



PRENSCHOOL

Parent Handbook

2024–2025

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” – 1 Peter 2:9

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VISION

Mercy Culture Preschool's exists to take students from corporate encounters with God to daily personal encounters with God.

MISSION

The purpose of Mercy Culture Preschool is to partner with families to develop Kingdom Leaders by equipping the whole student – spirit, mind & body through presence driven discipleship.

Jeremiah 29:11 states that God has a plan and purpose for every individual. Our goal is for each child to have a keen understanding of their identity as sons and daughters. Providing opportunities for each child to begin to develop skills which will be foundational for learning their purpose and preparing for their destiny.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

- **At MC Prep we believe Jesus is the Son of God.**

Jesus Christ is eternally God. He was together with the Father and the Holy Spirit from the beginning, and through Him all things were made. For man's redemption, He left heaven and became incarnate by the Holy Spirit through the Virgin Mary; henceforth, He is forever one Christ with two natures—God and man—in one person.

- **We believe The Bible is the Word of God.**

We affirm that the Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, is alone the only infallible, inspired Word of God, and that its authority is ultimate, final, and eternal. It cannot be added to, subtracted from, or superseded in any regard. The Bible is the source of all doctrine, instruction, correction, and reproof. It contains all that is needed for guidance in godliness and practical Christian conduct. (II Timothy 3: 16–17). 13

- **We believe in the Trinity.**

It is the testimony of both the Old and New Testaments and of the Christian Church that God is both One and Triune. The biblical revelation testifies that there is only one God and that He is eternally existent in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There is one God manifested in three persons: The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (I John 5:4–7).

- We believe in the Person, gifts and move of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is God, the Lord and giver of life, who was active in the Old Testament and given to the Church in fullness at Pentecost. He empowers the saints for service and witness, cleanses man from the old nature and conforms us to the image of Christ. The baptism in the Holy Spirit, subsequent to conversion, releases the fullness of the Spirit and is evidenced by the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God that leads and guides us into all truths, and that His gifts are in operation today (John 16:23 and I Corinthians 2:12)

- We believe in biblical marriage.

We believe in unconditional love for everyone while remaining unwavering in our loyalty to God's Holy word. We believe that because God our Creator established marriage as a sacred institution between one man and one woman, the idea that marriage is a covenant only between one man and one woman has been the traditional definition of marriage for all of human history. (Matthew 19:4-6)

ADDRESS

Mercy Culture Preschool
1401 Oakhurst Scenic Drive
Fort Worth, Texas 76111
817.332.3351

ORGANIZATION

Mercy Culture Preschool in Fort Worth, TX, operates within the structure of the Constitution and by-laws of Mercy Culture Church.

Mercy Culture Preschool is a drug, alcohol, tobacco, and smoke-free facility.

GANG-FREE ZONE

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang-related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas Law. These specific locations include childcare facilities. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of the childcare facility.

ADMISSION POLICY

Mercy Culture Preschool admits children of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs and activities, generally accorded or made available to children at this center.

However, we reserve the right to prioritize applications according to the following:

- MC Preschool Siblings
- MC Preparatory Siblings
- MC Church Staff & Serving Members

Before admitting your child to preschool, all fees must be paid and the complete admission packet must be completed and submitted before your child starts. The packet includes the following required items:

- Completed Application
- Signed Statement of Faith
- Signed Physician Statement
- Copy of Immunization Records or Exemption Affidavit
- Signed Payment Policy
- Signed Parent Handbook Statement*
- Emergency Authorization Form filled out entirely*
- Copy of Birth Certificate and Social Security Card

***Emergency Information form and Parent Handbook will be handed out on Meet the Teacher night. In order for your child to start, both must be brought back no later than the first day of school at morning drop-off.**

HOURS OF OPERATION

Mercy Culture Preschool opens at 7:30 AM and closes at 5:30 PM. Monday through Friday, ten months a year from August to May with the exception of School Holidays, breaks and half days.

Children must be picked up by 5:30 PM or a \$1.00 per minute late fee will be charged beginning at 5:31 PM. If picking up late becomes a consistent issue, dismissal will occur.

**Please refer to the Pre-School Academic Calendar at the end of this handbook.*

All dates are subject to change at the discretion of Mercy Culture Preschool.

TUITION POLICY

Tuition is billed on a 10 month payment plan but may be paid on a biweekly, or annual basis. Tuition will not be prorated. Tuition is not set on an hourly or daily basis. Failure to pay tuition and fees in a timely manner will result in removal from the preschool program.

