

Covenant Christian Preschool



Parent Handbook

Covenant Christian Preschool
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ccs.blackgold.ca

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Introduction and Welcome

Welcome to Covenant Christian Preschool! We are happy to have you and your child join us for an exciting year of learning and growing. This handbook is intended to be a guide for you, the parent(s), to keep you informed about important details that pertain to our preschool program. Please read through it carefully and *keep it as a reference throughout the school year*.

Philosophy and Goals

Our preschool program is directed by the belief that preschool should be a fun and safe place to be. We believe that a child's experience at preschool should be a positive beginning to their educational journey. Therefore, we aim to provide a Christian, early learning, and play-oriented program that recognizes the uniqueness of each child and encourages kindergarten readiness. We provide children with the following

- Center time where children are encouraged to interact with stimulating materials in their own personal way. Center supplies will include materials for arts and crafts, building, puzzles, games, reading, and role-play. Children are given time each day to select activities that reflect their individual needs, interests, and developmental level.
- Teacher-directed circle times that are an opportunity for whole-class discussions and learning. Students will be introduced to early learning concepts such as the alphabet, numbers, shapes, and colors. During this time, students will also explore learning themes with a variety of stories and songs.
- Bible times including songs, devotions, and prayers.
- Daily physical activity and gross motor skill development with opportunities to use the school gym and outdoor playground.
- Visits to the school library and participation in the library program.
- Daily small group time focused on alphabet/number activities, fine motor skills, and theme-based games and arts/crafts.

Program Size and Specifics

The preschool runs a **60-session program**. We have both a morning and an afternoon class that are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Each class has a maximum of 14 students.

Morning Class 8:40 – 11:20 AM (Tuesday and Thursday)

Afternoon Class: 12:30 – 3:10 PM (Tuesday and Thursday)

We do follow the Black Gold/CCS school calendar and are therefore closed on all public school holidays, including PD days, Teachers' Convention (including Christian School Teachers' Convention), November Break, Christmas, and Spring Break. More information can be found at ccs.blackgold.ca.

Registration Procedures

All children must be age 4 by December 31st of the year of registration.

Priority Registration begins in early January and is for families who are members of the Leduc Society for Christian Education (families who have an older child who, at the time of registration, is currently enrolled at CCS). Registration forms, required fees, and deposits will be due on the last school day in January to guarantee your spot for the upcoming year. Forms are available online.

Open Registration will begin on the *second* Tuesday of February at 10:00 am. Registration packages will be available online. There will be a Preschool Information Night, held on the *first* Tuesday of February at 7:00 pm.

- Please note that any repeating preschool students, under advisement of the teacher, will be guaranteed a spot in our preschool program for the upcoming year. The deadline for re-registering these students is March 31st.
- A non-refundable application fee is due with your completed registration package.
- Acceptance letters confirming your registration, class placement, and important fall dates will be sent out to you in May, after the release of the Black Gold school division calendar.
- There is no requirement for families to belong to a church, as long as they are aware of and support the Christian aspects of the program. This policy is different from the registration requirements for CCS's Kindergarten to Grade 9 programs.
- Registration in the CCS Preschool Program **does not** ensure your child will be automatically registered for Kindergarten at CCS. Kindergarten registration opens online in January.

Fees for the School Year

Note: fees are subject to approval of the LSCE membership at the Annual General Meeting.

Fees

- \$50.00 Non-Refundable Application Fee (*separate cheque due with registration package)
- \$700.00 School Fee (60 sessions – second week of September to end of May)
- \$50.00 Supply Fee (due September 1st – post-dated cheque/cash due with registration package)

*Our program is eligible for the Affordability Grant. Fees will be prorated accordingly. Please just pay the \$50 application fee and the rest will be invoiced to you in September. Monthly fees, with the Affordability Grant applied, are \$15.00.

