

MEREDITH LOUGHRAN PRESCHOOL AT SANDSTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



“Where Learning Is FUN”

**PARENT HANDBOOK
2024 – 2025**

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**Meredith Loughran Preschool
at Sandston Presbyterian Church
13 N. Confederate Avenue
Sandston, Virginia 23150
(804) 737- 1527**

Dear Parents,

We welcome your family to our preschool, and we hope that your child's learning experiences here will be filled with joy and happiness. Preschool is a time when children can learn so much if their development and growth are nurtured and supported. They strengthen their cognitive abilities, develop their social and emotional understanding, hone fine and gross motor skills and more. Although this is a time when children develop and change rapidly, they can gain confidence in their ability to accomplish their skills in their own unique way.

In the Parent Handbook, you will find information to help you better understand our program. We have also included a copy of our philosophy and goals.

Our **MISSION** at Meredith Loughran Preschool is to love and support children and their families in the name of Jesus by providing an affordable, high-quality preschool experience in a nurturing, Christian community. We seek to prepare children to be successful in school and in life, while sharing our faith and glorifying God's presence daily. We know and believe that this is going to be an awesome year. The staff and teachers will work hand in hand to help your child grow and learn.

Yours in Christ,

Devon Pence, Director

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Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me" Matthew 19:14

PHILOSOPHY and HISTORY

Meredith Loughran Preschool (MLP) is a mission of Sandston Presbyterian Church. It's staff, program and curriculum are overseen by the leadership of Sandston Presbyterian Church and its goal is to provide an affordable, high-quality preschool program with a play-based, child-centered approach in a nurturing, Christian environment. The focus is on fostering the social and emotional development necessary to be successful in school and in life, and to introduce pre-literacy and early literacy skills and language acquisition and development all within a loving, Christian context.

The Preschool was first established in September of 1978 as Sandston Presbyterian Preschool. The preschool was renamed Meredith Loughran in honor of a child of the church who had attended the preschool and was later killed in 1998 while serving as an active-duty naval flight officer aboard the USS Enterprise during Operation "Desert Fox."

GOALS

1. To enable children to feel competent and confident in their environment.
2. To aid children in learning to understand and live intelligently in God's world.
3. To teach children to manage themselves, their materials, and their daily routine.
4. To facilitate growth by providing adequate space, freedom of movement, and equipment necessary to foster development goals.
5. To protect children from health and safety hazards.
6. To help children find comfortable, contributing places in a group and learn to resolve conflict with others.
7. To encourage children to take initiative in planning and completing tasks.
8. To allow children to hear about God's love and concern.
9. To encourage children to explore their creative abilities.
10. To help children get ready to have a successful year in kindergarten.
11. To develop pre-literacy skills & a love of learning.
12. To help children strengthen skills such as cognition, large & small gross motor, social & emotional development, and fine motor skills.

RELIGION

Meredith Loughran Preschool is a ministry of Sandston Presbyterian Church. We seek to proclaim the love of God made real in Jesus Christ whom we call Lord and Savior in all we do. Our faith in Christ is an integral part of our preschool program. However, it is always in an age appropriate, nonsectarian manner. Our goal is not instruction in doctrine, but nurturing children in a loving, faith-based environment as we help them prepare for school and life. Children and families of all faiths or none are welcome.

HOURS OF OPERATION

MLP operates between the hours of 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. Parents can **drop off their child no later than 11:00 am** unless approved otherwise. School lessons will begin promptly at 9:00 am. We follow the Henrico County Public School calendar for major holidays and inclement weather. These include Labor Day, Election Day, Thanksgiving Break, Winter Break, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Spring Break, and Memorial Day.

FEES AND PAYMENTS

Our tuition rates are as follows:

- **Part-Time:** \$120.00 weekly – 3 Days 8:00 am to 5:00 pm or 5 days 8:00 am to 12:00 pm
- **Full-Time:** \$140.00 weekly – 5 Days 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Each payment is due on the first day of each week.
- No refunds will be made for days missed by any student.
- Payments are still required if your child is sick or out on vacation.
- Please make sure checks are made payable to Meredith Loughran Preschool (MLP) and that you put your child's name on the check each time a payment is made.
- Charges incurred for returned checks are the responsibility of the parent.
- Checks, **cash (exact amount)** and money orders are all accepted for weekly payments.
- If three checks are returned, parents will have to pay by money order, cashier's check, or cash only.
- Tuition that is not paid by the third day of each week will incur a \$10.00 late fee per week.
- If full payment is not made within five days of the due date, your child will not be allowed to attend until payment is received.

ADMISSION AND ATTENDANCE

Any child 3-5 years of age is eligible to be enrolled in MLP provided the child is completely toilet trained (this means NO help) and can follow simple directions.

