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Parent Handbook

2023-2024

www.joyfuldiscoverypreschool.org

**Important Contact Information**

Joyful Discovery Preschool at Mary, Queen of Peace Catholic Church

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Preschool website: www.joyfuldiscoverypreschool.org

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/joyfuldiscoverypreschool](http://www.facebook.com/joyfuldiscoverypreschool)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/joyful\_discovery\_preschool/](http://www.instagram.com/joyful_discovery_preschool/)

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**Philosophy/Mission Statement**

Joyful Discovery Preschool at MQP provides a safe, nurturing environment of learning with a child centered, developmentally appropriate curriculum balanced in play, academics, and joyful discovery. Our curriculum focuses on encouraging and guiding children towards success through early academic preparation, social- emotional development, and spiritual growth. We value the uniqueness of each child, foster a love of learning, and seek to instill an awareness of being loved by God.

Joyful Discovery Preschool is a ministry of Mary, Queen of Peace Catholic Church for children ages 2 through 5. This handbook provides you with guidelines and expectations for our families. As a ministry, we are also available as a resource for the spiritual needs of our families. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us if your family needs assistance.

Consistent with the values of the Catholic Church, we nurture personal growth, scholarship, lifelong learning, service and responsible stewardship through a faith-centered way of life. We welcome students of any race, color, or national and ethnic origin. Joyful Discovery Preschool does not discriminate toward students on the basis of race, color, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship programs, and other school administered programs.

**Statement of Confidentiality**

Joyful Discovery Preschool seeks to protect the privacy rights of children, staff, and families. Therefore, information about families enrolled in our program will not be disclosed to unauthorized persons unless there is written permission from the parent. Every effort is made to maintain confidentiality regarding information pertaining to families such as health status, relationships, finances, etc.

**Staff**

Our teachers are provided with a curriculum framework and materials that are appropriate to the age level of the children they are teaching, which they creatively individualize and enhance for each class. Each Teacher strives to create a learning environment that will meet the needs of each student. Open communication between school and home is very important and helps your child to grow in a positive and supported way. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns that may arise about your child’s development and growth.

 **Qualifications for a Teacher**

Our teachers have commensurate education, college degrees and/or experience working with preschool age children. They are selected based on experience, training, and ability to work with your children. All teachers are required to have the following qualifications:

* A Bachelor of Arts/Science degree (Lead Teacher). If the degree is not in the education field, comparable experience in the field is necessary.
* Demonstrates a loving, enthusiastic, and positive energy towards children
* Current Background Check
* Current CPR/AED/First Aid Certification
* Training in the use of an Epi-Pen, Blood Borne Pathogens & Seizures
* Completion of VIRTUS (Safe Environment) training program
* BTS Training and support from Director

**Tuition Policy**

Tuition is due on the 1st of the month for 10 months starting in August.  Each month’s tuition is to be paid one month in advance. Tuition is determined to be an annual amount based on the number of days each class is in session and then divided by 10 months to provide a manageable payment for our JDP families and to facilitate our school budget cycle. Please note there are no tuition refunds for time missed due to illness.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Payment # | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Tuition Due Date | 8/1 | 9/1 | 10/1 | 11/1 | 12/1 | 1/1 | 2/1 | 3/1 | 4/1 | 5/1 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Tuition 2023-2024 | Monthly Recurring Payment |
| 2's-Otter Class | $100 |
| 3's-Bear Class | $350 |
| 3's Bear Class with Lunch Bunch | $390 |
| Pre-K Owl & Fox Class | $410 |
| Pre-K Owl & Fox Class plus Lunch Bunch | $460 |
| Pre-K tuition with Fun Friday  | $530 |
| Pre-K tuition with Lunch Bunch & Fun Friday | $580 |

**\*\*Please note: A supply fee is collected for each student. (See Student Supply& Fee Section on page 9)**

A late fee of $25 will automatically apply to your account if tuition is not paid by the 10th of the month. If the account is assessed a late fee, the family will be notified by email and the account must be paid in full (tuition plus late fee) within 5 days or risk dismissal from the program. The best way to avoid late fees is to set up a recurring monthly payment through our website.

Payments (and set up of recurring payments) can be made online at:

<https://mqp.weshareonline.org/ws/opportunities/JoyfulDiscoveryPreschool>

If you do not wish to pay online, checks should be made out to “Mary, Queen of Peace” and are due to the Director on or before the 1st of each month. If for some reason you are not able to pay on time, please make prior arrangements with the Director or a late fee will be charged. All questions regarding tuition, late fees, or other financial concerns should be discussed only with the Director. The Director may refer you to the Bookkeeper Linda Liaw.

