

Mountainside Preschool Parent Handbook

2026–2027

Welcome to Mountainside Preschool

Welcome! We are honored that you have chosen Mountainside Preschool. At Mountainside, we strive to create a nurturing environment where children feel loved, safe, encouraged, and excited to learn. We value strong relationships with families and seek to provide excellent early childhood education while sharing the love of Jesus through our words and actions.

Mission Statement

Mission: To shine Christ's love to preschoolers and their families by creating a positive, Christ-centered environment that nurtures the whole child.

Statement of Faith

God, being three persons in one being, created mankind in His image by making male and female with a task to reflect God into all creation. However, because of sin and disobedience, the powers of sin and death entered God's good world and separated us from Him. Because of God's great love for humanity, Jesus came, fully God and fully man, to live perfectly, to die for our sins, and to rise victoriously. In Jesus' death on the cross, He paid the price for sin so that anyone who repents and believes in Him will be with God forever.

ENROLLMENT & ADMISSIONS

Registration & Enrollment

Registration for currently enrolled families and families attending our host churches typically opens in January. Community registration opens in February.

Children must have all required enrollment and health forms on file before attending school.

Class placement is made on a first-come, first-served basis and enrollment is confirmed upon receipt of the registration form, registration fee, and required tuition payment.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Mountainside Preschool admits students of any race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students. Mountainside Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, or other school-administered programs.

Accessibility & Accommodations

Mountainside Preschool seeks to provide meaningful access to children and families with disabilities or Limited English Proficiency whenever reasonably possible. Families who may need accommodations or communication assistance are encouraged to contact the Director.

OUR PROGRAMS

Mountainside Preschool offers age-appropriate programs designed to nurture children's spiritual, academic, social, emotional, and physical development through hands-on learning experiences, play, relationships, and exploration.

Preschool Program

The Preschool Program is designed for children who are three years old by August 31 and fully potty-trained. Children should be able to use the restroom independently. Occasional accidents are expected, and families should provide a complete change of clothes that will remain at school.

Through a variety of learning activities, children develop independence, social skills, classroom routines, early academic readiness, and an understanding of God's love.

Preschool classes meet from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Pre-K Program

The Pre-K Program is designed for children who are four years old by August 31. The program provides additional opportunities to develop kindergarten readiness skills while continuing to nurture the whole child in a Christ-centered environment.

Pre-K classes meet from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

Daily Schedule

While schedules vary slightly by class and age level, a typical preschool day may include:

- Arrival and free play
- Circle time and Bible lessons
- Learning centers and academics
- Art and creative activities
- Snack time
- Large motor play and outdoor activities
- Music, movement, and enrichment activities

Lunch Bunch

Lunch Bunch provides an opportunity for children to extend their preschool day through lunch, social interaction, outdoor play, and special activities.

Children participating in Lunch Bunch should bring a lunch from home that does not require refrigeration or microwaving.

As a nut-free facility, lunches may not contain nuts, peanut butter, nut butters, or products containing nuts.

Lunch Bunch fees and scheduling information are communicated annually.

Special Activities & Field Trips

Throughout the year, children participate in a variety of special events, classroom celebrations, guest presentations, programs, and field trips that enrich the preschool experience.

Parents will receive advance notice regarding special activities and any required permissions.

HEALTH & SAFETY

The safety and well-being of every child is a top priority at Mountainside Preschool. We are committed to providing a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment where children can learn and grow.

Illness Policy

Please do not send your child to school if they have:

- A fever of 100°F or higher within the past 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- An unexplained rash
- Red, draining, or irritated eyes
- Severe cold symptoms, including a persistent wet or barking cough, sore throat, or significant nasal discharge
- Any contagious illness that may place other children or staff at risk

If a child becomes ill during the school day, a parent or emergency contact will be notified and asked to pick up the child.

Please notify the school if your child is diagnosed with a communicable illness such as strep throat, pink eye, chickenpox, COVID-19, influenza, or another contagious condition.

Medication Policy

Mountainside Preschool does not routinely administer medication to children.

Exceptions may be made for emergency medications, including EpiPens, inhalers, seizure medications, or other physician-directed emergency medications when required documentation has been provided.

Before emergency medication is accepted, the preschool must receive:

- Written parent authorization
- Physician instructions or a medical action plan, when applicable
- Any required emergency medication supplied by the family

Emergency medications must remain readily accessible to staff while inaccessible to children. Staff responsible for a child with emergency medication will be informed of the child's needs and emergency procedures.

Medication administration and emergency medication use will be documented in accordance with preschool procedures and applicable regulations.

Families are responsible for providing updated medical information, action plans, and replacement medications before expiration dates.

Accidents & Injuries

Minor injuries will be treated by staff and communicated to parents as appropriate.

