



NORTHDALE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Parent Handbook

4 Year Old Preschool (VPK)

2020-2021

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Who We Are

Northdale Lutheran Church is a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). The members of Northdale Lutheran are committed to supporting parents in following God's command to "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6) This is carried out in many ways, including through Northdale Christian Academy. Our preschool staff work very closely with our pastor and elementary staff to provide the best atmosphere for our students. We want them to know that they are a valued member of our academy family.

Philosophy

A Christian School...

Northdale Christian Academy is dedicated to providing excellence in education for all its students. Our highly qualified teachers are committed to achieving this excellence by maintaining high academic standards; a safe, disciplined, nurturing environment; and proactive home-school communication.

In cooperation with our parents, Northdale Christian Academy will provide the knowledge and experience students need to become responsible and caring family members who will be prepared for school and beyond.

Northdale Christian Academy offers a comprehensive and varied curriculum, with all subjects being taught from a distinctively Christian perspective. This curriculum is designed with flexibility to meet the needs of each student. The ultimate goal is to cultivate and maximize each student's unique talents and abilities so he/she will be well equipped to serve as a valuable member of today's society.

At Northdale Christian Academy, each child's individual interests are encouraged and rewarded. Our teachers tailor their teaching to challenge each student, not to a class average. As children grow and progress through our preschool and elementary school, the diverse learning environment at NCA affords its students the opportunity to grow as scholars, musicians, artists, athletes, leaders, citizens - and most certainly as Christians - all to God's glory.

Dedicated to Excellence...

Faith... wisdom... confidence... perseverance... joy... strength of character - such are the inner qualities gleaned from an education that touches not only the mind, but also the heart. NLS is dedicated to enlightening the hearts of its children. Our commitment, parents, is to assist you in your God-given responsibility to "...bring up children in the training and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4) Christian education is Christ-centered education. The Savior and His love for us are at the heart of all we think, do, and say.

Northdale Christian Academy is a place where children learn to fold their hands and bow their heads and talk to God. It's a place where the Bible serves as the framework for absolute guidance and truth. It's a place where love for God and His Word are instilled and nurtured in our precious children. It's a place to learn Bible stories and apply them to everyday life. It's a place to prepare the hearts and minds of children for a life of faith.

Mission/Vision/Objectives Statements

Mission

Northdale Christian Academy exists to assist families by providing an excellent education in a safe, Christian environment.

Vision

Northdale Christian Academy prepares students four years old through eighth grade with a comprehensive educational program. The Biblical viewpoint encompasses all aspects of our academy's ideology through the social, emotional, physical, and academic disciplines. Our qualified Christian teachers partner with families to equip students with the skills to be life-long learners who successfully navigate and contribute as members of a diverse society.

Objectives

The Christian education program of Northdale Christian Academy strives to provide for the complete educational welfare of each child, and to guide him or her in the maximum development of his or her spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical abilities. Parents and teachers must work together in their common goal of training God's children to walk in His ways. The objectives of the school are as follows:

- Provide daily opportunities to each child to grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ as his/her Lord and Savior through the diligent teaching of God's Word.
- Provide a Christian environment to nurture the individual development of each student spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, and physically.
- Provide for the spiritual and earthly welfare of the student by means of complete Scriptural education, as well as teaching all secular subjects from the Christian viewpoint.
- Teach students to faithfully use their time, talents, and treasures to glorify God, and to provide opportunities for service in the community.
- Offer assistance in Christian parenting for all families.
- Equip students to share the love of Jesus with others through their words and actions.
- Set a clearly defined Code of Conduct and teach all students respect for rules and for the rights of others as God's Word directs us.
- Promote opportunities for parental involvement in carrying out NCA's mission.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

On the basis of race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin, no student will be denied the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available at Northdale Christian Academy. This school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational and admissions policies, scholarships and loans, athletics, and other school-administered programs.

Curriculum

Our most important goal is to teach children about Jesus. We use a series of Bible stories in our ChristLight curriculum to teach specific Bible truths. In addition, God's Word is woven into all that we do throughout the day. This includes singing songs, praying before meals, attending weekly chapel services, etc. For other aspects of a child's development, we strive to meet or exceed all the standards required by the state of Florida's VPK (Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten) program by utilizing the High/Scope curriculum. High/Scope is a research-based program that focuses on the philosophy that children learn through play. This active learning occurs when activities are child-centered, developmentally appropriate and children are actively engaged. Our daily lessons will be carefully planned based on these concepts.