Fee Payment Options

- Payment in full by September 30th
- Monthly Credit Card Payment (pick up form at the office)
- Automatic Monthly Withdrawals (September–May), divided equally
 - VOID cheque needs to be brought into school office and authorization form filled out
- EFT to: PAYMENTS.LSCE@GMAIL.COM (all lower case)
- Other (Please make arrangements with the LSCE Administrator)

Payment preferences can be indicated on registration forms, and invoices will be sent out at the beginning of the school year. Questions regarding payment options and procedures can be directed to the Society Administrator via the school's main number (780-986-8353). VISA/MC/debit services are available in the school office.

Withdrawing from the Preschool

If it is necessary to withdraw your child at any time during the year, we require **ONE MONTH** notice. Any withdrawals before the start of the school year require notification by August 15th. Fee (except the non-refundable registration fee) will be returned to you for the months remaining in the school year. If notice is not given before August 15th, then one month's fee is forfeited.

Oversight and Evaluation of the Program

The preschool is licensed by the Leduc Society for Christian Education. The governing board of the Society (known as the Executive) has a standing committee, the Preschool Committee, to deal with preschool issues. This committee consists of the preschool teacher and parents of preschool or CCS children. The committee meets regularly to discuss the preschool program specifics and any concerns of teachers and/or parents. In addition, the committee conducts an annual evaluation of the preschool program, organizes the Preschool Information Night & required Fall Parent Meeting, and oversees classroom cleaning times. Ongoing administrative support for the preschool program is provided by the Leduc Society for Christian Education's Administrator, as well as other front office staff at the school. Questions about the program should be directed to the Society Administrator via the school's main number (780-986-8353 ext.2).

Discipline and Guidance

Classroom rules encourage children to be responsible, use manners, listen to others, and respect the teacher(s), their classmates, and property. We encourage self-control, self-esteem, and cooperation for children, where developmentally appropriate. The following discipline guidelines will be used at the preschool:

- The teacher will act as a model for the children to see appropriate behaviors.
- Children will be redirected by the teacher, teacher assistant, or roster parent to different acceptable activities to help eliminate current behavior issues and avert potential problems.
- If children are unable to correct their behavior, they will be removed from the situation/activity. The teacher will discuss the situation with each child; in some instances, a choice of further action will be offered (e.g., continued participation in the activity or another activity that is deemed appropriate by the teacher). If there is an issue of injury/hurt with another student, a child will be asked to apologize, where developmentally appropriate, and rectify the situation before returning to the activity.
- The teacher will be in communication with parents concerning any ongoing issues involving discipline/guidance with their children (see "Aggressive Behavior Policy").
- Should the preschool staff determine that a child cannot adjust to the program after a certain period of time, parents may be asked to withdraw their child from the program.
- Any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation, or emotional degradation will not be tolerated. This includes the use of physical restraint, confinement, or isolation.
- The discipline policy will be introduced to parents at the Preschool Information Night, as well as the Fall Parent Meeting.

Aggressive Behavior Policy

If a child is regularly/repeatedly aggressive or violent towards other children or staff (hitting, biting, scratching, spitting, kicking, etc.), a meeting will be scheduled between the teacher and parents in order to discuss various strategies that may help in dealing with the child's behavior.

We will try various ways to deal with and rectify inappropriate behavior; however, if there are no changes in the child's aggressive behavior after a specified amount of time, the recommendation may be made to have the child withdrawn from the preschool class.

Teacher–Parent Communication

Communication between home and school is essential to having a successful preschool experience.

1. Monthly Newsletters will be sent out to all parents at the beginning of each month, notifying you of special classroom events, themes, and roster dates.
2. Email Addresses will be collected at the beginning of each preschool year. We ask that each parent provide a current, regularly checked email address to make efficient communication possible for the teacher.
3. A weekly copy of the school's newsletter, The Chronicle, will be sent out to preschool families.
 - Please remember that the preschool teacher and staff are busy tending to the students during drop-off and pick-up times. If you have concerns that you would like to discuss with the teacher, please call or email at an alternative time to either discuss your concerns or to set up an appointment to do so. However, we have an open-door policy, and parents are welcome in the classroom at appropriate times.
 - If you have any concerns regarding your child and kindergarten readiness, it is your responsibility to contact the teacher to set up an appointment to discuss your concerns.

Clothing and Shoes

At CCS Preschool, we feel that it is important for the children to get involved with the material that we are using. This "hands-on" approach will often be a bit messy. We encourage children to come dressed accordingly.