If a child is injured and emergency medical care is needed, staff will call 911 and then contact the parent or emergency contacts immediately.

An incident report will be completed for injuries requiring documentation and will be shared with parents.

Child Abuse Reporting

All Mountainside Preschool staff are mandated reporters under Pennsylvania law.

If staff have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect, they are legally required to make a report. The safety and well-being of children will always be our highest priority.

Supervision of Children

Children are supervised by staff at all times during classroom activities, transitions, restroom use, playground time, Lunch Bunch, and dismissal.

Children may never leave a supervised area without staff permission and supervision.

Safety & Security Procedures

For the safety of all children:

- Exterior doors remain secured during the school day.
- Visitors must enter through designated entrances and check in with staff when appropriate.
- Children are released only to parents or authorized individuals listed by the family.
- Photo identification may be required before a child is released.
- Custody orders or legal restrictions regarding pick-up must be provided to the office and kept current.

Parents have free access to their children during hours of operation unless restricted by a court order or other legal documentation. To minimize disruptions to the learning environment and maintain the safety of all children, visitors may be asked to check in with the office and follow school security procedures during their visit.

Parents may review applicable licensing regulations, inspection summaries, and other required public information upon request or as otherwise required by Pennsylvania Department of Human Services regulations.

Emergency Preparedness

Mountainside Preschool maintains emergency plans and procedures for fire, severe weather, medical emergencies, missing children, evacuation, shelter-in-place, lockdown, and other emergency situations

Fire drills and emergency preparedness drills are conducted regularly in accordance with state regulations.

Parents will be notified as soon as possible if an emergency affects normal school operations.

COMMUNICATION

At Mountainside Preschool, we believe strong communication between home and school is essential to a successful preschool experience. We are committed to keeping families informed about their child's growth, classroom activities, and important school information throughout the year.

How We Communicate

We communicate with families through:

- Brightwheel (primary communication platform)
- Email and newsletters
- Classroom lesson plans and updates
- The Mountainside Preschool website
- The Mountainside Preschool Facebook page
- Parent-teacher conferences and individual conversations

Parents are encouraged to regularly check Brightwheel, email, and school communications to stay informed about classroom activities, special events, and important announcements.

Brightwheel

Brightwheel is our primary communication tool. Families will receive messages, reminders, photos, classroom updates, and other important information through the app. Brightwheel is also used for attendance, student information, and dismissal procedures.

Parent-Teacher Communication

We value open communication and encourage parents to contact us with questions or concerns.

Parents may communicate with teachers through Brightwheel, school email, or by contacting the office.

To ensure privacy and appropriate documentation, staff do not communicate with families through personal text messages, personal email accounts, or social media.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are held at the beginning of the school year and may be scheduled throughout the year as needed. Teachers and parents are encouraged to communicate regularly regarding a child's development, progress, and any concerns that may arise.

If a teacher has concerns regarding a child's development or kindergarten readiness, families will be contacted to discuss recommendations and possible next steps.

Family Involvement

We value the partnership between home and school and encourage families to participate in special events, programs, field trips, and volunteer opportunities throughout the year.

Website & Social Media

Information about preschool activities, calendars, announcements, and events may be found on our website at:

www.mountainsidepreschool.com

Families may also follow Mountainside Preschool on Facebook for updates and highlights from the school year.

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Mountainside Preschool does not provide transportation services. Parents and guardians are responsible for arranging transportation to and from school.

Arrival

Children should be dropped off between 8:30 and 8:45 a.m. If your child will be absent or arriving late, please notify the school through Brightwheel, email, or by phone.

Early Drop-Off

Early drop-off is available at the Dillsburg campus from 7:45–8:00 a.m. for an additional monthly fee.

Preschool Pick-Up with Pre-K Siblings

Preschool students may remain until 12:00 noon for pick-up with a Pre-K sibling for an additional monthly fee.

Authorized Pick-Up

Children will only be released to parents, guardians, or individuals authorized by the parent on the child's registration form.

If someone not listed on the registration form will be picking up your child, parents must notify the school in advance through Brightwheel, email, phone call, or written communication. Staff may request photo

identification before releasing a child. Parents are responsible for keeping emergency contacts, phone numbers, authorized pick-up information, and custody documentation current throughout the school year.

Custody Documentation

If there are custody arrangements, court orders, or legal restrictions regarding parental access or pick-up, a copy of the current legal documentation must be provided to the office. Mountainside Preschool will follow all applicable court orders that have been provided to the school.

Late Pick-Up

Parents are expected to arrive on time for dismissal.

Late pick-up fees may be assessed according to the current fee schedule.

Parking & Traffic Safety

For the safety of all children and families, please park only in designated lined parking spaces.

Please do not park in handicapped spaces without proper authorization, fire lanes, "No Parking" areas, or unmarked spaces, even for brief periods of time.

