

**PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK FOR
STUDENTS AND PARENTS
2009-2010**



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Preschool Handbook

Welcome to Victory Christian School! We are excited that you and your child will be joining our Preschool Program. We look forward to providing you with a caring and fun environment in which your child can experience and grow academically and socially. It is a privilege to be a part of your child's early learning years, and we thank you for entrusting him/her to us.

Victory Christian School Preschool is an extension of Victory Christian School. VCS opened in 1995 as a ministry of Victory Christian Center.

This handbook is designed to inform you of the policies and procedures that facilitate a quality preschool. We trust that you will acquaint yourself with this information. We believe parents are partners in the education of their children. The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are intended to ensure the best care for your child.

Philosophy

Victory Christian School's Preschool Program is based on the belief that a child learns best when they can learn through play. Play-based learning aids a child's development socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually, and spiritually. Our program places a strong emphasis on developing the child's Christian life as well as their academic life.

Together with group time, learning centers, teacher-guided activities and movement activities, our teachers provide a Christian basis for development. The year begins with reading and writing readiness, then moves into letter and number formation, which prepares a child to enter Kindergarten.

Preschool staff will facilitate each child's growth during the preschool year by:

- Giving each child unconditional love with smiles, friendly words, encouragement and care
- Showing each child respect by considering their opinions and validating their feelings
- Being a good listener
- Providing limits that are reasonable and understandable to each child to ensure a safe learning environment
- Giving opportunities for each child to succeed and build confidence, by completing challenging, age appropriate tasks
- Helping each child be responsible, giving them the tools to complete their "own" tasks
- Providing opportunities for each child to make choices
- Developing problem-solving skills, and giving guidance while each child works out the challenges that face them
- Knowing the individual need of each child through a developed and ongoing knowledge of child-development
- Encouraging each child to learn from their mistakes
- Celebrating accomplishments at each step
- Encouraging and supporting the differences and uniqueness of each child
- Viewing all experiences as valuable opportunities to encourage growth
- Asking open-ended questions that help each child become critical thinkers

Preschool Objectives

In preschool, our expectations are that students have a positive experience that will translate into an enjoyment of school at all levels. By allowing the students to play and interact freely during most of their experience at preschool, students grow socially, emotionally, and intellectually, learning valuable skills that will be necessary in becoming part of a larger group, such as Kindergarten or Grade school.

One of our goals throughout the year is to instill a love for God and a love for others in each of our students. By giving our students opportunities to practice working together and walking in love towards their classmates, we will see their love for God grow.

The daily routine will include opportunities to grow emotionally, spiritually, physically, intellectually, and creatively. Routines will include:

- Providing loving and caring staff in a safe, strategically planned learning environment designed for the needs of preschoolers
- Offering experiences that will develop gross and fine motor skills
- Integrating Christian values and stories into daily activities
- Encouraging participation in group activities
- Offering a wide variety of art experiences that give children freedom to create
- Designing explorative activities that will help build enthusiasm for learning

Some of the materials used to formulate activities for preschoolers are:

- Songs, Finger Plays, Rhymes, and Poems
- Storybooks and Literature Activities
- Puppets
- Bible Stories
- Personal Experiences Of Our Staff And Our Parents
- Field Trips

Getting the beginner ready for Preschool?

Many parents say, “Can I help my child be ready for preschool?” Yes, you can! The list that follows is provided as a guideline of some of the abilities three and four year-olds are capable of, keeping in mind that each child develops to his/her own unique timetable. You can encourage your child to:

- Follow simple directions (. help mom and dad)
- Finish small tasks (putting away toys, books, clothes, etc)
- Sit still or work on an activity for about 5-10 minutes
- Speak clearly, using simple sentences (no longer using baby talk consistently)
- Say “please”, “thank you”, and “excuse me”
- Attend to toilet necessities unassisted
- Put on and take off his/her own coat, mittens, hat, etc. with assistance when necessary
- Have respect for his/her own property as well as the property of others
- Practice knowing his/her own full name, birthday, and age.
- Listen quietly to stories being read or told
- Look at a picture and name things in it
- Listen to a short story and tell what happened in it
- Recognize a variety of letters of the alphabet, numbers, shapes, and colors
- Accept responsibility willingly

Curriculum

Preschool is established through the medium of play that incorporates a wide variety of fine and gross motor skills within small and large group settings. Young children have an urgent need to communicate; therefore, the preschool learning environment is rich with experience in communication and promotes an air of acceptance and literacy. The children’s interests and developmental needs are foundational when planning daily activities.