Daily Routine

(Activities in bold indicate VPK session)

6:30-8:30 Free Play
8:30-9:00 Table Time, Parent Drop-Off
9:00-9:30 Circle Time
9:30-9:50 Small Groups
9:50-10:10 Bathroom, Snack
10:10-10:40 Outside
10:40-11:00 Bible Story
11:00-11:20 Music
11:20-12:00 Centers
12:00-12:15 VPK Pick-Up
12:00-12:30 Lunch
12:30-1:00 Outside
1:00-1:15 Story Time
1:15-2:00 Rest Time/Quiet activities
2:00 Part-Time Pick-Up
2:00-2:45 Science/Social Studies
2:45-3:15 Table time
3:15-3:30 Snack
3:30-4:00 Free Play
4:00-4:30 Outside
4:30-6:00 Child's Choice

Admission/Registration

Children must be 4 years old by September 1 to enroll. Parents must first submit an online application along with an application fee, if applying for extended care. Once the child is accepted, parents must submit a valid VPK voucher to be eligible for VPK enrollment. Enrollment priority is given to members of Northdale Lutheran Church or families currently enrolled in Northdale Christian Academy. All information in your online registration must be filled out in full before a child will be allowed to attend.

Arrival and Departure

Our hours of operation are 6:30 AM-6:00 PM, Monday-Friday. VPK hours are 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM with a 30 minute window from 8:30-9:00 AM and a 15 minute window from 12:00-12:15 PM to allow for drop off and pick up. Please arrive before 9:00 AM as we start promptly and VPK hours are strictly recorded. If you would like to make use of the extended child care hours beyond the VPK hours, there are part-time and full-time options available. Please see the tuition section for more details. There is a fee of \$1/minute if a child is picked up after this time frame, after 2:00 PM if the child is enrolled in part time extended care, or after 6:00 PM if they are enrolled in full time extended care. Only those adults listed on your pick up authorization form will be allowed to pick up your child. Written consent must be given to release them to anyone who is not listed on the pick up authorization form.

Daily Attendance/Absences

Every child must be signed in and out promptly every day. Parents must also sign a Student Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate to verify your child's school attendance each month for VPK records. Parents must notify the center, in writing, as soon as possible if their child will be absent. Children can be absent no more than 20% of the scheduled VPK hours for the year. If they are absent more than 20% in any three months of the program, we reserve the right to terminate the VPK enrollment and parents/guardians will be responsible for the full tuition if they wish for their child to remain in the same class.

Enrollment Options

VPK Only: Our VPK hours are 9:00 AM -12:00 PM. There is no charge to parents for VPK hours.

Part-Time Child Care: This includes early morning care from 6:30-8:30 AM as well as afternoon care until 2:00 PM.

Full-Time Child Care: This includes early morning care from 6:30-8:30 AM as well as afternoon child care until 6:00 PM.

Tuition & Fees

Northdale Christian Academy charges a non-refundable \$75 application fee for children enrolled in our extended care program. This fee is paid during the online application process through a third-party tuition management system called TADS. All payments are non-refundable. VPK is a state-funded program provided at no cost to parents. Any child care outside of the scheduled VPK time is the financial responsibility of the parent. Non-VPK students will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Tuition payments are charged monthly and due the 15th of each month. If payment is not received on time, a late fee will be assessed. The procedure for delinquent accounts is as follows:

- Current delinquency- Contact will be made with the family by the principal to arrange immediate payment.
- 30-day delinquency- Contact will be made with the family by the principal to arrange a conference with the SMB to discuss payment.
- 60-day delinquency- Student(s) is/are placed on probation until payment is made.

VPK only: Free

VPK + Part Time Child Care: \$80/week (6:30 AM-2:00 PM)

VPK + Full Time Child Care: \$120/week (6:30 AM- 6:00 PM)

A late fee of \$1/minute is applied in the following situations:

- when a child is picked up after 12:15 if VPK-only.
- when a child is picked up after 2:00 PM if part-time.
- when a child is picked up after 6:00 PM if full time.

Media Permission

Children may be photographed or videotaped for use within our preschool either for educational, promotional or advertising purposes. Parents are asked to sign a release on the registration form granting us permission to photograph or videotape their child. All staff will be notified when a parent denies this activity.

Confidentiality

Relevant student and family information will be shared with other school staff only. Sharing information with other families or any outside source without written consent from parents is prohibited.