Enrollment for the next school year begins December 1st for families currently attending MLP. A **\$50.00 non-refundable** registration fee is charged when we place your child in our program, **along with the first week's tuition**. Enrollment for new families for MLP begins February 1st and the deadline for enrollment is Labor Day in September.

MLP maintains confidential records of each child admitted, including identifying information, health records, emergency contacts and other information that helps us get to know your child. We must see the original birth certificate of each child that is enrolled.

MLP maintains attendance records for each child and staff. Please call 804-937-8606 when your child is sick or will be absent. We would also like you to inform the Director when you plan to take an extended family vacation. There are no refunds for days missed from MLP.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Park in the Sandston Baptist Church parking lot on Pickett Avenue and make sure you follow the arrows in parking lot area (map last page.) Be careful and watchful of our children while loading and unloading and be aware of the cars leaving the parking lot. Come in our back door and bring your child into the classroom. Children are **NOT** allowed in the parking lot or on the playground unattended. **Drop-off time no earlier than 8 am and pick-up no later than 5pm.** (Fees applied) Please try to be prompt for drop-off and pick-up, no drop-offs after 11:00am. **We would like to “Thank” Sandston Baptist Church for sharing their parking lot with us!**

STAFF

The staff have a degree and/or are experienced in Early Childhood Education. Copies of degrees and/or transcripts are kept on file in the MLP office. All staff members are required to provide a certificate of good health, a TB test, a fingerprint/ background check, and personal references with their application for employment. Each staff member is required to have at least 20 additional hours in training each school year. Staff is required by the Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1509, to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to Henrico County.

STAFF -TO-CHILDREN RATIOS

The following ratios apply to children enrolled at the preschool. Children 3 years old to 5 years old: one staff person for every 10 children.

DISCIPLINE

Teachers use a variety of approaches to promote appropriate behaviors in the classroom. These include proactive strategies such as establishing a positive classroom climate, structuring the classroom environment, engaging children in learning, having clear rules and expectations, and providing direct instruction of expectations and routines. Children are encouraged to solve conflicts through problem-solving.

Every effort is made by MLP staff to assist parents in modifying unacceptable behavior. Examples of possible interventions include meeting with MLP staff to develop a behavior plan, parents spending time in the classroom, and/or a modified schedule.

Children who repeatedly fail to follow classroom and school rules are sent home. Reasons to be sent home include, but are not limited to, hitting other children, hitting a staff member, biting, kicking, spitting, or using abusive language. If behavioral issues cannot be resolved, it may be necessary to remove the child from the program or find a more appropriate educational placement.

COMPLAINTS AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

Questions, problems or complaints from staff and parents shall be handled by speaking with the Director. The Director shall draw on the resources of the church Pastor for assistance with problems, when necessary, or other expert help when needed.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Sick days

If your child is ill, please follow these procedures:

Call the school as soon as possible to alert them to your child's illness. Children who have any of the following symptoms should stay home from school and not return until they are **symptom-free for 24 hours**:

- fever over 99 degrees
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- persistent cough

If your child becomes ill at school, the Director will call you to pick up your child immediately.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of any changes in address, phone numbers, or emergency contact numbers.

Medications

Children who need to take medications while at school must have a medicine form completed by their physician and sent to the school. If you need copies of the form, the director can provide them for you.

Parents-Guardians have the option of keeping medication at school or bringing it daily. If you choose to transport medication daily, it must be carried to and from school **by a parent or guardian**. You will be called immediately if medication is sent in the child's backpack, as this is against school policy.

All medication must be brought to school in the original prescription package. Medication may not be sent in a container that does not contain original prescription and dosage information.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & VOLUNTEERING

Successful early childhood programs actively involve families and others from the community. Our staff will develop partnerships with families because parents have both a right and a responsibility to participate in decisions about their children's care and education. Parents know their children best and can share valuable information about their development.

As parents, you are encouraged to participate in all phases of MLP. If you have a special talent or skill to contribute, we would like you to share it with us. You may volunteer to help in the classroom, chaperone field trips or help in other ways. Before volunteering in the classroom or working in the school building, you must fill out a volunteer form.

PARTIES

Parties are a good opportunity for parents to connect at MLP. Parents with flexible schedules may work with the teachers to plan a party, often including a game, story, snack, and /or a simple art or craft project. Food brought for parties must be store-bought with ingredients listed and in original packaging. We love parties, yet we want to make sure that we are careful due to food allergies.

COMMUNICATION METHODS

MLP is committed to regular communication between the school and parents concerning the progress and needs of the child. Verbal conversation, phone calls, and text messages are the means of communication used when personal and immediate contact is required or an issue specific to your child arises.

Our Lesson plans and calendar will be available to parents at the beginning of each month. If you have any questions regarding the calendar, feel free to contact the Director.

CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled during the school year, at parent or teacher request. Please check your school calendar for scheduled conference days.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency evacuation procedures are posted in each classroom. An emergency kit is in the classroom, containing an Emergency Plan with procedures to follow in various situations.

