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(717) 432-2155 ♦ mtnsideschool@verizon.net
www.mountainsidepreschool.com

PARENT HANDBOOK

“Mountainside Preschool – A positive, Christ-centered environment that nurtures the whole child.”

We are happy you have chosen to send your child to Mountainside Preschool. We believe that this program gives children a great start in getting to know what school is all about in a safe and caring learning environment. Providing experiences in all areas of a child’s development (intellectual, social, physical, emotional and spiritual) gives them many ways to grow.

Communication is very important. We encourage and expect that parents read the operating procedures in this handbook, the monthly newsletters, emails, SeeSaw posts from your child’s teacher, and any supplemental notes that we may send home. Please check your child’s folder daily for notes from the teacher or works of art. Also, please check the website for current news and calendars. You can also follow us on Facebook for some updates during the week of the exciting things we are doing. We want you to feel free to be a part of the preschool; offering suggestions, comments, and helping out on party days. You are always welcome to visit the preschool anytime your child is here.

1. ADMISSION TO SCHOOL

Mountainside Preschool enrolls children from age three to five. All children must be potty-trained (no pull-ups) and able to use the toilet with a minimum amount of teacher help. (Teachers will help with snapping and zipping when necessary and when a child needs help learning how things work in the bathroom at preschool.)

In December, registration for the following school year opens for families of children currently enrolled in Mountainside and for families who attend The Meeting House – Dillsburg Campus. In January, registration opens for anyone else in the community who would like to enroll their child. Positions in the classes are filled on a first come, first served basis.

2. PRESCHOOL – Monday-Wednesday or Tuesday-Thursday (8:30 am - 11:30 am)

A child must be three years old by September 1 in order to register for the Preschool Class for that school year and must be fully potty-trained.

3. PRE-KINDERGARTEN - Tuesday - Thursday or Monday-Wednesday-Friday (8:30 am - 12:00 noon)

A child must be 4 or 5 years old. A child may attend the Pre-K program for two years if the parents choose to wait to send their son or daughter to Kindergarten even if they are eligible to attend Kindergarten in their school district or if the parents and teachers determine a child would benefit from two years in the program.

4. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

If a parent wishes to enroll a child with a diagnosed or undiagnosed special need, Mountainside will need to meet with the parents and the child to determine if the school is able to best serve the needs of the child. If the child is diagnosed, documentation from a doctor or an Early Intervention IEP must be made available to the Director of Mountainside. *(The special needs of the child will be kept confidential. Only those making the decision about enrolling the child will be given information. Parents will be kept informed of the decision-making process.)*

If it is determined that the child could benefit from attending Mountainside, there will be a one calendar month trial period for the child and the staff to see if the preschool is the appropriate place to meet the special needs of the child. After this month, there will be a meeting with parents and teachers of the child and the Director to determine if the school is able to continue to meet the needs of the child along with the needs of the other children in the classroom. *The Mountainside Director and Board will decide if the child can remain enrolled in the program.*

A parent may not attend school with the child to help with any special needs. It will be determined by the Director if it would be beneficial for the parent to contact their Intermediate Unit or for the parent to get other services that would provide the child with help at Mountainside. *The Mountainside Director and Board will decide if the child can remain enrolled in the program while services are being determined.*

5. DISCIPLINE / TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT

Mountainside uses a positive approach to discipline. Some examples are:

- Distraction to an alternate activity
- Offering alternative behavior choices
- Reinforcing acceptable behavior with praise
- Maintaining structure and routine
- Arranging the room with lots of choices

When correction is necessary, these steps will be followed:

1. Discussion between the teacher and child
2. Time Out
3. Removal from the group with supervision
4. Informal parent conference (either at pick-up time or over the phone)
5. Formal conference with parents, teacher, and Director

Parents will be asked to withdraw their child from Mountainside if any of the following conditions apply:

- A child is in danger of physically hurting himself or others based on an inability of the child to use self control
- It is determined that the special needs of a child cannot be met by the teachers and staff of the preschool
- A parent does not make special arrangements to cover tuition after two months of non-payment of full tuition.