School Delays & Closings

In the event of inclement weather or other emergency situations, families will be notified through Brightwheel and other school communication channels.

If the local school district associated with your campus is closed due to weather, Mountainside Preschool will generally be closed as well.

If a two-hour delay is implemented, all Mountainside classes will begin at 10:30 a.m. and dismiss at 12:30 p.m.

Families should monitor Brightwheel, the school website, and school communications for updates regarding delays, closures, or schedule changes.

BEHAVIOR & STUDENT SUPPORT

At Mountainside Preschool, we believe every child is uniquely created by God and deserves to be treated with love, dignity, patience, and respect. Our goal is to create a safe, nurturing, and positive environment where children can learn, grow, and develop healthy relationships.

Positive Behavior Guidance

Preschool children are still learning self-control, problem-solving, cooperation, and appropriate social skills. Our staff uses positive guidance techniques to teach and encourage appropriate behavior.

Behavior guidance strategies may include:

- Clear expectations and consistent routines
- Positive reinforcement and encouragement
- Redirection to appropriate activities or behaviors
- Helping children identify and express emotions appropriately
- Teaching problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills
- Temporary removal from an activity when necessary to regain self-control

Corporal punishment, ridicule, threats, humiliation, withholding food, or any form of physical punishment is never permitted.

Parents will be informed when significant behavioral concerns arise so that families and teachers can work together to support the child.

Child Support Process

When a child experiences ongoing academic, developmental, behavioral, social-emotional, or safety concerns, Mountainside Preschool may implement a Child Support Process.

This process may include:

- Communication with parents regarding concerns
- Classroom observations and documentation
- Collaboration with families to identify support strategies
- Consultation with early intervention providers or outside professionals, when appropriate
- Development of an individualized support plan

The goal of the Child Support Process is to work collaboratively with families to help children succeed within the preschool setting whenever possible.

Children with Individual Needs

Mountainside Preschool values every child as uniquely created by God and seeks to provide a nurturing environment where all children can learn and grow. We welcome the opportunity to partner with families in supporting children with a variety of developmental, educational, behavioral, medical, and social-emotional needs.

Parents are strongly encouraged to share any diagnoses, evaluations, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), service plans, medical information, or other relevant information that may affect their child's participation in the preschool program. This information helps us work collaboratively with families to support each child's success and determine appropriate accommodations when possible.

When concerns arise regarding a child's development, behavior, learning, or ability to participate safely and successfully in the program, Mountainside Preschool will work collaboratively with the child's family and, when appropriate, outside professionals or service providers to determine reasonable accommodations and supports.

While we strive to support each child to the best of our ability, Mountainside Preschool is a part-time preschool program with limited staffing and resources. In some situations, a child's needs may require a level of support,

supervision, specialized services, or staffing beyond what the preschool can reasonably provide while maintaining a safe and effective learning environment for all children.

If ongoing concerns arise regarding a child's safety, behavior, developmental needs, participation in the program, or ability to function successfully within the classroom setting, Mountainside Preschool will work collaboratively with the family to explore reasonable accommodations, support strategies, evaluations, or outside services.

If, after reasonable efforts have been made, it is determined that Mountainside Preschool is unable to meet the child's needs appropriately or safely within the resources of the program, the Director may determine that continued enrollment is not in the best interest of the child, the class, or the preschool. In such cases, the Director will work with the family to discuss alternative programs, services, or resources that may better support the child and family.

SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

Clothing & Footwear

Children should wear comfortable clothing appropriate for active play, art projects, and outdoor activities. Because preschool can be messy, we encourage families to dress children in play clothes that can get dirty.

Please dress children in clothing that promotes independence when using the restroom. Simple waistbands, elastic pants, and easy-to-manage clothing help children be successful and confident in the bathroom.

Children should wear closed-toe shoes that allow them to run, climb, and participate safely in playground activities. Flip-flops, dress shoes, and other footwear that may interfere with safe play are discouraged.

Please send a complete change of clothes labeled with your child's name to be kept at school.

Children will participate in outdoor play whenever the weather permits. Please dress your child appropriately for the season.

Snacks & Nutrition

Mountainside Preschool provides a daily snack for children.

To help protect children with food allergies, Mountainside Preschool is a nut-free facility. Please do not send foods containing peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, nut butters, or products containing nuts.

Children participating in Lunch Bunch should bring a lunch that does not require refrigeration or microwaving.

Toys & Personal Items

Children are encouraged to leave toys, electronics, and other personal items at home unless specifically requested by a teacher for a classroom activity or special event.

Mountainside Preschool is not responsible for lost, damaged, or broken personal items brought from home.