As often as possible, the teacher will take students outside to play on the playground. Notice will try to be given to parents by the teacher when they are planning an "outdoor gym time." However, please ensure children are wearing "weather-appropriate" clothing when they arrive at school. Flip-flops are discouraged at all times, and we ask that children always come to school with socks on.

A **clean indoor pair of non-marking running shoes** is a requirement for each child. These shoes will remain in the classroom for preschool use and should be labelled clearly with your child's name.

Please provide your child with a backpack that will be big enough to bring home library books, crafts, etc.

Occasionally, accidents happen, so we ask that a change of clothing and underwear be brought to school each day and left in your *child's backpack* in case of a spill or accident. Please put the change of clothes in a large, labeled zip-lock bag so that the dirty ones can be transported home neatly in the bag for you to wash.

Snacks

Parents are asked to send **a nutritious snack and drink** with their child on each preschool day. As required by licensing, we ask that the snack/drink include two of the four food groups (e.g., apple & cheese or yogurt & crackers). Healthy habits and manners are encouraged during snack time. Snack time will occur approximately halfway through the preschool day, about 10:00 am for the morning class, and 1:30 pm for the afternoon class.

- Please make sure that the preschool teacher is notified of any **allergies** that your child has. The teacher will ensure that all families are notified of allergies present in the classroom, so snacks can be packed accordingly.

PLEASE NOTE: On (or near) your child's birthday, you may choose to send a special treat for the class to share. The Health Board regulations state that food brought in by parents to be shared with the whole class must be purchased from a food store and brought to school in the original container; it must also have an ingredients label on the package. **No homemade cookies, loaves, cupcakes, etc., are permitted.**

Supervision Policy and Procedures

Preschool supervision policy is as follows. Please note that for the purposes of supervision, parent volunteers will be considered staff members:

- The ratio of children to adults will not exceed 1:12.
- The teacher and Educational Assistant, upon being hired, will have a thorough tour of the school, both indoors and outdoors.
- Children will be under supervision at all times to ensure their safety, well-being, and development.
- Teacher and EA will circulate regularly around the classroom space to ensure all children are engaged and safe.
- When moving to other areas within the school (ie. gym, library), students will walk in an orderly fashion; they will be counted upon leaving the classroom and again when arriving at their destination. The same procedure will be followed when returning to the classroom.
- In the case of outdoor play, clear boundaries will be established with the children, and staff will monitor the area carefully. One staff member will lead the children to the playground or field in an orderly fashion, and the other staff member will follow the group. Children will be counted before leaving the classroom and once they arrive at the play area. The same procedure will happen when returning to the classroom from the outdoor play area.
- Staff will observe children's play and behavior both indoors and outdoors.
- Program supervision practices will meet children's developmental needs

All volunteers will work under the supervision of the teacher. Volunteers must ensure they maintain confidentiality regarding students and families. They also must follow teacher instructions (which follow CCS/Black Gold protocol) regarding abuse prevention and student safety.

Arrivals, Pick-Ups and Late Pick-Ups

Arrival Procedure

Please make sure you see the preschool staff before you leave your child.

Preschool classroom doors will be shut until these drop-off times. If you arrive early, please wait outside or in your vehicle.

Morning Drop-Off: Begins @ 8:30 AM

Afternoon Drop-Off: Begins @ 12:20 PM

*If you are late in bringing your child to school, please enter the school via the office doors and walk your child to the preschool classroom.

Pick-Up Procedure

Morning Pick up 11:20-11:30 am

The staff will bring your children to the school doors at 11:20 am for pickup. The doors will be locked until then, so please wait patiently outside.

Afternoon Pick up 3:10-3:20 pm

The staff will bring your children to the school doors at 3:10 pm for pickup. The doors will be locked until then, so please wait patiently outside.

- Please pick up your child promptly from school.
- If you are running late please phone the school office and let us know.
- Children who are picked up after the designated pick-up times will be waiting in the office with a designated adult.

When dropping off your child or picking up your child, please use the marked crosswalks so that your child can be safe walking in the car park.