There may be other reasons for termination of enrollment that would be determined by the Mountainside Preschool Board that are not listed here. The Mountainside Preschool Board of Directors reserves the right to terminate the enrollment of any child whose chronic, disruptive behavior or lack of response to discipline interferes with the other children's ability to learn. This will occur at the recommendation of the Director and only with unanimous Board approval.

6. HEALTH

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to us. Our health regulations are strict. If your child comes down with a communicable disease (chicken pox, strep throat, pink eye, etc.), please notify the school. If your child will not be in school on a certain day, please call us.

Please use good judgment before sending your child to school with a cough or a runny nose. We realize this is common during the winter months, but we ask that you DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD when these cold symptoms are severe or your child has had a fever of 100 or more during the last 24 hours. Tylenol may reduce a fever, but your child can still be contagious. If your child comes to school and a teacher feels he/she is not well enough to stay, you will be called. If a parent cannot be reached, we will call the emergency number(s) you have given us. For this reason, it is very important to keep all names and phone numbers of your contact people current.

No medicines will be given to children by staff at Mountainside with the following exceptions:

- A child with an Epi-Pen that is used for allergic reactions and parents sign written permission for use of the Epi-Pen.
- A child has a medical condition where it is necessary to give medicine in an emergency situation and parents give written permission for staff to administer the medicine as needed.

If a child is hurt and emergency medical care is needed, the staff will call 911 for help and then call the parent immediately following.

If a child is hurt and emergency medical care is not needed, staff will care for the injury and notify parents with a phone call, if necessary, so that a parent can come and determine what is needed. An accident report form will be filled out by the person helping the child and will be given to the parent for their signature.

As teachers, we are obligated by law to report any suspected child abuse. If we see unusual bruises or injuries, we will talk with you about them. Please understand that we are not being judgmental but are only looking out for the welfare of your child.

7. SAFETY

The lobby doors at Mountainside Preschool will be locked at 8:45 am. Parents may buzz in at the office door if they are running late. The downstairs door, outside doors at the steps, and door to the playground will also be locked at all times. No parents are allowed downstairs without the permission of the Director or unless it is a special party day. In order to keep a secure and safe sign out process at the end of the day, parents and grandparents must stay in the lobby. No parents are allowed in the sanctuary or hallway. Your child's teacher will have you sign out your child and will call the child from the hallway or sanctuary to be dismissed. Anyone picking up your child must be designated on the registration form. Please have I.D. ready to show the teacher. If someone is picking up your child that is not on your registration form, a phone call, email or note must be sent to the office before dismissal.

8. TUITION AND PAYMENT POLICY

A tuition and payment policy has been formulated to provide necessary and regular income. Tuition is based on enrollment (a reserved space), not on attendance.

Tuition is due on or before the 5th of each month. Checks payable to Mountainside Preschool are preferred and are to be put in the Mountainside tuition box. The box will be in the foyer at pick-up times. **Please place cash payments in a sealed envelope labeled with yours and your child's names on it and put it in the tuition box. Please do not give your tuition payment to the teachers or put it in a backpack. [Note: ALL checks - tuition, Scholastic books, fundraisers, field trip fees – should be made payable to: Mountainside Preschool and put in the tuition box.]**

Tuition for the M-W-F Pre-K Program is \$125.00 per month. Tuition for the T-TH Pre-K Program is \$105.00 per month. Tuition for the M-W or T-TH Preschool Program is \$95.00 per month. A non-refundable registration fee of \$40.00 is payable when you enroll your child each year. Each child is enrolled for the entire school year (September through May). Two weeks prior notice is needed upon a child's withdrawal from the program.

Parents are responsible to contact the school if you are having difficulty with keeping your tuition current. We will be happy to work with you. Families who are consistently late with tuition payments, who have not contacted us, may be charged a late fee. Families who have not paid tuition for two months, and

have not set up a written payment plan, will no longer be allowed to send their child to school until this tuition is paid.