Dress Code

The Dress Code at Northdale Christian Academy contributes to the health and safety of the student, fosters a positive educational environment, promotes positive academy spirit, and serves as an outreach tool. School uniform purchases are made through the Ideal School Apparel online store: <http://www.idealschoolapparel.com>.

Uniforms for School Days and Out-of-School Events

What is the uniform for Northdale Christian Academy?

- All students will wear the uniform polo shirts available through the online store.
- If students choose to wear long sleeves inside the building, it must be the uniform sweatshirt available for purchase through the online store. Girls are allowed to wear plain navy blue cardigans.
- On Fridays, students have the option to wear a NCA activity shirt. The activity shirt is a t-shirt with the academy name and logo available through the online store. The activity shirts may also be worn on field trips or other events in place of the uniform polo shirt. Students are required to wear uniform bottoms on Fridays.
- Pants, shorts, skirts, or skorts will be khaki or navy blue in color.
- Girls are permitted to wear uniform polo dresses available through the online store.
- Closed toed shoes will be worn and securely fastened to the feet.

How should the uniform be worn?

- Shirts will be tucked in.
- All pants, shorts, skirts, and skorts will be secured at the waist. Shorts must be worn underneath skirts and dresses. Girls may wear plain navy blue leggings under shorts, skirts, or skorts.
- Hair will be clean and neatly groomed. Any hair dye used should reflect naturally occurring hair color. The general appearance of a student should reflect neatness and good personal hygiene.
- All articles of clothing should be marked with the student's or family's name.

What is not allowed in the NCA dress code?

- Cargo style shorts or pants are not permitted.
- Sweatpant and yoga-style materials are not acceptable for bottoms.
- Mini-skirts and short shorts are not permitted. Hemlines will be no shorter than mid-thigh.
- Excessively tight fitting clothing is not acceptable.
- Clothing that is torn, frayed, or stained will not be allowed.
- Crocs, flip-flops, shower shoes, skate shoes, or similar type shoes are considered unsafe and therefore unacceptable.
- Hats and other head coverings will not be worn in the building.
- Excessive jewelry is not permitted. Boys are not allowed to wear earrings.

Uniform-Free Days

Occasionally the students will be allowed a Uniform-Free Day during which students will be allowed to wear something of their choosing in accordance with what is appropriate for a young Christian person.

- Tank tops, spaghetti strap tops, sleeveless tops, and exposed midriffs are not permitted.
- Spandex, stretch, yoga, or any excessively tight bottoms may not be worn as outer clothing.
- Mini-skirts, mini-dresses, and short shorts are not permitted. Hemlines will be no shorter than mid-thigh. Pants must be ankle length and not drag on the floor.
- Bottoms may not have printing on the backside.
- All pants, shorts, skirts, and skorts will be secured at the waist.
- Clothing that is torn, frayed, or stained will not be allowed.
- Excessively tight fitting clothing, such as leggings, are not acceptable without shorts or skirts worn over the top.
- Closed toed shoes will be worn and securely fastened to the feet. Crocs, flip-flops, shower shoes, skate shoes, or similar type shoes are considered unsafe and therefore unacceptable.
- Hair will be clean and neatly groomed. Any hair dye used should reflect naturally occurring hair color. The general appearance of a student should reflect neatness and good personal hygiene.
- Hats and other head coverings will not be worn in the building.
- No excessive jewelry. Boys are not allowed to wear earrings.

NCA staff reserves the right to use discretion in judging the appropriateness of student dress code compliance.

Spirit Dress

Certain times throughout the year may be designated as school spirit days along with the annual school spirit week. During these times students may be allowed to dress out of the normal uniform dress code following the daily theme and the uniform-free guidelines.

Dress Code Violation Consequences

In all cases, students whose personal appearance is not in accordance with these guidelines will not be allowed to participate in school day activities until appropriate attire has been obtained. The student may receive a half or full-day absence due to dress code violation depending on the amount of classroom time missed. A dress code violation form will be used to document offences.

- 1) First offense:
 - a. Notify parent/guardian
 - b. Change of inappropriate attire
- 2) Second offense:
 - a. Notify parent/guardian
 - b. Change of inappropriate attire
 - c. Disciplinary action
- 3) Third offense
 - a. Conference with parent/guardian
 - b. Change of inappropriate attire
 - c. In-school detention

Discipline Policy

Preschoolers are developing in many ways. They are learning new independence, how to communicate their needs appropriately, and that their actions affect others. Our job as Christian educators is to guide them in learning to make God-pleasing decisions in whatever situation they may face. We take advantage of opportunities throughout the day to teach strategies for problem-solving, self-soothing, dealing with social conflict, and making positive choices and decisions. The more practice they get with these situations, the more confident they will become.