LATE FEE:

\$10 RETURNED

\$30 CHECK FEE

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Parents may withdraw their child from Mercy Culture Preschool after presenting a written, 30 day notice to the Director. If the written, 30 day notice is not given before the child is withdrawn from Mercy Culture Preschool, parents are held responsible for one month of additional tuition.

DISMISSAL POLICY

Mercy Culture Preschool reserves the right to dismiss a child upon one-week notice for serious behavioral problems or non-payment of fees. Dismissal may also result immediately if the Preschool feels the preschool, teacher, parent or child is in jeopardy or parents have not followed the policies. See page 20 for our discipline, guidance, suspension & expulsion policies.

ARRIVAL TIME

Each classroom begins with Connect with God at 8:30 AM. Children who arrive after 8:30 AM will miss this crucial part of their daily spiritual education and learning experience. We ask that all students arrive before 8:30 AM when possible.

SIGN IN/OUT PROCEDURE

When arriving at preschool, you will bring your child to the classroom and sign in on the Brightwheel App by scanning the QR code posted outside your students classroom. When picking up your child, you will sign out on the Brightwheel App.

Please do not rely on your child's teacher to check your child in & out.

RELEASE OF STUDENTS

The classroom MUST have on file the name, phone number, driver's license number, and relationship of each adult whom you have designated to pick up your child found on the Student's Emergency Information form. We cannot release a child to unauthorized adults. If someone other than the parent or legal guardian will be picking up, the office must be notified in advance. A picture ID is required for anyone not regularly picking up your child. This procedure will be enforced for the safety of your child.

NOTE: Children cannot be released to anyone younger than 18 years of age.

PARKING

Parents must park in the designated VISITOR PARKING SPACES. Per the city fire marshal, vehicles are not to be parked along the curb and left unattended in the marked fire lane. That is a violation of city ordinance. Vehicles parked in the fire lane may be ticketed and/or towed at the city fire marshal's direction. Mercy Culture Preschool has no discretionary power and assumes no liability for illegally parked vehicles.

DROP OFF & PICK UP

During drop off and pick up, you may park underneath the awning. We ask that you do this in a timely manner as to not hold up the drop off/pick up line. If you need to speak with your child's teacher, please park in a visitor parking space. If your conversation may be more extensive, please schedule a meeting with your child's teacher as to not take them away from the class for a long period of time.

We ask that you not drop off or pick up during nap time from 11:30am–2:00pm as to not disrupt the classroom.

If you arrive to pick up while the students are walking to or from the playground or on a walk, please meet us at our destination and refrain from picking your child up while we are in transition for the safety of the children.

VISION/HEARING SCREENING

The state of Texas requires vision/hearing screening for all four year olds. This testing should be completed at a well-check visit, and the results must be on form as well. Please provide copies of this screening to the Director of Mercy Culture Preschool.

IMMUNIZATIONS

A current record of the child's immunizations must be present for the student to enter into Mercy Culture Preschool Program. The child must meet all requirements for immunizations according to their age as determined by the Texas Dept. of Health or have a physical immunization exemption affidavit on file. Parents are ultimately responsible for keeping up with their students' immunization records. For more information on immunizations, you may go to www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunization

VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASE FOR EMPLOYEES

Mercy Culture Preschool has implemented the following policy for employees to be in compliance with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Minimum Standard Rule #746.501 (27), requires a policy for protecting children from vaccine-preventable disease.

While safety of our employees and children in our care is paramount, we have elected to make immunizations for vaccine-preventable disease optional to Mercy Culture Preschool employees.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

Each child must have an emergency treatment authorization on file in the office. Parents are responsible for keeping the name of the child's physician, as well as the name of the person to contact in an emergency when the parent cannot be reached in our files. In the event of an accident or illness requiring medical attention, the child's parents will be called immediately. If we are unable to locate the parents in an emergency, the Director will call 911, and the parents will accept responsibility for payment for any expenses incurred as a result of the 911 call.

DISPENSING MEDICATIONS

Mercy Culture Preschool Teachers may not administer medications. Only the parent, director or person in charge may administer medication to a child. Mercy Culture Preschool will only allow medication to be administered if it's prescribed to be administered 3 times a day (middle dose).

ALL MEDICATION MUST BE IN ORIGINAL CONTAINER AND ADMINISTERED EXACTLY AS PRESCRIBED.

Items such as diaper rash cream and powder can be used on the child that brought it without having to fill out a form unless it is a prescription. If it is in their bag, it is implied that it is intended for the use of their child.