Late Pick-Up Fees

If a parent is consistently late, a verbal warning will be issued. After this, a \$20 fee will be charged for each late pick-up. Further issues with respect to this matter will be left to the discretion of the teacher and the Society Administrator.

Cleaning Commitment

To meet licensing requirements, the preschool toys require regular scheduled cleaning. We achieve this with a parent cleaning roster. Each registered child shall have an adult (18+) volunteer once or twice to clean and sanitize the toys and play areas. A schedule will be made at the beginning of the year, with the expectation that all scheduled roster days be attended, subject to a \$100 fee for any unexplained missed commitment.

Preschool Information Night

On the *first* Tuesday of February at 7:00 pm, the preschool will hold an Information Night for all parents. This is an opportunity for parents to come into the school, meet the teacher and EA, and ask any needed questions. This is a **parent-only** evening and is not intended for children. Registration forms and fees will **only** be accepted starting on the *second* Tuesday of February at 10:00 am and continuing until the program is full. Registration fees will only be collected if we have spots available in the year's upcoming program.

Mandatory Fall Parent Meeting

One week prior to the start of our preschool program, a required parent meeting will be held at the school. The teacher, EA, Society Administrator, and the Preschool Committee will be available to answer any questions and address any concerns that you might have. This is a **parent-only** evening and is not intended for children. Dates for this event will be communicated via the teacher's newsletter in late August.

Accidents and Illness

A child who is well enough to enjoy and participate in preschool activities may come to class unless he/she

- has a fever (temperature taken)
- has vomited within the last 24 hours
- has diarrhea
- has an unexplained rash or cough
- has a communicable illness or
- has been on medication for less than 24 hours for a contagious condition (e.g. strep throat, impetigo)

If a child is ill (see the above list) or injured during a preschool class, the following procedure will be followed:

- the teacher or assistant will provide first aid to the sick or injured child,
- the teacher or assistant will supervise the other children
- the teacher or assistant will phone the child's parents and an ambulance, if necessary

To minimize contact between sick children and other children, sick children waiting for their parents to arrive will be supervised in the office by the front office staff.

If an illness is determined during class time, the teacher will record and document the name of the child, the date the child was observed to be ill, the name of the staff member who identified the child was ill, the time the parent was initially contacted, the time the child was removed from the program and the date the child returned to the program.

The "Parental Commitment" on the registration form gives permission for a responsible adult in charge of a child to use necessary measures in a medical emergency. Under normal circumstances, the parents will be notified first, and, failing that, the emergency contact(s) listed on the registration form.

If a student is injured or becomes ill during program time, the parent(s) will be notified immediately. If the parent(s) are unreachable, the listed emergency contact(s) will be called. If the emergency contact(s) are also unreachable, medical attention will be administered as needed, determined by the

administrator and preschool teacher using the child's medical record sheet for reference. If immediate medical attention is required, 911 will be called, and emergency personnel will be escorted to the child for care, and the medical reference sheet will be provided.

Any incident requiring a call home and/or a call to an emergency contact will be noted by the teacher on the Illness Report Form. This allows staff to identify if there are any trends or issues.

If the teacher has reason to believe that a child may be suffering from a disease listed in Schedule 1 of the *Communicable Diseases Regulation* (AR 238/85), the teacher must ask the parents to remove the child from class immediately.

Students may return to school after an illness when they are symptom-free for 24 hours OR have a doctor's note indicating they may return without posing a risk of infection to other students.

Health Care

Covenant Christian Preschool may provide health care to a child only if the written consent of the child's parent has been obtained or the health care provided is in the nature of first aid.

Administration of Medicine

Parents may only send emergency medication to school. If medicine is sent to school, parents must fill out the medical information form and give the form and the medication to the teacher.

The teacher will administer only emergency medications. These medicines will be administered according to label directions and only under the following conditions:

- The medicine is in the original pharmacist's container.
- The parent/guardian has met with the teacher beforehand to explain how the medication must be administered.
- The parent/guardian has signed a medical waiver.

At all times, emergency medication will be stored in a place inaccessible to children.