Eligible Discounts:

* Families who are **active** parishioners of Mary, Queen of Peace church can receive a 10% discount on tuition. An active parishioner is defined as a parishioner who attends Mass weekly, gifts monthly to Stewardship of Treasure, and volunteers within the MQP community. Please reach out if you are an active parishioner and the Director will get verification from MQP to apply this discount.
* Families with more than two children enrolled at Joyful Discovery Preschool are eligible for a 10% discount on the younger child’s tuition.
* Families who chose to pre-pay the annual payment by August 1st can deduct $100 if enrolled in the 3’s & Pre-K classes, and $50 if enrolled in the Otter Class.

**Withdrawal Policy**

A Notice of Withdrawal from Joyful Discovery Preschool Form must be filled out if a parent wishes to withdraw their student from the program. This form is available by request to the Director. Notice is required by the 1st of the month or 100% of tuition is due for the following month. The form must be turned in at least 30 days in advance of the withdrawal date. Tuition will not be pro-rated. No withdrawal forms will be accepted for withdrawal dates after April 30.

**Calendar**

Joyful Discovery Preschool follows the Issaquah School District calendar for holiday and vacation days, with a few exceptions. We are closed for the following holidays: Veteran’s Day, Thanksgiving Day (the day prior and the day following), Christmas/Winter Break, Martin Luther King Jr Day, Mid-winter Break, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Spring Break, and Memorial Day. A school calendar will be emailed to you and posted on our website.

**Inclement Weather Days**

School closures for any reason will be communicated through email as well as the Joyful Discovery Preschool website and/or Facebook & Instagram page.

In case of inclement weather, we **usually** follow the Issaquah School District for closures and delays. If ISD is delayed or closed, then most likely JDP will be closed for the day. The Director will work with MQP staff to determine the safety of coming to school given the unique circumstances of the MQP building and location. Please note that occasionally we may be open or closed even if ISD has made a different decision. Parents are expected to check their email and/or the JDP Facebook/Instagram page in the morning before coming to school on days when a closure is possible. Closures will be decided by 8:00am.

**Make Up Days**

JDP does not make up the first 4 missed days due to any closure reasons: inclement weather, power outages, or other closures out of our control. After the 4th missed day, we will allocate make-up days based on accumulated days missed per class. Only the students who attend that class may attend. For the safety of all students and staff, we cannot accommodate the entire student body during these make up days.

The first 4 days that JDP is closed, the days will not be made up.

The 5th day we are closed will be made up on a date to be determined

The 6th day we are closed will be made up on a date to be determined

The 7th day we are closed will be made up on a date to be determined

The 8th day we are closed will be made up on a date to be determined

If more than 8 days are missed, the Director will discuss a plan beyond the policy stated above. The Pre-K graduation will be shifted to accommodate any make up days JDP may have to schedule. For your planning purposes, please be aware that the JDP school year may go as late as Thursday June 14th.

Note: No makeup days will be scheduled due to closures after April 1st.

**Arrival and Departure**

Parking: Please park your car in any of the designated parking spots of the church parking lot. Do not park in any marked handicap spots unless you have a valid permit to do so. Please do not use the fire lanes in front of the building for drop off or pick up. This space is reserved for emergency vehicles only.

2’s Otter Class:

*Drop-off routine*: A parent or caregiver must be present during our 2’s class. When you arrive in the morning encourage your child to use the bathroom, then you can line up outside of the Otter classroom. The teacher will open the classroom door when school starts at 9:30am. The Otters will meet in the Owl classroom on Fridays.

*3’s Bear Class:*

*Drop-off routine*: Parents or caregivers will need to escort their child downstairs to wait outside the classroom each morning until the teacher opens the door for the start of the day. Please make sure the teacher is aware of your child’s arrival before leaving. The school day begins at 9:30am. If you arrive after 9:30am please contact the Director or MQP office staff for entry. The phone number is posted on the glass doors.

*Pick-up routine*: At the end of the school day, the Teacher will escort the children upstairs to the South Bell Tower (elevator side) for dismissal. Students will be dismissed individually to you, once you have entered the building, or are on the sidewalk. Please be courteous with noise volume during this time—MQP is a busy place, and we want to be respectful to other groups using the building.

Wolf, Owl & Fun Friday Classes:

*Drop-off routine*: Parents or caregivers will need to escort their child downstairs to wait outside the classroom each morning until the teacher opens the door for the start of the day. Please make sure the teacher is aware of your child’s arrival before leaving. The school day begins at 9:30am. If you arrive after 9:30am, please contact the Director or for entry, the phone number is posted on the glass doors.