SUNSCREEN AND INSECT SPRAY

Mercy Culture Preschool will not provide or apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent. We ask all parents, if you wish your child to wear sunscreen or insect repellent, that you apply it on your child before they come to school.

HAND WASHING

A teacher will supervise the hand washing of each child as they enter the classroom. Students will also wash hands before and after eating and after outdoor playtime.

POTTY TRAINING

For sanitation reasons children must be fully potty trained and in underwear before entering the three year old classes. If your student is not potty trained by 3 – they will be placed in the 2 year old class until fully potty trained.

NOTE: If your child needs to be placed in the 2's class in order to finish potty training, know that there is a chance there is no space for an additional child. If that is the case you will not be able to bring your student for Mercy Culture Preschool until they are fully potty trained and then my return to the 3's class.

ILLNESS

A child who appears ill will not be admitted to child care unless approved in writing by a physician. The following symptoms will be used as guidelines for dismissal, but are not all-inclusive:

- Fever of 100 degree or more within 24 hours
- Vomiting
- Undiagnosed rash
- Mouth sores
- Infected sores

- 2 cases of diarrhea in a day
- Severe itching of body, scalp; or scratching of the scalp
- Pinkeye – conjunctivitis, viral or bacterial
- Difficult or rapid breathing, persistent coughing

Parents will be notified to pick up their child immediately if signs of illness occur during the school day. We are asking that all parents partner with us by ensuring that their student is picked up within 60 minutes of contact and does not return to school prior to being 24 hour symptom and fever free without medication. This is for the health and safety of all students attending Mercy Culture Preschool.

Mercy Culture Preschool will notify parents when an illness needs attention or is contagious. The child will be isolated until the parent can pick up the child. A doctor's note stating what your child had and is NO LONGER contagious will be required for your child to be readmitted into the preschool.

PARENT CONCERNING INJURIES AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

Parents will be notified when a child has been exposed to a communicable disease within school. Parents should likewise notify the school when children are exposed to a disease outside of preschool.

In case of a child being hurt, the parent will be notified. An accident report will be written up and signed by a teacher, witness, parent and director or person in charge. A copy will be made and kept in the child's file. The parent will receive a copy to take home.

If the injury is serious enough that it requires immediate attention, 911 will be called, a designated person will stay with the child at which time the director or person in charge will

contact the parents. If the parent cannot be reached, the director or person in charge will call all the people on the emergency contact lists until someone is reached. In case of severe injury or communicable disease reportable to the CDC, a report will be written and the state will be informed.

If it is a communicable disease, the child will be separated from the other students and the parents will be contacted and asked to come pick up the child.

ROOM ASSIGNMENTS

We will use the traditional date of September 1st for cut off when grouping students entering into 3's class and above.

Staff-to-child ratios are in accordance with the Texas State Licensing Requirements.

NOTE: In order to be enrolled in K3 (Three Year Class), children must be three years old by September 1st and be fully potty trained.

DRESS CODE POLICY

Shirts

- MC Prep Polos purchases from LandsEnd is required daily aside from Fridays for all K4 students
- Shirts must touch the beltline and never expose midriff
- No spaghetti straps, backless attire and off the shoulder tops

Dresses, Jumpers, Rompers Skirts, Shorts, Pants, and Jeans

- Dresses & skirts shall be worn at a length that is mid thigh or longer and must have shorts underneath
- Shorts must be mid-thigh or longer
- Rompers & jumpsuits are discouraged

Shoes

- Shoes MUST be worn at all times.
- Only secure, well fitting shoes are allowed for the safety of the students.
- Unsafe footwear is not permitted (i.e., Crocs, slippers, play/kids heels & backless shoes)
- Shoes must be accessible for all children 3+ to put on by themselves. High Top or other difficult to put on shoes are discouraged.

Hair, nails & makeup

- Hair shall be neat, clean, and well groomed, and worn in a style and color that is not distracting
- Makeup for preschool students is not allowed
- Nails may be painted for girls but fake nails are discouraged

Miscellaneous

- All garments must be sized appropriately
- Proper undergarments shall be worn at all times
- No pajama wear of any type except, on campus designated days

- Ball caps, beanies, headbands, bows, clips & sunglasses may be worn but understand that they are easily misplaced
- During the colder months, warm coats, jackets, hats & gloves are required

FOOD ALLERGY PLAN

Every child in our care, who has a food allergy, must have an emergency food allergy plan. This plan is an individualized plan prepared by the child's health care professional that includes:

- A list of each food child is allergic to
- Possible symptoms if exposed to a food on the list
- The steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction
- Signature of the health care provider and the parent/guardian
- If a student has a severe allergy, we will ensure that class is free of that food

FOOD INTOLERANCE OR SENSITIVITY

If your child has any type of food sensitivity or intolerance that is not considered a diagnosed allergy, we ask that you state that on your child's emergency information form. We will also need to know if you will be bringing your child's meals daily or if we can continue to provide our school made lunches and snacks.