The daily routine is consistent to give children a sense of security about the happenings of the day. However, there is recognition that children’s individual needs vary from day to day, therefore, adjustments are made to create a nurturing environment. The length of time for each component accommodates the gradual growth of interest and ability to participate in the activity.

Our curriculum will cover basic concepts needed to form letters and numbers, which are an asset when entering Kindergarten. The concepts covered in our curriculum are: Colors, Shapes, Numbers, Letters.

Class sizes are small to enable more small group and individual learning situations.

Daily Schedule

The *daily schedule* in Preschool is as follows:

Morning Entry: sign in procedure, agenda drop off, coloring and reading

Circle Time: O Canada, prayer, devotions/Bible story, calendar and weather activities, songs

Learning Centers: pre-writing, pre-math, art, manipulative activities (games, puzzles, fine motor skill activities), sand and water play, dramatic center, reading, puppets

Snack: Provided by preschool. Menu will be posted weekly outside the classroom. Snack covers 2 major food groups.

Group Activities: readiness activities, recognition and printing numbers and letters, songs and movement activities

Dismissal: Sign out procedure, agenda pick up

Each month activities and décor will be based on a theme. Themes can include: Teddy Bears, Space, Seasons, Gingerbread, Snow, Ocean Life, The Jungle, Or Garden. Songs, movement activities, the dramatic center and art projects will be based on the monthly theme.

Preschool uses a variety of publications and student books to enhance readiness activities. Bible stories, literature and nursery rhymes will also be used to supplement the basic curriculum.

- 1) Readiness activities include various activities and worksheets which focus on tracing, cutting, pasting, coloring, sorting and patterns.

Readiness for formal reading begins the first time a child is introduced to books. Interaction with many types of print around the room and during the activities will nurture the development of each child's understanding of print as we experiment with it in exciting ways. Literature will include stories, fairytales, poems, riddles, rhymes, songs, etc.

- 2) "Handwriting Without Tears" is a program used by our Preschool teachers to enhance the main curriculum. This program allows a child to learn the printing of capital letters by first learning how to hold a crayon with proper grip. The child learns to form shapes and then letters. Capital letters are formed first in preschool due to the fact that a child will develop consistent habits for letter formation and letter placement since all capital letters are the same size.
- 3) Bible stories: Young children learn spiritual truths best in natural ways that are related to the concrete world that they are able to experience. Specially planned and spontaneous prayer or Bible story times are interwoven in weekly activities.

Hours of Operation

Preschool operates from mid-September to mid-June for two, 3-hour classes per week. Preschool is closed during Christmas Break (2 weeks), Spring Break (1 week) and all statutory holidays. Please obtain a Victory Christian School Calendar from the VCS School office, as other holidays are listed.

Orientation

At the beginning of the school year, parents will be asked to attend a preschool orientation. It is important that parents attend so they can learn about parent involvement, volunteer opportunities, classroom policies, school policies and meet the staff of the preschool. Parents will be made aware of the date of the orientation upon acceptance into the program.

Child Discipline Policy

At Victory Christian School we have a no-tolerance policy in regards to bullying, disrespect and violence. At the preschool level, this is interpreted as invoking physical harm to another child or staff member (i.e. kicking, punching, slapping), and continued direct disobedience to preschool teachers and staff.

Victory Preschool believes that all behavior management should be carried out in a non-threatening manner that is appropriate to the child's level of development. Individual characteristics and behaviors are understood and recognized, as well as varying levels of development and comprehension between the ages of 3-5. Consistency is important when conveying messages to the children.

