

Valley Christian Preschool Parent Handbook



*Every child is a unique and special gift from God,
and should be encouraged to progress at his or her
own rate of speed toward enriched experiences.*

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Valley Christian Schools

Valley Christian Schools serve over 1,000 families throughout the Tri-Valley area. This rich interdenominational environment provides a strong backdrop for effective ministry to students and families. At Valley Christian Schools families can find continuing Christian care and education for their children from ages three years through Grade 12.

Our Mission

To provide a college preparatory education from an evangelical Christian worldview that will equip students with the skills to flourish spiritually, excel academically, succeed vocationally and thrive relationally in order to further God's kingdom on earth.

Our Biblical Mandate

Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. The second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these." Mark 12:29-31

Our Statement of Faith

- We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracle, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Source: The National Association of Evangelicals

SCHOOL – FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

We believe God has charged parents with the primary responsibility for the training of their child. You have chosen us to *partner* with you in the education of your child and we count it a privilege to do so. We take this responsibility seriously and desire the same level of support from you. Your support is essential to the success of our school and vital for your child's self-esteem.

AS AN EARLY EDUCATION PROGRAM, WE WILL:

- Provide a safe and caring environment.
- Be clear and consistent in all we do.
- Provide a broad and balanced curriculum to develop the whole child.
- Acknowledge that each and every child is a unique individual created by God.
- Have clear goals and learning objectives for the children.
- Inform parents at an early stage of any concerns we have regarding a child's learning or behaviors.
- Ensure that we are available, by prior arrangement, to discuss progress, behavior, or any concerns that you might have about your child.
- Provide a consistently Biblical foundation for all teaching, striving to communicate God's love and His desire for an intimate relationship with each child and his/her family.

AS THE PARENT OF A CHILD ATTENDING VALLEY CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL, WE ASK YOU:

- Support the school's philosophy, programs, policies, and procedures.
- Ensure that your child attends school regularly.
- Ensure that your child is at school on time.
- Let the school know the reason for your child's absence.
- Let the school know about any problems or situations that might affect your child's learning or behavior.
- Encourage and support your child in completion of his/her "schoolwork" and home reinforcement activities, being aware that expectations are different depending on the age of the child.
- Make every effort to attend meetings and events, showing your child a desire to participate in his/her education.
- Encourage your child to obey the teachers, rules, and play safely, with pride in his/her actions and learning.
- Cooperate with the school in the guidance and discipline of your child.

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS

We view our school ministry as a service to the families and children of our community who desire quality Christian childcare and academic enrichment for their children beginning with preschool ages three years through our Junior Kindergarten program.

We believe that each child is a unique and special gift from God and should be encouraged to progress at his or her own rate of speed toward enriched experiences, self-discipline, and the ability to make good choices. Our goal is to provide an education that develops the whole child by providing a preschool experience of lasting value with biblical values and principles woven throughout.

- **Spiritually:** by providing a Bible time, and by integrating a biblical worldview throughout the curriculum and learning environment. We model Christ-centered character qualities through the love of our staff and the responses given to the children in our care. Bible stories, songs, and prayer give children an awareness of God's love for them.
- **Intellectually:** by encouraging an enthusiasm for learning through exploring and hands-on experiences.
- **Physically:** by encouraging experiences that will develop large and small muscle coordination and motor skills.
- **Socially / Emotionally:** by encouraging participation in group activities, getting along with others, and developing a feeling of security and belonging.
- **Creatively:** by encouraging the exploration of art mediums, creative experiences, and music.

OUR PROGRAMS

Valley Christian Preschool is a member of Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). We are, also, very proud that we have been accepted into candidacy for preschool accreditation through ACSI. As a candidate for ACSI accreditation the administration, teaching staff, and support staff of Valley Christian Preschool are presently going through a thorough self-study and assessment process. First, the program addresses the spiritual or Christian aspects of our school and second, the quality of our educational program and its appropriateness to the age of the child. *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth."* III John 1:4

The term Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) is often used in early childhood education programs and is part of the philosophy of Valley Christian Preschool. It is our goal to provide children with an environment that will allow them to **grow** in all developmental areas. God tells us through scripture that children need time to grow. *"And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and Man."* Luke 2:52. Different levels of activity, development, and learning styles are expected, accepted, and used to design appropriate activities. Our programs include a variety of activities allowing for differences in young children. There is a balance of free choice and planned activities. In all

activities we strive to build the child's self-concept in a loving, secure, and accepting environment.