The Emergency Plan is reviewed with MLP staff annually. Fire/emergency drills are held with the students and teachers.

In the event of emergency weather conditions or any unusual emergency, the children will be taken to the safest interior location in the building. (In the event of a tornado, this will be the storage room of the Christian education building, immediately across from the classrooms. If in the sanctuary, the children and teachers will proceed to the church basement.) Parents will be notified by phone or text immediately if any emergency arises where the children need to be sent home.

CURRICULUM

MLP utilizes a blended curriculum that is developmentally appropriate and targeted toward engaging different brain domains and styles of learning. Children's brain growth takes place rapidly between ages 3-5 years of age. Teachers plan lessons incorporating children's interests, striving for a balance between child-initiated and teacher-directed activities. Lesson plans are available for parents to see in the classroom. We seek to meet the needs of each child by differentiating learning experiences.

Our curriculum is as follows:

- Christian Education
- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Social Studies
- Science
- Music
- Art
- Physical Education
- Health
- Safety

SNACKS & LUNCHES

Children are to bring **two snacks** and lunch **each day**. Please send healthy foods with good nutritional value. Snacks and lunches are stored safely in the original container in the classroom. We ask that parents send a spill-proof water bottle with their child each day. **Please, No soda, coffee or hot drinks.** We encourage families to send snacks and lunches that follow USDA's CACFP guidelines

<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/>

NAP & QUIET TIME

Children will have a break for Nap Time or Quiet Time in the middle of the day.

A mat will be provided for each child. We do ask that a small blanket or covering and pillow be sent in. Be sure to label it with your child's name. Coverings need to be taken home on Fridays to be washed and brought back on Mondays. Nap Mats are a great option because they have an attached pillow and blanket. They can be found at Target, Walmart or Amazon.

SCHOOL BAGS, CLOTHING AND TOYS

Each child should have a roomy tote bag that is easy for the child to use. School bags with an open top are best for sending home large artwork.

Children should wear durable, **WASHABLE** clothes that will not be ruined in active outdoor play or with art materials. A complete change of clothes for each child, including socks & underclothes should be provided in case of an accident.

All SWEATERS, COATS, AND JACKETS SHOULD BE LABELED WITH THE CHILD'S NAME. Be sure to label every item that your child brings to school. **NO TOYS** should be brought to school except on show-and-tell days.

We recommend that your child wear shoes appropriate for active play. Flip flops, jellies, or backless sandals are hazardous on a playground and limit participation and movement.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND LATE OPENINGS

When Henrico County Public Schools are closed due to inclement conditions, MLP will also be closed. If schools are delayed by 1 hour, MLP will also be delayed by 1 hour. If schools are delayed by 2 hours, MLP will also be delayed by 2 hours.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES & ENROLLMENT TERMINATION

If your child must be withdrawn from MLP for any reason (ex. moving), please notify the Director in writing at least two weeks prior to withdrawal.

Policy for Removing a Child

We want every eligible child to have the opportunity to participate in MLP. However, the following circumstances may result in a child being removed from the program:

- If a child does not have immunizations completed within the designated time, usually within ten days after the immunizations are due.
- If there are problems with transportation, (ex. repeated failure to pick up a child) from school on time.
- Continuous non-payment
- If there are repeated occurrences of disruptive behavior which interrupt or interfere with lessons and our daily schedule.

Daily Schedule

8:00 a.m. - Arrival/Center Rotation/ Morning workbook

9:00 a.m. - Clean Up Time/Potty Break

9:15 a.m. – Morning Meeting/Circle Time

9:30 a.m. – Morning Snack/Potty Break

10:00 a.m. – Weekly Lessons

10:30 a.m. - Recess

11:15 a.m. – Lunch/Potty Break

11:45 a.m. – Story Time

12:00 p.m. – Rest Time

2:00 p.m. – Afternoon Snack/Potty Break

2:30 p.m. - Weekly Lessons

3:00 p.m. – Small Group Learning

3:30 p.m. – Center Rotation/Potty Break

4:00 p.m. – Recess

4:45 p.m. – Prepare for Departure

MLP COVID Procedures

- Each child and teacher have to wash their hands before entering the classroom.
- Masks are optional.
- Children and teachers are to sanitize or wash their hands after every activity.
- Children and teachers have to wash their hands after each bathroom break.
- Teachers are to clean and disinfect the entire bathroom after school each day.
- Teachers are to clean and disinfect any items that have been mouthed, sneezed, or coughed on immediately or put aside until disinfected.
- Teachers are to clean and disinfect the entire classroom at the end of each day.
- If a child shows signs of illness or develops a temperature over 100.4F during school, the child is to be immediately separated from other children and parents are to be called to pick up the child.

****Subject to change according to the Governor's mandate***