Classes that are cancelled due to bad weather or holidays are not to be deducted from monthly tuition rates. We typically have snow make-up days on the same days as Northern School District. If your child will not be attending school due to vacations or special family trips, please put a note in the Mountainside mailbox to let us know of this absence. **Tuition will not be reduced should you choose to take your child out of school for vacation, etc. during the school year.**

9. COMMUNICATION

We will convey information about how your child is doing as well as activities that go on at school through several modes of communication. We will give a short summary of how your child did that day at pick-up time. We will also communicate pictures, notes, and updates about your child through the secure SeeSaw app. Newsletters and notes home will be in your child's take home folder which will be sitting on the Mountainside table in the lobby. Emails will also be sent to remind you of upcoming events and activities. Our Facebook page will often have pictures and posts about our daily activities. Finally, our website (www.mountainsidepreschool.com) will have details about our events and upcoming activities.

To communicate with us, we ask that you call the office (717-432-2155) or email at mtnsideschool@verizon.net. You may also drop off any forms and tuition in our Mountainside Mailbox located on the Mountainside table in the lobby when you pick up your child. **Please do not put things in your child's backpack as we do not check backpacks. Backpacks should only contain a change of clothes for accidents.**

10. ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP

Parents are expected to arrive **before** dismissal time to pick up their child. If a parent is late, the parent will be charged \$5.00 for every five minutes they are late in arriving.

The hours for the M-W-F and the T-TH Pre-K Programs are **8:30 am to 12:00 noon**. Children should be dropped off under the carport at the upper church foyer entrance to the building between 8:30 and 8:45 am. If your child is going to be late or absent, we ask that you notify the school by 8:30 am. Parents are asked to come into the church foyer entrance to pick up their children for dismissal at **12:00 noon**.

The hours for the M-W and T-TH Preschool Programs are **8:30 am to 11:30 am**. Children should be dropped off under the carport at the upper church foyer entrance to the building between 8:30 and 8:45 am. If your child is going to be late or absent, we ask that you notify the school by 8:30 am. Parents are asked to come into the church foyer entrance to pick up their children for dismissal at **11:30 am**.

For the safety of all children and those picking up children, park ONLY in lined parking spaces. **Please do not park in "No Parking" areas, handicapped spaces or un-lined areas** - - even for a short period of time. Your help with this is greatly appreciated.

NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO A PERSON WHO IS NOT AUTHORIZED BY A PARENT. WE MUST HAVE, IN WRITING OR VERBALLY THAT DAY FROM THE PARENT, AUTHORIZATION FOR A NEW PERSON NOT ON YOUR LIST. THESE PERSONS SHOULD BE EXPECTED TO SHOW A PHOTO I.D.

11. SCHOOL ATTIRE

Please dress your child in clothing that is proper for preschool play. Painting and outside play (weather permitting) are daily activities. **All children must wear sneakers or closed toe shoes with socks.** (No Crocs, sandals or flip flops are allowed because of possible injury- including splinters). Children will not be allowed to play on the playground if they come to school in these shoes. Please understand that this rule is for your child's safety. Please make sure that all jackets, coats, and backpacks have your child's name on the inside.

Please have your child bring a bag or backpack each day with a change of clothes packed inside (shirt, pants, underwear, socks). This will help if any accidents happen including juice spills, etc.

12. PRESCHOOLER OF THE DAY / SNACKS & DRINK

Several times during the year your child will be the "Preschooler of the Day". On that day your child should bring 1 or 2 things in his/her backpack to share that day for Show and Tell. Please help your child limit themselves to just 1 or 2 things.

Snacks and water will be provided by the school. We strive to have healthy snacks that can enhance our curriculum. Several times a year parents will be invited to help donate items for our snack time.