Valley Christian Preschool offers the following programs:

- Half-Day and Full-Day Programs for Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, and Junior Kindergarten which include school readiness curriculum and skills, visual and motor perception activities, music, art, science, Bible, and Spanish.
- Computer enrichment classes with *Learning Street USA*, which includes an additional fee set by the named vendor. Registration forms and information will be made available by *Learning Street USA* at the beginning of the school year.
- We also offer a summer program for our currently enrolled full day students. The summer program themes and fee schedule will be made available in early spring prior to the summer session.

Please note that each child is enrolled for a specific program schedule. Due to capacity limitations and staffing needs IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ROTATE DAYS WITHIN A PROGRAM. For example, a child scheduled for a 3-day program on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday must attend those days and per the program- morning or afternoon. If a permanent change is needed, this must be requested in writing to the preschool *in advance of any change being made*. Changes can be made only as space is available. A \$20.00 program change fee will be assessed.

Classes Offered

Preschool Threes:

1. 3.0 years of age by September 1 of the enrolled school year **and**
2. Totally responsible for own toileting needs.

Pre-Kindergarten Fours:

1. 4.0 years of age by September 1 of the enrolled school year.

Junior Kindergarten Fives:

1. 5.0 years of age by Dec. 31 of the enrolled school year.

Curriculum

"Curriculum" is a term used to describe all of the components or elements used in our early education programs. Curriculum includes directed activities, play and exploration centers, outdoor physical development, thematic activities, instructional materials, and texts.

Bible is integrated throughout the day. We will use Bible stories, character building stories, music, and prayer as part of our curriculum. We want the children to know God loves us, Jesus is our friend, the Bible is God's Word, and prayer is our time to talk to God. Doctrine from any particular denomination is not taught. We are an interdenominational school.

Development of the whole child is a team effort, with instruction and experience in the classroom being supported and reinforced at home. You can help your child get the most out of his/her learning opportunities as well as continue the learning experience at home by talking with your child about class activities. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions or activities to reinforce what is being stressed in the classroom.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

Registration and Enrollment

Registration is on a first come-first served basis beginning in January of each year for the regular school year. Registration takes place in the following order:

1. Valley Christian School families.
2. Public.

Valley Christian Preschool operates on a non-discriminatory basis, according equal treatment and access to services without regard to race, color, or national origin or ancestry. Each child should be ready for the type of group experience that our preschool has to offer. Under the terms of our license with the Department of Social Services, we are not permitted to change diapers. Children must be fully toilet trained and are not to be sent to school in "pull-ups" or other such diapers. Fully toilet trained means that children should be able to use the bathroom independently. Any child that is not fully toilet trained will be withdrawn from the program. While we take into consideration that young children have accidents, *if toileting difficulties arise and/or persist, parents will be asked to make other arrangements until success in this area is achieved.*

Children with special needs such as emotionally, physically or cognitively challenged will be accepted if it is determined that they will benefit from the program and the staff is able to meet their needs in addition to the needs of the other children.

Parent Orientation

The Director will set aside time at the beginning of the school year for a Parent Orientation evening to discuss the philosophy, curriculum, and policies of Valley Christian Preschool. It is also a time to answer any questions that you may have. There will also be an opportunity that evening to visit your child's classroom and meet his/her teacher

Open Door Policy

It is our desire to be available to parents' questions and concerns. Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time. In fact, we encourage that you visit at least once. When visiting the school for any reason, please check-in at the office prior to entering a classroom.

Hours of Operation and School Closures

Valley Christian Preschool programs are in operation from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday through Friday. Full day enrollment is from 7 A.M. to 6 P.M. Half-day enrollment is from 8:15 A.M. to 11:15 A.M. or 12:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. Junior Kindergarten is from 8:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.

The Schedule- Holiday and Vacation Breaks, School Closures

School vacation, breaks, and observed holidays are similar to those of a traditional academic calendar. Please refer to the school calendar in your enrollment packet for all school closures.