NOTE: We cannot provide any food substitutions or withhold giving any part of school provided meals due to state regulations unless a substitute is provided by the parents.

LUNCH & SNACKS

A hot lunch and snacks (morning and afternoon) are provided for the children every day and meets nutritional requirements by Licensing. Menus are sent home and are posted in each classroom.

You may send a packed lunch with your child on any given day. We are unable to refrigerate or heat any lunches from home, so please pack a cold pack if necessary. Things that are not allowed in lunches are anything with peanuts, sugary drinks or candy. Grapes must also be cut in half to avoid choking.

*When children bring their own lunch from home, the school is not responsible for its nutritional value or meeting the daily nutritional needs of the child but must meet the classroom allergy restrictions (if applicable).

BIRTHDAYS

Your child's birthday will be celebrated at Mercy Culture Preschool during the school year. If you wish, you may send a store bought/package birthday treat for your child's class. Please check with your child's teacher about what are appropriate birthday treats for each age. Please let your child's teacher know in advance. The teacher will tell you how many children are in the class and if there are any allergies. We ask that invitations to birthday parties outside of the preschool will only be distributed if there is one for each child in the class (to spare hurt feelings).

NAP TIME

Following lunch, children will be provided with a nap or rest period. Each child will be required to rest for a minimum of 60 minutes. Each student will be required to provide a folded nap mat and a small blanket or roll up nap mat; pillows are not permitted.

- ALL nap items must be taken home every Friday to be laundered.

LESSON PLAN

Each classroom will have the daily schedule and weekly lesson plan both posted in the classroom as well as included in the child's take home folder. Each teacher will create and communicate any daily updates and monthly plans to parents via the Brightwheel App.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Each classroom will be provided with two daily times for the children to have outdoor or indoor adequate activity. There will be a daily schedule posted in the classroom with the hours of outdoor play and this should also be communicated by the teacher. In the event that the weather does not permit outdoor activities, such as temperature over 95 and under 40 degrees, there will be a time scheduled to have vigorous activity inside our gym or playroom.

SUPPLIES

Each class has a supply list written specifically for that age group. All items need to be brought to preschool no later than the day your child starts. All children need to have two spare changes of clothing in their backpacks at all times. This includes socks and shoes. Clearly label each article that is brought to the facility. PLEASE, NO TOYS FROM HOME unless approved by the child's teacher.

PARENT TO TEACHER COMMUNICATION

At Mercy Culture Preschool, being present with your child is a priority. You are welcome to send your child's teacher messages whenever is convenient for you although please do not expect a response immediately. Our teachers will check their messages daily from 7:00am–7:30am as well at 11:30am–2:00pm. If you need to reach your child's teacher outside of those times for more pressing matters, please call the front office.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Mercy Culture Preschool has an open door policy. This means that you as a parent are welcome to visit and observe in your child's classroom for a 30 minute window upon giving notice to the child's teacher or Director with the exception of nap time 11:30 PM to 2:30 PM. Please check in with the main office for a visitor badge before entering the classroom.

POLICY ON HALLOWEEN

October 31st is traditionally recognized as Halloween. Mercy Culture Preschool does not recognize this day in room decor, art projects or in any type of celebration. Believing that this is a pagan holiday, we will not acknowledge this day in any way.

DAILY REPORTS

You may see your child's daily report by checking the Brightwheel App. Progress Report will be sent home twice annually for K3 & K4 Classrooms. A Kindergarten Screening is administered to all children entering Mercy Culture Preparatory for Kindergarten.

POLICY CHANGES

Parents will be informed in writing of any changes made to our policies and procedures.

BABYSITTING

If you choose to hire one of Mercy Culture Preschool employees to babysit for you, the employee is doing it on their own and not in conjunction with the preschool. Mercy Culture Preschool is not held liable.

ABSENCES

The full tuition rate is charged whether a child is present or not. There are no rebates or discounts. Please understand we make no exceptions. If your child is absent due to being sick, family days or vacations, please notify your child's teacher.