Permitted methods of child guidance include:

1. **Reason/Resolve:** In a controlled, gentle, non-threatening voice the preschool teacher/staff member gets down on the same level as the child and explains in simple language the inappropriateness of their behavior. The preschool teacher/staff member will explain to the child how their behavior affects others and how their feelings may also be affected.
2. **Redirecting Behavior:** If the behavior continues, the preschool teacher/staff member will redirect the child to alternative activities.
3. **Positive Reinforcement:** Preschool teachers and staff members will reward positive behaviors through words, praises and privileges that build a child's self-esteem and thus encourages appropriate behavior.
4. **Problem Solving:** Preschool teachers and staff members enter into a problem solving situation in the event that the child cannot. Children are provided with alternative choices by the teacher/staff member after problem solving is implemented. Teachers/staff members intervene in children's behavior if it is a physical or emotional risk to themselves, others or property.

5. **Remove:** In extreme circumstances, if a behavior continues, the child will be removed from the situation for a limited, supervised period. As soon as the child is ready to return calmly, he or she will rejoin his or her group.

Parents will be given a copy of the ‘Preschool Parent Handbook’ to read before their child enters the program. During the application process, parents will be asked to attend an interview with the preschool director. At this time, the parents will be directed to this policy as stated in the parent handbook. Each parent is required to attend one of two preschool orientations prior to their child’s start in Victory Preschool. Again, at this meeting, parents will be advised of this procedure and the floor will be open to questions concerning the policy.

During staff orientation, the preschool director will review these procedures with the preschool staff, giving direct examples of each stage of the policy.

Each preschool classroom will have three guidelines which will be displayed throughout the classroom:

- Be Quiet
- Be Listening
- Be Working

Registration Procedure

Registration begins on March 1st preceding the September of desired enrollment. Registration packages are available from the Victory Christian School office. Students will be considered for enrollment based on age and availability of space in the classroom. Register early to ensure a space. Preschool’s curriculum is based on developmental stages for four year-olds. Therefore, students who are four by February 28th of the desired year of attendance will be considered for enrollment.

If you and your child would like to visit, please call the school office to

arrange an appropriate time when you can meet the teaching staff who will be able to answer your questions promptly.

Class Size

The Preschool classroom has 12 spaces available per class. With 13 or more students, an additional worker will be assigned to the classroom. Scheduled classes vary per year depending on demand.

Tuition/Fees

Victory Christian School's Preschool program requires that a tuition fee be paid. This covers operation costs, snacks, and classroom materials. The fee is \$100.00/month for a total of \$1,000.00/year. In addition, each child is required to be in uniform.

Throughout the year, field trips will be taken. Parents will be given at least two weeks notice before the trip in order to make payment.

A \$100.00 application fee will be required to apply to the program. This will cover classroom supplies, materials, and administrative costs.

Attendance

Regular attendance is important so that each child is able to receive maximum benefits from the program. Please call the school office (780-988-5433) if your child is sick, will be late, or is unable to attend. This assists the teacher in planning necessary materials, etc. Please notify the office if your family is taking a vacation during the school year.

Arrival and Departure

Drop off time is 8:20am (or 10 minutes before class begins if afternoon classes are offered). Class begins at 8:30am. Pick up time is 11:30am (or 3:30pm if afternoon classes are offered). Parents must record and

initial their child's name and arrival time in the binder just inside the preschool classroom. We would like to encourage parents to drop off their child by 8:30am so that all the students can begin the daily routine together.

At the end of class, please initial the binder and note the departure time. Please make every attempt to be prompt in picking up your child; children often worry if they do not see their parent or guardian at departure time.

If you will be late picking up your child, please notify staff or call the school office (780-988-5433). Parents who are repeatedly late picking up their child will be charged a fee for the additional staff time required to care for the child.

Licensing requirements only allow us to have the children in our program for 3 hours each day, which is why the pick up times must be adhered to.