At school, you can expect that teachers will be guiding children with the biblical perspective that Jesus, our Savior, loves us and that is our motivation for how we treat others. We show our love and faith in Jesus in all we think, say, and do. Christian guidance starts by building a positive relationship with each child. Teachers make positive comments about children's behavior as often as possible to reinforce positive behavior. Teachers show love and concern for children by setting clear limits and expectations and following through. They give clear directions, anticipate problems and plan accordingly.

Preschool is a great starting point for children to begin thinking for themselves, correcting their own mistakes, and solving their own problems. They will be encouraged by staff to try working out their problems as independently as possible. When intervention is needed, teachers will use redirection and negotiation to change children's behavior and assist in conflict resolution. Sitting apart will be used when negotiation or redirection does not resolve the problem. The child will be directed to the calming area in the classroom with an explanation of why they are leaving the group and what they need to do to return. They may return as soon as they are ready. Time-out will be used only for behavior that is repeatedly aggressive and unsafe and will be a set amount of time determined by the teacher. Persistent problems will immediately be brought to the attention of the parent, so that together as partners, we can work to problem-solve and support positive changes. Open two-way communication between parents and teachers is a very valuable part of the trust and partnership we share.

Our staff understands that young children are just learning the skills of getting along with each other. Accepting limits and taking responsibility for their actions is a work in progress, so they will be treated with patience and understanding. Discipline is defined as training or teaching. This is distinctly different from punishment. All punishment that is humiliating or frightening to a child is strictly prohibited. There will be no corporal punishment under any circumstances, even under the request of a parent. Under no circumstances will food, rest, toileting, or physical punishment be used to manipulate a child.

Toilet-Training Policy

All children are expected to be toilet-trained upon enrolling in our VPK program. Children shall not be scolded or punished for lapses in toilet training. The Preschool will work with the parent on a plan of action if accidents become a frequent issue.

Biting Policy

Biting is a common behavior in children from birth to age three. Past the age of three, biting is much less common, but may still occur. If a child bites, he or she will immediately be separated from the other children with the firm explanation, "No. Biting hurts. We don't bite." First aid and comfort will be given to the child who was bitten. The child who bit will be given time to calm down and then the teacher will instruct them that teeth are for chewing and smiling, not biting. Both sets of parents will be notified immediately and asked to fill out an incident report upon pick up.

If the biting is repeated, the child's parents will be asked to pick him up within one hour of the incident. The teacher will meet with the parents to make every effort to understand the cause of the biting and take preventative measures to correct the behavior. If preventative measures are not effective, the child will be asked to leave the program for two weeks to try to break the biting cycle. If the biting continues upon their return, they will be asked to leave the program.

What to Bring

There will be a suggested supply list provided to you. VPK students are not required to bring any supplies, but these suggested items would be appreciated. Please also send two full sets of clothing for your child. Accidents do happen and being prepared with clean clothes will help the child handle the situation more easily. If your child is staying for extended care, parents are responsible for bringing a cold lunch as well as a blanket for rest time. Small pillows and stuffed animals are optional.

Lunch and Snacks

Lunch and snacks are provided by the parents. There is a refrigerator available for cold lunches. Birthday treats are optional. Please speak with your child's teacher prior to bringing a special snack so they can plan for the day. If your child has a food allergy, you must inform the staff on your enrollment form.

Rest Time

All children who stay for the afternoon will be encouraged to rest quietly. A cot is provided for each child. Parents are welcome to send a blanket, small pillow and small stuffed animal (The stuffed animal must have no lights, sounds or movement. This is not to be a toy; it is a comfort item.) After resting quietly for 30 minutes, if a child is still awake, they will be offered a quiet activity such as books or puzzles until rest time is over. Rest blankets will be sent home weekly to be washed.

Parent-Teacher Communication

Students will bring home Monday folders with any important information from the staff as well as their work from the previous week. There will also be a weekly school newsletter to inform parents of what's happening at our school as a whole as well as specific information about our preschool class. Email reminders about important events will also be sent home as needed. If you have any questions or concerns, I am happy to meet with you. If it is more than a quick check-in, please schedule a time to meet with me so I can give you my full attention and time to understand how I can help. Mandatory parent-teacher conferences will be held in Fall and Spring to discuss each child's progress. If there is an issue, please bring it to the attention of your child's teacher and then the director if necessary. If the issue cannot be resolved by the director, it will be brought to the attention of the principal and then school board if necessary.