School Hours and Late Arrival and Pick-up

We ask that children arrive at school on time. Because of the nature and design of our programs, we value and reserve these times for the children and their experiences. Late arrival and pick-up makes this extremely difficult to maintain because of the disruption of the continuity and flow for the children in the classroom. It is difficult for children to be the last child to arrive at school and in the same manner it is worrisome for a child to be the last child picked up from school. However, we are aware that there are times that you may be unavoidably detained. Please call and let us know when to expect your child. In preparation for the times when you have an unscheduled late arrival or pick-up, we ask that you drop off and pick up your child in the least disruptive manner possible. Additionally, please help your children be aware that activities may already be occurring as they arrive so that they will be comfortable entering the classroom and/or so that they will not be “upset” that they missed something such as Show and Tell. Continual late arrival or late pick-up may require a review of your child’s enrollment.

Additionally, we are required by the State of California to make a daily observation of each child on arrival at our school for signs of communicable diseases or other evidence of ill health, and this is difficult to do so effectively with late arrivals. If we see signs of illness, you will be asked to take your child home or to pick-up your child from school.

Sign-In/Sign-Out Procedures

For your child’s safety and protection, the following sign-in and sign-out procedures will be followed **without exception:**

The Department of Social Services and Valley Christian Preschool requires a **responsible authorized adult (18 years or older)** to **SIGN** each child in and out of the preschool daily, noting the arrival and departure time of the child. It is each authorized adult’s responsibility to be sure that a teacher acknowledges his/her child’s arrival and departure. Please do not leave children unattended in the classroom or on the playground. Children will be released only to parents or other authorized adults listed on the Identification Emergency Card. All information on the Identification Emergency Card must be kept current. If an adult is unknown to the staff on duty, identification will be requested. Verbal authorizations either over the phone or in person will not be accepted. You may

stop by the front office and make changes to the Identification Emergency card OR leave a signed and dated note with the front office staff authorizing the preschool staff to make the changes. Children will not be released to any adult suspected of intoxication from alcohol or drugs.

The preschool needs copies of any served court orders. We must have a certified court order on file regarding parental custody matters. We cannot refuse a parent pick-up rights unless we have a court order on file about those rights. Please notify us immediately of any changes in custody orders.

Your children are very precious to us. These rules are here to protect them and to ensure their safety.

Vacation, Illness and Absence Procedure

We ask that parents notify their child's teacher or the office when children are absent from school and if at all possible at least one week in advance of planned vacations.

Classroom Placement

We view each child placement very seriously. When deciding in which classroom to place a child, we review numerous criteria and evaluate what is best for individual children and for the group as a whole. Criteria include but are not limited to age of the child, developmental readiness, schedule, gender, and social development. Parent feedback is welcomed and considered but is not necessarily a determining factor. As advocates for children, our main goal is to provide placement that is best for the individual child in the preschool setting. We appreciate your support in making each placement a positive experience at home and at school.

Termination

- Services provided by Valley Christian Preschool do not meet the needs of the child as determined by the parent(s) and/or Director.
- A child having physical, emotional, behavioral or psychological disorders that are beyond the capabilities and/or expertise of the teaching staff as determined by the Director.
- Parent(s) or guardian in disagreement, or non-supportive, of the preschool's philosophy of education, discipline, and/or policies and procedures.
- Family is unable to cooperate with the staff, or for behavior endangering the children, other families, or staff.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Tuition

Tuition is based on a school year amount and is a set fee. Tuition for children starting **after** the first day of school is calculated based on exactly how many days are left in the school year. For yearly tuition calculate the monthly tuition by 10.

Families are offered two options to pay tuition:

1. Full payment due by July 1.

Or

2. 10 monthly payments beginning in July using the FACTS tuition management program. With this option, families can choose to pay beginning on June 20 through March 20 or beginning on July 5 through April 5. The funds will be electronically transferred from your personal bank account. Neither FACTS nor the school will have knowledge or direct access to your bank account. You may also pay your tuition by credit card. Detailed information will be provided with the FACTS tuition management program.

Fees

1. Registration fees are non-refundable.
2. Any fee charged above and beyond your regular tuition payment will require a separate payment made to Valley Christian Preschool and will be billed by Valley Christian Center's Accounting Department. A fee of \$30.00 will be assessed for each returned check as well as for late payments.
3. All desired program changes must be submitted in writing. Program changes will be based on availability and must be approved by the Director and/or Office Manager. A \$20.00 processing fee will be assessed.
4. Late pick-up fees of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed for each minute after the class ending time. The fees will be assessed according to the time on the preschool clock(s).