If someone other than a parent picks up your child, please notify the preschool in advance and in writing. **Children will not be released to unauthorized individuals.**

Staff

Our preschool staff consists of a Preschool Program Director, an Alberta Education certified teacher and, in cases where class sizes go above the 1:12 ratio, a Preschool assistant will join our staff.

Throughout the year, staff have the opportunity to develop professionally through workshops and conferences. Staff members are trained in first aid through St. John's Ambulance.

The Preschool Program Director is responsible for student registration

and family interviews, curriculum implementation, staff training and liaison between parents and teachers.

Off-Site Activities (Field Trips)

Throughout the school year, teachers and staff may take the students on field trips during class hours. Teachers will send home a field trip permission form 2 weeks prior to the event. The form includes the date, time and location of the trip as well as any cost associated with the trip. Victory Christian School's off site ratios for preschool is 1:3. Parents will be asked to volunteer as supervisors for the outing.

Parents complete the permission form and return it to the school by the date given. This form must be filled out in writing. No over the phone permission is accepted. Payment must be accepted with permission form.

Safety-Fire Drills and Emergency Evacuations

Throughout the year there will be fire drills held at Victory Christian School to familiarize children with the proper procedures for a safe emergency exit of the building. In the event of a fire or other danger, children will be evacuated according to plan.

Instructions and directions for leaving each room and the building will be posted in each room. Leave the room in single file, in an orderly manner, and proceed to the proper location without any talking. Students should recognize the seriousness of such a drill and refrain from improper behavior. If we are unable to safely re-enter the building, the children will be relocated to the sanctuary of Victory Christian Center.

In the event of an extreme disaster, the preschool will be closed until it is safe to re-open. Parents are asked to pick up their child as soon as possible in the event of an extreme disaster.

No firearms will be located on school property.

Staff are also trained in the event of a lockdown.

Health

If your child is ill, it is best to keep them at home. Examples of illnesses include: acute colds, fever, diarrhea, hacking cough, vomiting, pink eye, head lice, or any communicable disease.

If you have any questions about whether or not a disease may be communicable, please either contact the school office (780-988-5433) for a list or contact your nearest Capital Health Center.

A child with a mild cold may attend preschool if they can participate in regular, daily activities. They will be monitored and if the cold reaches the point that the child no longer will play and requires special attention and comfort, then a parent will be required to pick up the child and keep the child at home until they are symptom free. If a parent can not be contacted, emergency contacts will be notified and they will need to pick up the child.

If your child has an infectious condition, please notify the school office immediately (head lice, chicken pox, measles, mumps, pink eye, etc).

If your child becomes ill at school, they will be given a quiet place to rest and the parent will be notified to bring the child home.

In case of accident or illness requiring a physician, an ambulance will be called if the parent has pre-authorized permission on the registration form. The parent or emergency contact will be notified immediately.

Please keep the teachers informed of any special circumstances that might influence your child's experience at preschool.

No medication (prescription or non-prescription) will be administered to any child. We ask that medication be given at home. In the case of allergy-related medications, written permission and instructions are required. Medication must be stored in its original container. All medications will be kept in and administered from the school office.

Immunizations must be current and a copy of the record must be submitted along with the registration form (DPT, polio, measles, rubella, HIB, mumps) **Should there be an outbreak of any of the above diseases, any child who has not been immunized will be asked to stay at home until the child is no longer considered at risk.**

It is required by licensing that we report any suspected neglect or abuse of a child to the Child Services. It is our responsibility to protect the child from mal-treatment of any type.

Smoking is prohibited on school property.

Parent Involvement

We welcome parents to be involved in their child's classroom. Building a relationship with your child's teacher is essential in having a smooth experience in preschool. From time to time, there are field trips that you can accompany your child on and home projects (cutting, tracing, assembling of projects) which need to be completed in order to be used or displayed in class.

If you would like to help in either of these areas, please make your child's teacher aware of this and they will be more than happy to accept your assistance.

To ensure the safety of everyone at the school, we must be aware of who is in the building at all times. Parents are requested to inform the

receptionist at the school office before visiting the classroom during class time. This does not include drop off and pick up times. The Elementary Outside door nearest the preschool room is locked between 8:30am-3:00pm. Please use the main school doors if you need access to the room during these times.