Emergency Closings

You will be notified of any emergency closing through our parent information system. You can choose to receive these notifications by text or email.

Field Trips

All field trip will require parent permission before a child can attend. Some experiences require additional fees to be paid by the parent. Parents are asked to contact their child's teacher if the payment becomes a financial hardship. Other arrangements will be made. In situations where students are unable to attend, teachers will provide replacement experiences or assignments that meet similar curricular objectives. Parents/volunteers will serve as drivers for such trips when necessary. Drivers are asked to secure each rider with a safety belt and booster seat if necessary, and take every precaution to ensure the safety of the children. Drivers are not to place any students under the age of twelve in the front seat of the car if it is equipped with a passenger-side air bag. All drivers are required to provide evidence of his/her driver's license and proof of insurance. All drivers and chaperones are required to complete the Protect My Ministry course and sign the Volunteer Covenant Code before participating in any field trip or school activity.

Health and Safety

****A separate COVID-19 Health policy will be supplied in addition to our current policy.***

Health Records: 2 health forms are required for enrollment: the Florida Certificate of Immunization and Student Health Examination. Please see your healthcare provider for any questions.

Illness: It is in the best interest of the child, the other children and the staff to keep a sick child at home when they have symptoms of an illness. A child may return when they are free of symptoms for 24 hours and/or 24 hours after prescribed medication has begun, with the exception of lice. A child who has head lice may return after treatment has completely removed all lice, lice eggs, and egg cases. Reasons for a child to remain at home or be sent home include but are not limited to the following: Fever of 100 degrees or higher, Vomiting, Skin rash/Open sores, Inflamed, swollen or red eyes, Diarrhea, Irregular urine or stool, Cough or sore throat, Stiff neck or headache, or Head lice.

Should a teacher feel that a child is unable to function properly due to illness, the parent or parent-designated person will be notified immediately and requested to make arrangements for pick-up within one hour. The ill child will be isolated and supervised until they are picked up.

In the event that a child has a contagious disease, they may not attend preschool. The Preschool must be informed of the disease so notice of possible exposure can be given to all families enrolled and to the county health department. The child's name will be kept confidential. A child with a communicable disease may be readmitted with a signed statement from their physician. Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to: chicken pox, German measles, hepatitis, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, or meningitis.

Medication: Doctor-prescribed medication will be administered by the staff with written consent of the parent. Teachers will not administer over-the-counter medication unless prescribed by a physician. The medication must be in its original container with the child's name, date, name of medication, name of physician, dosage, and directions for administration. The parent must fill out a Medication Administration Record.

Sunscreen: Parent-provided sunscreen will be applied to children at the parent's request only.

Accidents/Incidents: If the injury is serious and requires professional medical treatment, a parent will be contacted immediately. If the injury is minor, parents will be informed at pick-up. The teacher and parent will sign an accident/incident report to be kept for our records. All staff are trained in First Aid and CPR and will follow First Aid procedures for every injury.

Exclusions

Reasons for possible exclusion:

- The child appears ill, over-tired, or unable to participate in the daily program.
- The child is not developmentally ready for the preschool curriculum or routine.
- The child is overly aggressive towards others, including, but not limited to: repeated biting, punching, or kicking
- The Preschool cannot meet the needs of the child with reasonable accommodations.
- Parents do not observe the policies outlined in the Parent Handbook.
- Non-payment, late payment or late pick up of children. (See tuition agreement.)
- Child is not dressed in compliance with the dress code.

Procedure for temporary exclusion:

- Parents will be asked to take an ill child from the center immediately if present, or within an hour of notification if not present.
- The director will inform the parents verbally or in writing concerning the reason for exclusion, the date exclusion will begin, and the conditions necessary for the child to return to the Preschool.
- There will be no adjustment in tuition for temporary exclusion.

Procedure for permanent exclusion:

- The director will inform the parents verbally or in writing concerning the reason for exclusion and the date exclusion will begin.
- The director will inform the principal and school board as soon as possible.
- Parents may contact the principal and board in writing within one week if they wish to appeal the decision.
- Parents will be notified of the board's decision within two weeks.
- There will be a refund of any unused tuition if the child is permanently excluded.

Withdrawal

At least two weeks written notice is required upon withdrawal from the Center. Refunds for credit balances will be considered when made in writing to the Director at least two week prior to withdrawal.

Reviewed June 2020