If emergency medication is given, the person who administered it will record their name, the name of the child receiving the medication, the amount administered, and the time administered. The person will also initial the record.

Emergency Evacuation

In an emergency, the preschool children will join the other school students in leaving the building quickly and safely. The children will line up at the door for a head count. The teacher will take the daily attendance log and the portable record with each child's emergency contact information and lead the children to the designated area, with the EA/assistant following at the end of the line. Throughout the year, the teacher will explain emergency evacuation procedures and practice drills with the children.

Off-Site Activity & Emergency Evacuation

Covenant Christian School follows Hour Zero procedures, including Lock-Down, Hold and Secure, Shelter-in-Place, Evacuation, and Dismissal. The preschool program will follow this as well and participate in practice drills when they occur during class hours. The school emergency evacuation procedure will be posted by the classroom door. All staff members will know the plan and be informed upon hiring. The plan will be communicated to parents at the fall parent meeting. The plan will also be communicated to preschool students, where developmentally appropriate.

Any off-site activities will be prefaced with an informational letter from the teacher. Parents will be required to fill out and sign a permission form in order for their child to participate in the off-site activity; information will include transportation and supervision arrangements in respect to the activity. Children who have not turned in signed permission forms will not be permitted to participate.

A portable information file, including child information, medical information, and emergency contact numbers, is kept in a specific place in the classroom, close to the door. In the event of an evacuation or in the case of off-site activities, this file will be in the teacher's possession and readily available if needed.

School Cancellation

The preschool only operates on days that students attend CCS. Occasionally, throughout the year, buses will not be operational due to weather and road conditions. On these days, CCS does remain open, and it is a parent's responsibility to drive children to school if so desired. The preschool will also remain open unless the preschool teacher decides to cancel a session. In this situation, the teacher will contact the parents directly via email or phone before 7:30 am for the morning class or 11:30 am for the afternoon class.

Incident Reporting

The teacher will complete a Critical Incident Report in the case of an emergency evacuation; an unexpected program closure due to an emergency; an intruder on program premises; an injury or illness requiring emergency health care and/or requiring the child to remain in hospital overnight; an error in the administration of medication by a program staff or volunteer resulting in the child becoming seriously injured or ill and requiring first aid; a child requiring emergency health care and/or overnight hospitalization; the death of a child; an unexpected absence of a child from the program (e.g., lost child); a child removed from the program by a non-custodial parent or guardian; an allegation of physical, sexual, emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child by a program staff member or volunteer; the commission by a child of an offence under an Act of Canada or Alberta; and/or a child being left on program premises outside of the program's operating hours. The teacher will report the incident immediately to Alberta Child Youth Services licensing staff. The report will be kept at the school. Within two days, a copy will be sent to Alberta Child Youth Services licensing staff.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Cannabis

In accordance with Black Gold Policy, the entire school building is designated free of alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis. No staff member or volunteer will consume these products, smoke, or vape at any time or place where child care is being provided.

Children's Records

An up-to-date record will be kept on the premises, with the following information for each child:

- The child's name, date of birth, and home address
- A completed enrollment form
- The parent's name, home address, and telephone number
- The name, address and telephone number of a person who can be contacted in case of an emergency
- A medical information form if emergency medication may be administered (see "Administration of Medicine" above)
- The particulars of any health care provided to the child, including the written consent of the child's parent
- Any other relevant health information about the child provided by parents, including the child's immunizations and allergies, if any

Vision Statement for Covenant Christian School

The Christian vision of education for Covenant Christian School is the same for all students, from Preschool through to Grade 9. Although preschool families are not required to subscribe to this vision statement, parents should recognize that this vision shapes all aspects of the preschool program, from the concepts that are taught to the methods of building relationships.

Education Vision Statement

As followers of Jesus Christ, we declare with joy and trust, “Our world belongs to God!” Because our world includes the realm of learning, we affirm the following principles related to our Christian faith and the role of education.

Creation: We affirm that in the beginning God—Father, Son, and Spirit—called this world into being out of nothing and gave it shape and order. God continues to direct all that happens in the world.