HOLIDAY PARTIES

Scheduled parties for the school year will be Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter and End of the Year. All parents are welcome to attend. We do not celebrate Halloween, so please do not bring Halloween related items as treats. We will have a Fall Festival the last week of October.

Teacher's may request room parents to help with planning parties and added support during classroom parties. Please reach out to your student's teacher if you are interested in participating.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

A fire drill will be held once a month for Mercy Culture Preschool. During a drill, children will evacuate the building and proceed immediately with their teacher to the designated area outside.

Fire Evacuation Plans are posted in each classroom as well as the preschool hallways and are available for observation at any given time.

Severe weather drills and lockdown drills will be held 4 times a year, and children will proceed immediately with their teachers to the designated safe room in the building. Staff will teach children the proper procedures to follow and be with them throughout the drill. It is important that children are given several opportunities to practice these drills so that they will not panic and will know what is expected of them in the event of a real emergency.

In an emergency, the first responsibility will be to move the children to our alternate location. If any of our children require assistance in any way a staff member will be assigned to that child to help them in accordance with their need to reach our new location safely.

PARENTAL CODE OF CONDUCT

The goal of Mercy Culture Preschool is to direct students toward Christ-centered behavior that helps them Spiritually grow and develop their Fruits of the Spirit. Mercy Culture Preschool parents are expected to follow the same guidance and discipline policies as our teachers if on school property. If a parent violates our discipline policy, it could result in grounds for dismissal of the student.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

Mercy Culture Preschool believes that all students are "disciples taught of the Lord and great is their peace and undisturbed composure." – Isaiah 54:13

Mercy Culture Preschool understands that children are not perfect and there will be times when children will require discipline due to our sinful nature. Mercy Culture Preschool believes that there can be no true change in behavior if there is no change in the heart of the child. One way that Mercy Culture Preschool leads a child to change their hearts is by using Scripture to reproof and encourage the child. This allows us to not just focus on disobedience, but teach children how to overcome their own sin-nature by applying how the Bible tells them to live and treat others.

We also commit to reminding the children of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements and redirecting behaviors.

To fulfill the mission of MC Preschool, partnership is required from each family when dealing with disruptive behavior. We believe that consistency from all parties involved is the best way to handle these issues. When your child's teacher notices consistent behavioral issues, they will inform you of these issues and seek your partnership in helping your child understand their own sin-nature and change their heart. This will look differently for each child. If a child puts themselves, the other students or teachers in immediate harm, is inconsolable for an extended period, or is consistently not following instructions to the point to where it becomes a disruption to the rest of the class, being sent home for the day may be required. If behavioral issues continue, we may request a parent meeting in order to come up with a plan on how we all can best help the child.

Mercy Culture Preschool reserves the right to terminate care permanently or excuse for the day for disciplinary problems at any time.

BITING, HITTING, KICKING & SPITTING

We take all physical behavior seriously at Mercy Culture Preschool. Biting especially is a very serious and dangerous occurrence with young children. In most cases, children understand that this behavior is not appropriate and biting stops by the age of 3. If this becomes a chronic issue, Mercy Culture Preschool will work with the child and the family to stop this behavior. If the physical behavior persists, dismissal will occur.

SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

First and foremost, it is our desire to never suspend or expel any child within our program. All steps will be taken to help every child find where they fit in our program. We will partner with parents to find creative solutions. We will observe the student, document incidents, and restructure lesson plans as needed.

5 offenses must occur before dismissal

First & second offense – In class time out

Third – Child must be picked up

Fourth – Meeting with child's teacher, Preschool Director & Head of School

Fifth – Dismissal from program

Suspension or expulsion will be decided on an individual basis after all other steps have been taken and it is apparent that the child or family meets one or more of the points mentioned below:

- It is clear the preschool cannot meet the needs of the child
- A danger to themselves or others. (Hitting, kicking, biting, ect)
- Continual late pick ups
- Lack of trust in Mercy Culture Preschool's staff & faculty
- Consistent disruptive behavior from student or parent

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

Under Texas law, the staff and administration of Mercy Culture Preschool are obligated to report any suspected abuse that comes to their attention. The statute provides in part as follows: "A person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or

welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person shall be reported.” Mercy Culture Preschool will comply with the law.

LICENSE AND ACCREDITATION

Mercy Culture Preschool is licensed through the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Child Care Licensing Division. To contact the local Licensing office, you can call 1.800.582.8286.

WEATHER POLICY

In the event of inclement weather a FACTS parent alert text message will be sent out as well as an email. Please note Mercy Culture Preschool will observe Fort Worth ISD.