There may be occasions throughout the year when parents are invited to join us for celebrations and a “potluck snack”. These occasions will be announced on the parent information board located directly outside the classroom as well as through memos or notes sent in your child’s agenda.

If you wish to bring a snack or cake for your child’s birthday, please inform the teacher and we will be sure to accommodate this special time for you and your child. A day will be set aside in June to celebrate summer birthdays. If you would like to be a part of providing birthday snacks for this occasion, please let the teacher know.

Uniforms

Victory Christian School has a standardized dress code for the purposes listed as follows:

- To create a positive disciplined environment in the school.
- To assist students in concentrating on academic achievement rather than on clothing competition.
- To eliminate offensive fashions.
- To help reduce peer pressure.
- To help parents and students with financial pressure.
- To create a positive image in the community.

The uniform is as follows:

Khaki or navy cotton twill pants (purchased through the office)

White, burgundy, or navy VCS polo shirt (purchased through the office)

Black running shoes

Navy blue sweater (pull over, zippered, button up. No sweat shirt material.)

VCS sweater (optional)

To ensure your child is happy and dry at school, please dress them in outer wear that will keep them dry during the winter months as well as the spring melting time.

Please send a backpack (no cartoons or images please) regularly to transport teacher-parent communication as well as to send home crafts or projects worked on in class.

Lost and Found

Lost and found is located near the main entrance of Victory Christian School.

Hooks

The preschool is well stocked with classroom materials and toys for your child's use; therefore, any toys brought from home should remain in your child's backpack. This prevents major issues concerning a possible breakage or loss of the item. Exceptions will be made for sharing days which will be announced by the teacher.

Jackets and backpacks should be hung on your child's hook, which is labeled with their name. Shoes/boots should be placed on the Preschool shelves in the boot room located at the south end of the elementary hallway. No outside shoes should be worn inside the classroom. Inside shoes are to be brought everyday in the child's backpack along with their agenda.

Snack

Snacks are provided daily for preschool. Snacks consist of foods from 2 of the 4 major food groups; fruit and vegetables, dairy, breads, protein. A drink of juice or water will also be provided. A weekly snack schedule will be posted on the parent information board located outside the Preschool classroom.

Please give any allergy information directly to your child's teacher on the first day of school. Please inform your child's teacher of any allergy concerns.

Pictures

Individual and class photos will be taken in the Fall and/or Spring and Fall photos will be available to purchase before Christmas.

Throughout the year, photos will be taken and collected for the Victory Christian School yearbook, Parent board, student's progress reports and teacher professional portfolios.

Book Clubs

Each month a book club flyer will go home with your child. The Book Club flyers offer a wide range of age appropriate literature for you and your child to read together. When students purchase books from this book club, a percentage of the sales are given back to the school allowing us to add new books into the preschool classroom and school library.

When ordering books, please enclose your cash payment or cheque made payable to Victory Christian School with the order form. Books generally arrive within two weeks from the time of the order, which is placed with the company after the return due date given on the order form.

Parent Communication

Each student will receive an agenda folder at the beginning of the year. Please bring this agenda every day. This is the main form of communication your child's teacher has with you in regards to your child's progress. Parents are encouraged to write any questions down in a note and send it to school in the agenda folder. The teacher will reply to show they have read your comments.

Please check the folder daily for notes, newsletters, progress reports and your child's art or other projects and clean them out daily. Please empty the folder to show your child's teacher that you have read the notes sent home. Please read and respond to any notes made by the teacher as this will show you have read them.

Parents are always welcome to dialogue with staff concerning their child. However, since there are many parents picking up and dropping off their children at the same time, making an appointment to discuss your child with their teacher is recommended. It is important to know how your child is developing, so please make time to attend the parent conferences in November and March, following the completion of student progress reports.



Mission Statement of Victory Christian School

“Our mandate is to provide Christ-centered education of the highest standard, equipping students to be leaders in their chosen profession.”