Birthdays & Celebrations

Families are welcome to celebrate their child's birthday at school by providing a special snack or take-home treat. Please coordinate birthday celebrations directly with your child's teacher in advance.

Because Mountainside is a nut-free facility, birthday snacks and treats may not contain peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, nut butters, or products containing nuts.

Please do not send cupcakes or treats with excessive frosting. Our snack time is brief, and simpler treats allow children to enjoy the celebration while keeping classroom routines running smoothly.

Birthday invitations may only be distributed at school if the entire class is invited.

Preschooler of the Day

Throughout the year, each child will have the opportunity to be recognized as the "Preschooler of the Day."

Children may bring one or two items from home for Show and Tell on their special day. Please help your child limit items to one or two meaningful selections that can be easily shared with the class.

TUITION & FINANCIAL POLICIES

Registration

A completed registration form, registration fee, and any required enrollment payments must be received before a child's enrollment is considered complete.

Registration fees are non-refundable.

Tuition

Tuition reserves a child's place in the program for the school year and is not based on attendance.

Families are responsible for tuition payments regardless of absences due to illness, vacations, weather-related closures, holidays, or other circumstances.

Current tuition rates and program fees are published annually and provided during enrollment.

Billing & Payments

Mountainside Preschool uses Brightwheel for tuition billing and payment processing.

Each family will be assigned a billing plan through Brightwheel. Tuition payments are automatically processed on the 5th of each month using the payment method selected by the family.

Payment history, invoices, receipts, and account information may be accessed through the Brightwheel app.

Families are responsible for maintaining current payment information within Brightwheel and ensuring sufficient funds are available for scheduled payments.

Late Payments

Families experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to contact the Director as soon as possible to discuss their situation.

Accounts with overdue balances may be subject to additional fees and may affect continued enrollment.

Withdrawals & Refunds

If a family chooses to withdraw a child from the program, written notice should be provided to the office as soon as possible.

Registration fees are non-refundable.

September tuition becomes non-refundable after June 30, as class placement and staffing decisions are based upon enrollment commitments.

Any additional refund policies will be communicated during enrollment and registration.

Financial Assistance

Scholarship assistance may be available for qualifying families. Families interested in applying for financial assistance should contact the office for additional information.

GOVERNANCE, CIVIL RIGHTS & PARENT CONCERNS

Board of Directors

Mountainside Preschool is governed by a Board of Directors that provides oversight, leadership, and support for the preschool's mission and operations.

The Board works in partnership with the Executive Director and staff to ensure that Mountainside Preschool remains financially sound, mission-focused, and committed to providing a high-quality preschool experience for children and families.

Civil Rights & Non-Discrimination

Mountainside Preschool admits students of any race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students.

Mountainside Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, or other school-administered programs.

Parent Concerns & Grievances

Open communication between families and school staff is important to us. Parents with questions or concerns should first communicate directly with their child's teacher whenever appropriate.

If concerns remain unresolved, parents are encouraged to contact the Director.

If additional review is needed, concerns may be brought to the Mountainside Preschool Board of Directors.

Our goal is to address concerns in a respectful, constructive, and timely manner while maintaining positive relationships with children, families, and staff.

Licensing Information

Parents may review applicable licensing regulations, inspection summaries, and other required public information upon request or as otherwise required by Pennsylvania Department of Human Services regulations.

Contact Information

Dillsburg Campus: 1071 York Road, Dillsburg, PA 17019

Mechanicsburg Campus: 321 Gettysburg Pike, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Phone: (717) 432-2155

Email: mtnsideschool@verizon.net

Website: www.mountainsidepreschool.com

Community Resources & Additional Information

Families seeking additional support or services may find the following resources helpful:

ChildLine (Child Abuse Hotline)

1-800-932-0313

ChildLine Information

Pennsylvania CONNECT Helpline (Early Childhood Development & Early Intervention Referrals)

1-800-692-7288

help@connectpa.net

[CONNECT Helpline](#)

Families with concerns about their child's development may contact CONNECT for information, developmental resources, and referrals to Early Intervention services.

Capital Area Intermediate Unit (CAIU) Preschool Early Intervention

717-732-8400

[CAIU Early Intervention Services](#)

Provides developmental screening, evaluation, and preschool Early Intervention services for eligible children.

York/Adams Early Intervention (Birth to Age 3)

717-771-9893

[York/Adams Early Intervention](#)

Anyone may make a referral if there are concerns about a child's development. Services are available at no cost to eligible families.

New Hope Ministries

717-432-2087

99 W. Church Street, Dillsburg, PA 17019

[New Hope Ministries](#)

Provides food assistance, financial assistance, family support services, and other community resources.

Pennsylvania 211

Dial 211 or visit:

[PA 211](#)

Connects families with local health, housing, food, counseling, and community support services.

Additional community resources are available upon request.