*Pick-up routine*: At the end of the school day, the Teacher will escort the children upstairs to the **North** Bell Tower (MQP office side) for dismissal. Students will be dismissed individually to you, once you have entered the building or are waiting on the sidewalk near the Plaza. Please be courteous with noise volume during this time—MQP is a busy place, and we want to be respectful to other groups using the building.

***ALL Classes:***

If another adult is authorized to pick up your child, a Carpool Authorization Form MUST be filled out and signed in order to release your child to that adult. If we do not recognize the person picking up your child, we will ask for identification.

If you have an au pair who will be picking up your child, please be sure they are on your signed authorized pickup form.

Please be respectful of the church staff and parishioners after school pick up. Preschool families are asked to refrain from play on church grounds after school hours due to liability and disruptions. This includes the plaza, parking lot and sidewalk areas. If students and their families wish to play or visit after dismissal, please find an alternate location.

**Classroom Activities**

In all our classrooms the teachers create a balance of both active and quiet activities, as well as group time, individual time and small group instruction. The weekly themes are developed to engage the students using literature, songs, movement, art, science, social studies, math, fine and gross motor development and sensory play. The children are encouraged to explore these activities through a variety of materials to help develop excitement and curiosity for learning and the world around them.

We value the process of the activities and learning, more than the end “product”. Do not be surprised if something comes home that requires some explanation from your preschooler but trust that he/she was enriched through the process of working with the materials and the experience of creating. This is where true learning takes place.

**Folders**

Each day parents should check their child’s backpack to locate his/her folder. Inside that folder you’ll find artwork or activities that your child will love to share with you. You will also find news and information from your child’s Teacher. Please take time to appreciate the work that your child brings home. They are so proud of it and positive, specific feedback helps develop self-esteem and encourages your child to keep on trying! You will also find samples of classroom projects out on our hallway bulletin boards. Some pieces are kept for assessments and/or projects.

**Discipline Policy**

We believe that children learn best in a positive, loving, consistent and developmentally appropriate environment. Our ultimate goal is to help your child develop intrinsic control of their own behavior as well as develop their sense of responsibility and independence.

At Joyful Discovery Preschool our teachers help children develop these skills through role-modeling, specific and deliberate lessons, and through daily positive interactions. They use language that helps children know “what to do” rather than “what not to do”. For example, instead of saying, “do not run in the hallways”, we say, “walking feet in the hallways, please”.

At this age, behavior issues are generally a great opportunity to learn. Our teachers help students problem solve and guide them towards making good choices. However, if a problem persists and is disruptive on a regular basis, the Teacher(s) and Director(s) will request a conference with the parents to discuss the situation.

Please consider us a resource and safe place to share issues, questions or challenges regarding your child. Our door is always open, and we believe that communication is important. If there are any changes going on outside of school or at home, please feel free to share them with us. We are here to help!

**School Rules**

Each classroom may have more specific rules that pertain to that age and classroom, but these are the over-arching guidelines that Joyful Discovery Preschool operates under:

* We are respectful and kind to each other
* We take care of our classroom and keep it safe
* We listen to each other

**Playground Rules**

Our top priority for playground/recess time is for the students to engage in gross motor activity, develop friendships and social skills, and have fun while being safe. We follow our school rules on the playground as well, but here are our specific rules that pertain to the playground:

* Go down the slide on your bottom, feet first
* Students cannot climb up the slide
* No throwing sand or wood chips

**Personal Items**

It is a Joyful Discovery Preschool policy that all personal items (other than backpacks, snacks and water bottles) stay at home unless it is your child’s sharing day. Any comfort items brought to school at arrival (such as a special stuffed animal or blanket) or toys need to be taken home prior to the start of class each day. It has been our experience that toys or items from home often cause problems with sharing/turn-taking. Additionally, special items that get lost or broken at school can be very upsetting. Our classrooms are filled with age appropriate and interesting toys that your child has access to. We thank you in advance for your help with this important rule.

**School Supplies & Fee**

A supply fee will be collected at the beginning of the year to purchase school supplies for each student and the classroom.

* Bears, Owls and Foxes will have a supply fee of $40 per child
* Otters and Fun Friday will have a supply fee of $20 per child

 You can pay the supply fee online as a one-time payment, cash or a check made out to MQP. Please give all payments to the Director in an envelope with your child’s name and classroom on it, titled Supply Fee. This payment is due on Meet & Greet or before.