13. BIRTHDAYS

You are welcome to bring a special snack and/or a take home treat for you child's class, if you like, on or close to their birthday. Please schedule this in advance of their birthday directly with their teacher.

WE ARE A NUT-FREE FACILITY. DUE TO THE INCREASED NUMBER OF CHILDREN WHO ARE ALLERGIC TO PEANUTS AND OTHER NUTS, PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY KIND OF PEANUT, PEANUT BUTTER, AND OTHER NUT OR NUT-BUTTER SNACKS. THANK YOU.

Please be considerate of children's feelings and do not send birthday invitations to be passed out at school unless the whole class is invited.

14. TOYS

It is requested that NO TOYS be brought to school except when your child is "Preschooler of the Day". (See #10) No toy guns are allowed at the school at any time.

15. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Various guests visit throughout the year during our group time and we will take some field trips throughout the year. Parties will be held at various times (Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, etc.). Parents will be asked to help donate food for these events and are always welcome to attend.

16. SCHOOL DELAYS & CLOSINGS

In case of inclement weather, please listen to your radio or television for announcements about the **Northern York County School District**. If they are closed, Mountainside will also be closed. **If Northern School District has a 2-hour delay, Mountainside will begin classes at 10:30 am and end at 12:30 pm for both preschool and Pre-Kindergarten.**

If you are in doubt as to whether Mountainside is having school or not, **please** check the website **before** leaving home (www.mountainsidepreschool.com). The website is updated **immediately** after we are notified by Northern School District.

17. FUND RAISERS

During the school year we may hold a couple of fundraisers. We do not wish to make these a burden to parents but do use the funds to help update our toys and facilities. Parents **are not required** to participate in any fundraisers. Your participation is entirely your choice.

18. PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences will be held on an “as needed” basis throughout the year. If the teacher has a concern about your child’s Kindergarten readiness, they will be in contact with you. If you have any questions or concerns about your child during the school, please do not hesitate to talk with your child’s teacher or the Director.

19. MOUNTAINSIDE PRESCHOOL STAFF

Director - Pam French

Administrative Assistant - Sue Lawver

M-W Preschool (White Bunnies) Teacher - Cheryl Hopkins; Aide - Diane Sites

M-W Preschool (Green Frogs) Teacher - Kerri Bollinger; Aide - Suzannah Melhorn

T-TH Preschool (Blue Birds) Teacher - Pamela Roman; Aide - Martha Heller

T-TH Preschool (Orange Fish) Teacher – Cheryl Hopkins; Aide - Amy Musser

T-TH Preschool (Gray Squirrels) Teacher - Susan Hatch; Aide - Shelly Mains

M-W-F Pre-K (Purple Dinosaurs) Teacher - Sue Stine; Aide - Sharon Delafield

M-W-F Pre-K (Brown Bears) Teacher - Jenn Tanney; Aide - Susan Hatch

M-W-F Pre-K (Yellow Ducks) Teacher - Michelle Stauffer; Aide - Amy Musser

M-W-F Pre-K (Black Penguins) Teacher - Pamela Roman; Aide - Martha Heller

T-TH Pre-K (Green Turtles) Teacher - Sue Stine; Aide - Ruth Anne Engle

T-TH Pre-K (Red Ladybugs) Teacher - Jenn Tanney; Aide - Sharon Delafield

M-W Floating Aide – Stacy Stoner

20. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mountainside Preschool and its Staff are overseen by a Board of Directors. The members of this Board meet on a monthly basis. The Board reviews the activities of the Preschool and assists with any needs or concerns of the Staff or families of the school. The Board of Directors is the final authority on all issues regarding Mountainside Preschool, its Staff, and its students and families.

21. MOUNTAINSIDE WEBSITE

Information about the activities of Mountainside Preschool will be posted on our website at: www.mountainsidepreschool.com.

If you have questions or concerns throughout the year, please feel free to contact Pam French at 432-2155 (school), 979-4552 (home), or talk with one of the other teachers.