Fall: We affirm that our disobedience to God has broken the relationship between God and us. Looking for life without God, we find only death, leaving us blind to our place in the world and to the meaning of life.

Redemption: We affirm that Jesus Christ, the eternal Word made flesh, conquered sin and death. Being both God and man, Jesus is the only mediator between God and us. He alone paid the debt of sin; there is no other Saviour. It is through Christ that all areas of life, including education, are redeemed and restored. Therefore, it is only in Christ that we are able to discover the meaning and purpose of life.

Restoration: We affirm that, in Christ, one day God will make all things new. In fact, God is already involved in restorative work. In the beginning, God invited people to care for creation; now we are called through the Holy Spirit to share in God’s ministry of reconciliation and redemption, in all parts of the world, actively declaring, “This too belongs to God!”

Scripture: We affirm that the Bible is the Word of God, leading us to know God and have life in Jesus Christ. It infallibly tells of God’s mighty acts, reveals God’s will, and proclaims God’s plan of salvation.

School: We affirm that a primary task of the Christian school is guiding students into a deeper understanding of who God is, God’s work in creation and history and their role in God’s Kingdom. Christian schools help nurture children in the Biblical faith so they can take up their calling as faithful stewards of their God-given tasks.

Students: We affirm that students, of whatever ability, are people who bear God’s image and have a place in His plan. Christian schools strive to guide students into a deeper understanding of God’s story so that they can live joyfully, playing their part in God’s Kingdom both now and in the future.

Teachers: We affirm that parents and guardians entrust Christian teachers with the responsibility of instructing students. Teachers, in co-operation with families, are responsible for integrating a Christian perspective in all aspects of schooling, including the curriculum, and also for living a God-pleasing life.

Parents and Guardians: We affirm that the responsibility for the education of children rests primarily with parents and guardians, to whom children are entrusted by God.

The Christian Community: We affirm that since Christian education plays an important role in the growth of the Kingdom of God, the wider Christian community has a responsibility to come alongside families, nurturing children, and playing an active role in their education.

(Some parts are based on Our World Belongs to God, a document of the Christian Reformed Church)

Core Purpose

- Flourishing Learners
- Delighting in God
- Inspired to Serve

Defining Statements

Flourishing Learners will

- Embrace Lifelong Learning—Adults, children, and youth will show a passion for learning, celebrating the journey of discovery and, with discernment, using the tools of the day
- Develop Abilities—Learners will discover, develop, and use their passions and talents, exhibiting a growth mindset
- Think Critically—Learners will be engaged, creative, discerning, and innovative
- Collaborate—Learners will engage in activities that require both individual and group involvement, learning the skills needed to thrive within community
- Build Resilience and Restoration—Because setbacks, disappointments, and failures are inevitable, as learners experience them, they will develop healthy coping strategies, including the use of restorative practices to deal with brokenness
- See Connections—Learners will be encouraged to see beyond the traditional subject area boundaries while exploring the interconnectedness of God’s creation

Delighting in God with

- Love—Love of God will be wonder-struck, hope-filled, joy-inducing, and awe-inspiring
- Head, Heart, and Hands Worship—Worship will prayerfully encompass knowledge, passion, and service as an integrated response to God
- Gratitude—Learners will take pleasure in doing God’s will
- Trust—With the deep assurance that each person belongs to God, learners will trust that God has a plan for their lives and respond with courageous obedience

Inspired to Serve in ways that are

- Formative—Learners will be involved with authentic service experiences connected to the curriculum, where they can use their gifts and passions to joyfully serve
- Community Focused—Service will occur both within school and beyond, with learners actively seeking out ways to be involved
- Image-Reflecting—Learners will have a deep understanding that all people are made in God’s image and will respond with love, empathy, and sacrifice

Core Values

God, the Lord of all things, calls each of us to be part of a Kingdom-building restoration vision. Students, staff, parents, and the wider community can play a part in God’s transformational work by living out the following characteristics, which form the basis for teaching and learning at Covenant:

God-Worshipping

Order-Discovering

Creation-Enjoying

Image-Reflecting

Idolatry-Discerning

Beauty-Creating

Servant-Working

Justice-Seeking

Earth-Keeping

Community Building