You will need to purchase a school backpack that is large enough for their folder and schoolwork. Please be sure it can zip with a folder in it. Your child will receive a folder on the first day of school which is our primary communication tool. Feel free to place communication to the Teacher or Director in the folder as they will be checked daily. However, you can always hand important items (including checks) directly to the Teacher or Director.

**Comfort Kits**

As part of our Emergency Preparedness plan at Joyful Discovery Preschool, we prepare emergency kits for each classroom. Additionally, we are asking you to please assemble a “comfort kit” for your child. During an emergency (such as an earthquake), it is important for children to be reassured that everything will be all right. The “comfort kit” is a personal touch because you prepare them especially for your child.

Please place the items in a large Ziploc baggie and clearly label it with your child’s name. Here are some suggested items for the kit:

**- Nonperishable food** - example: granola bar, energy bar, dehydrated fruits, packaged crackers, beef jerky, etc… (no nuts, please)

**- Bottled Water** (no larger than 16 oz.)

**- Letter** **and/or photograph** from home - example: handwritten letter reassuring your child that everything will be ok and that you love them.

**- Small comfort item** (stuffed animal, small blanket)

Please turn in comfort kits by your child’s **first day of school**. It will be returned to you at the end of the school year.

**Change of Clothes**

Each child will need an extra change of clothes, including top, bottom, underwear and socks. Please store them in a large Ziploc baggie clearly labeled with your child’s name. These will be used in case of accident due to art projects, inclement weather or bathroom issue. These will also be returned to you at the end of the school year.

**Parent Involvement**

The partnership between families and school is a very important one! We appreciate parent involvement and have a few opportunities each year.

**Snack Time**

Due to severe food allergies, our Joyful Discovery Preschool classrooms are to be **peanut and nut-free**. If your class has a child with a different food allergy that needs to be addressed, your teacher will let you know.

Students will bring their own snack each day. We encourage healthy snacks such as string cheese, small oranges, wheat crackers, carrots and dip, and other fruits and vegetables.

**Lunch Bunch**

Students have the opportunity to attend an optional Lunch Bunch extension each school day. It is an additional 45 minutes of class which includes lunch and free play.

If your child is attending Lunch Bunch, you will need to provide a healthy, nut free, appropriately sized lunch for your child for each day they attend. Dismissal from Lunch Bunch is 1:15pm.

Lunch Bunch will begin in September and go through the end of the school year. There will be no Lunch Bunch on field trip days or the last day of school.

**Fun Friday**

Pre-Kindergarten students will also have the option to sign up for Fun Friday. This class focuses on art and science. It meets on Fridays from 9:30-12:30pm. There is no Lunch Bunch offered for Fun Friday. The Fun Friday Class has a supply fee of $20. Discounts are not applied to Fun Friday tuition.

**Conferences/Special Needs**

Parent/Teacher conferences for the Bear, Fox and Owl classes will be held in the month of March. As the date gets closer, you will have the opportunity to sign up for a day/time that works best for you. The JDP staff, including Teacher and Director, are always available as a support to you and your child. If you have a concern or question regarding your child prior to the conference time, please be sure to let us know and we can arrange a meeting. If the concern requires a referral for additional services that JDP does not provide (ie. Speech therapy, OT/PT, etc) we can help you facilitate that process. JDP will make accommodations as appropriate in these situations and will help you to determine if JDP is able to continue providing the best preschool setting for your child. If JDP is unable to meet the needs of your child, we will work with you to find a more appropriate setting.

**Absences**

If your child will not be in school for any reason (illness, vacation, etc.) please email the Director at aimee@joyfuldiscoverypreschool.org **and** your child’s teacher to let us know. Attendance is taken in class each day and instruction is planned around the number of students present. For absences longer than one week please contact the Director. Please note there are no tuition refunds for time missed due to illness.

**Emergency Contact and Transportation Forms**

Upon enrollment and before your child can participate in class, the Emergency Contact Form must be filled out completely, including both a Primary Emergency Contact AND a Secondary Emergency Contact. Please be sure to let us know if this information changes! (Staff are not able to transport children for medical assistance). Additionally, if anyonebesides a parent will be picking up your child, we must have a signed Carpool Authorization Form with the person’s name and contact information. Please note that we will check ID before releasing a student to someone who is not their parent.

**Sick Policy**

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms – he/she must remain home. If the child is already at school, he/she will have a parent contacted to immediately come pick up his/her child.

• Fever (99.9 degrees or higher)

• Chills

• Fatigue

• Cough

• Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

• Sore throat

• Runny nose or congestion

• Headache

• Muscle pain or body aches

• Diarrhea

• Nausea or vomiting

If a student has any of the above symptoms the student will be sent to the director’s office. A director will determine if the child needs to be picked up and will notify you that your child is not feeling well.

