean their nose.
9. Arcola Christian Preschool has a person trained in **first aid** when school is in session. The American Red Cross will certify this person.

2024-2025 CLASS SCHEDULE

Class schedule options for the 2024-2025 school year will be:

2 ½ year olds (must be turning 3 by March 31, 2025):

- Tuesday and Thursday
- Wednesday and Friday

3 year olds (must be 3 by September 30, 2024) have the following options:

- Tuesday and Thursday
- Wednesday and Friday
- Monday/Wednesday/Friday
- Monday/Tuesday/Thursday

4/5 year olds (must be 4 by September 30, 2024) have the following options:

- Tuesday/Thursday
- Monday/Wednesday/Friday
- Monday through Thursday
- Monday through Friday

(Priority for the 4-day and 5-day classes will be current students who need an extra year of preschool and then those who will be 5 before January 1, 2025.)

All classes meet from 9:30 am – 12:15 pm.

Arcola Christian Preschool reserves the right to alter the class schedule as listed above based on enrollment demands.

FEE SCHEDULE

A **REGISTRATION FEE** of \$149.00 must accompany each registration form. The registration fee is non-refundable if your child is offered placement in our program so make sure to only mark those classes you are willing to accept.

TUITION for the 2024-2025 school year at Arcola Christian Preschool is listed below. Tuition is to be paid in nine equal installments. The first tuition payment is due May 1, 2024. It is a deposit and will be credited as the May 2025 payment. The remainder of the payments are to be made by the first of each month, August through March, and are applied to the following month's fees.

To ensure we receive timely payments, **we ask that all families make their tuition payments through our [online payment page](#) using an electronic fund transfer or use bill pay through your bank** allowing at least 7 days for processing and delivery. If this presents a problem for your family, please talk with our Director.

Monthly Tuition

Two-day classes	\$260.00
Three-day classes	\$320.00
Four-day class	\$390.00
Five-day class	\$470.00

Arcola Christian Preschool 2024-2025 Student Calendar

(Updated 6/12/2024)

August 26-29	Staff In-service/Training/Classroom Set-up
September 2	Parent Orientation Meeting (Director & Parents only) – 7 pm
Week of September 2	Open House (assigned times) & first days of school
October 3	NO SCHOOL – LCPS & ACP Closed
October 4	NO SCHOOL - LCPS & ACP Closed
October 14	NO SCHOOL (Indigenous Peoples' Day)
October 24 & 25	Halloween celebrations
October 30-31	NO SCHOOL – LCPS & ACP Closed
November 1	NO SCHOOL – LCPS & ACP Closed
November 4	NO SCHOOL – LCPS & ACP Closed
November 5	NO SCHOOL (ACP STAFF WORK DAY 9am-1pm)
November 1 - 10	Parent/Teacher Conferences – 3s & 4/5s only (students attend school as usual)
November 21 & 22	Thanksgiving Feasts – all students (students only)
November 25-29	NO SCHOOL (Thanksgiving Break)
December 18 & 19	Christmas Celebration
Dec. 20 – Jan. 3	NO SCHOOL (Christmas/Winter Break)
January 20	NO SCHOOL (MLK Jr. Birthday)
January 27	NO SCHOOL – LCPS & ACP Closed
January 28	NO SCHOOL – LCPS & ACP Closed
January 29	NO SCHOOL – LCPS & ACP Closed
Jan 30 & 31	Pajama Days – all students
February 13 & 14	Valentine's Day Celebrations – all students
February 17	NO SCHOOL – LCPS & ACP Closed (Presidents' Day)
Feb 27 & 28	School Pictures – all students
March 31	NO SCHOOL – LCPS & ACP Closed
April 4 & 7	NO SCHOOL – LCPS & ACP Closed
April 14 - 18	NO SCHOOL – Spring Break
May 1 – May 10	Parent/Teacher conferences -3s & 4/5s only (students attend school as usual)
May 22 & 23	Last Days of school for all students (Family celebration begins @ 11am)

Arcola Christian Preschool Carline

Follow the arrows on the map to travel safely through the carline.

Remember to carefully watch for anyone walking through the parking lot.

During drop-off, DO NOT allow your child to exit your vehicle until a preschool staff member is at your car to accompany him/her.

During pick-up, display your carline sign in your front passenger window or hang it from your rear view mirror in order to assist the staff in getting the children into the correct cars.

For the safety of every child and adult in our parking lot, please DO NOT talk on your cell phone during drop-off or pick-up.

More information can be found on pages 5-6.