In unique situations, the school will work with families whose child has a chronic condition and are obviously not contagious.

There are other symptoms and situations where we would ask that you keep your child home. These include, but are not limited to:

* Pink eye/Conjunctivitis: Mucus or pus draining from the eye
* Rash: Chicken pox or body rash, especially with fever or itching (not associated with toileting, heat or allergic reactions)
* Ear infections: May attend if treatment has been started and child is acting well
* Lice/nits: Children must not return to school until they are free from lice and nits (eggs). Parents need to notify school immediately if their child has lice!

**Please make sure your child is symptom free with no medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school.** If your child is taking any medications, please let us know so we can be aware and on the lookout for any changes in behavior. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

**Allergies**

If your child has any allergies – either food or environmental – that might affect their health if exposed, please let us know as soon as possible**. A child with a life-threatening or health risk allergy will need to have an Action Plan on record**. This Action Plan is to include specific instructions from the doctor or parent regarding the kind of allergy and severity, steps to take in case of allergy exposure, as well as, medications and dosage for your child (please make sure medications are labeled with your child’s name and up to date).

**Immunization Policy**

All students must have a current immunization form on file to start classes in September. Please print a copy of the vaccinations provided by your child’s health care provider. If you need an exemption form for religious or health-related reasons, please let us know and we will provide one for you. Exemptions are only accepted as allowed by WA state law.

If your child has a certificate of exemption, he/she may be asked to stay at home as needed if an outbreak of a disease he/she is not vaccinated against becomes prevalent in our community.

**Bathroom Policy**

All Bears, Owls and Foxes **MUST** be fully potty trained in order to attend JDP.

Students must be able to care for their own bathroom needs. We recommend you dress them in clothes that are easy for them to use (elastic waistbands are easier than belts, buckles and zippers).

When you arrive at school each morning, we ask you take your child to the bathroom.

Teachers and staff will not enter the toilet stalls with the child. If the child needs help in cleaning themselves, the teacher or staff will help instruct the child vocally from outside the stall area. Children needing help with buttons or zippers will receive help from staff outside the stall area.

If your child has a bathroom accident at school, the parent or guardian might be called to help with cleaning needs or change of clothing.

**Safety**

Our primary concern is your child’s safety and the safety of all the children and staff at Joyful Discovery Preschool. During the first few weeks of school, your child will be learning classroom, school, and playground rules that will help keep them safe. These rules will be reviewed and enforced throughout the year.

The double doors on either end of the preschool hallway will always remain closed and locked during the school day. Additionally, we have been advised by the local law enforcement offices on how best to prepare our school for any safety issues, including lockdowns and intruders. Please let us know if you would like more specific information about this policy.

**Injuries**

There is a standard first aid kit in the classroom that is updated and maintained. For minor injuries, first aid will be administered (band-aids or ice packs for example). Injuries will be recorded on an Accident/Injury report. The original report will be given to the parent to sign and return. We will then make a copy to send home and keep a copy in our files. We will verbally speak with you at pick-up or by communication home (phone call or email) to make sure you are aware.

For major injuries, we will call 911. Staff will apply first aid as appropriate or as directed for 911 dispatch. Parents and/or other authorized persons will be contacted as soon as possible. All staff members are CPR certified.

**Hand Washing**

The preferred method to wash hands is with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (A recommended way to make sure one is washing long enough is to sing the ABC Song.) Handwashing may be accomplished by the use of sanitizing gel when soap and water are not available.

* Classrooms will have hand sanitizer in several areas of the room.
* Teachers will remind students about the importance of washing hands after using the bathroom, and after sneezing or coughing.
* Students will also be directed by their teacher to wash hands immediately as they return from recess.
* Students will wash hands before snack and lunch.

**Cleaning and Disinfecting**

In general, elimination of high-touch surfaces is preferable to frequent cleaning.

* Classroom and office doors will be left open as much as possible, rather than having people constantly touch the door handles to open the door when entering and leaving rooms. At times it will not be practical for classroom doors to be left open, such as due to noise, and exterior school doors along with our JDP hallway door will always be locked closed, due to security.
* The student bathroom doors in the main building will always be propped open (there is still privacy in individual stalls even with the doors open).
* Since leaving doors latched open not only eliminates the touching of door handles, but also improves a room’s ventilation, windows throughout the school will also be left open as much as possible, except when too cold or noisy outside.
* School and custodial staff will disinfect high-touch surfaces when necessary and practical throughout the school day.
* Shared equipment, especially play toys and recess equipment, will be disinfected as needed, using wipes or spray.