Credits/Refunds

No credit is given for regularly scheduled school holidays and vacation periods. No tuition credit is given for any of the days a child is absent due to illness or vacation. Registration and tuition fees are non-refundable.

Withdrawal

Completing a Preschool Withdrawal form a minimum of thirty days in advance of the requested last day of attendance implements a withdrawal. The 30-day notice is determined from the day that the form is received by the preschool. Your school account will be charged accordingly for the remaining month's tuition whether your child attends school or not.

Fines

Throughout the year at Valley Christian Preschool, children will be using items that belong to the school and/or the teaching staff. These items include books, toys, and other materials and equipment. If school or teacher-owned materials or equipment are lost or deliberately damaged, you will be asked to either replace that item or your account will be charged a monetary fine representing a fair repair cost or replacement value.

HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

Upon enrollment, state licensing requires the submission of a health form signed by the child's physician. Additional regulations state that the child is to have standard immunizations.

Your child's health is very important to us. A daily health check is given upon each child's arrival. The person bringing the child must wait until his/her teacher or other staff member greets the child before leaving.

If your child becomes ill while at preschool, you will be contacted. A parent or authorized adult is **expected to pick-up the child within 60 minutes of a call from the school**. Sick children will be separated from other children until the parent's arrival. A cot or mat will be provided so that a sick child may rest comfortably until the parent arrives. The sick child will be properly supervised by the administration of Valley Christian Preschool.

We will do our best to keep our school healthy, but we need your help, too!

If your child displays any of the following symptoms, he/she **must** be kept at home:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher.
- Diarrhea – two or more watery stools within the past 24 hours.
- Nasal secretion that is thick, yellow or green, which is an indication of infection. Cloudy or colored nasal secretions may indicate an allergy. Please check with your child's doctor.
- Sore throat with fever or throat spots.
- Cough accompanied by fever, chills, or coughing up of green or yellow mucous.
- Vomiting or nausea.
- Unusual rashes.
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye).
- Child not feeling well, such as lethargic behavior and increased crying.

If your child suffers from allergy symptoms, a physician's confirmation and a list of suspected allergies would be required.

If a child is fussy, cranky, and generally not himself/herself **it is recommended that the child stay home.** Rest during these times may prevent the development of serious illnesses and prevent the spread of potential infection to others. Please notify the office immediately if your child has a communicable disease.

Your child may return to school after illness when:

- Fever has been broken for 24 hours.
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea has subsided for 24 hours.
- Antibiotic has been given over a 24-hour period for any type of strep or bacterial infection.
- Child is feeling well again and normal behavior has returned.

Recovery

When a child is sent home ill with fever, vomiting, or diarrhea, he/she may not attend school the following day. If the physician has prescribed an antibiotic, the child must stay home until he/she has completed the first 24 hours of the antibiotic.

If a child has been absent due to surgery, broken bones or other atypical medical conditions/symptoms, a physician's release may be required.

Medication

We frequently receive requests from parents to administer medication to their child. There are certain requirements mandated by the State of California that must be met before we are permitted to assist you. Valley Christian Preschool shall administer the medication if the following conditions are met:

- Parent or guardian's permission for the school to administer medication. You must read, complete, and sign the medication form AND hand medication to preschool office personnel. Medication forms are available at the preschool office. A **physician's signature** is required for any **prescribed medication.**
- All medication must be in original containers with physician's name, medication name, dosage, time to be given, what the medication is for, and any side effects to watch for.
- Over-the-counter medications must be in original containers as well with the name of the medication clearly visible. The child's name, amount to be given, and when must also be written and signed by the parent.

Under no circumstances will Valley Christian Preschool administer the FIRST dose of medication. NO medication of any kind may be left in a child's backpack or cubby. Please help us keep all of our children safe.

Sunscreen

We will apply sunscreen if we have written permission from you and the sunscreen is labeled with your child's name.

Allergies

When a doctor diagnoses a child as having food, medical or environmental allergies, a statement to that effect must be given to the preschool in writing. All allergies to medications and other substances including insect stings must also be stated on the emergency and medical forms. Information about children with allergies will be posted in all classrooms, in the kitchen, and in the emergency and field trip backpacks located in each classroom.

Accidents and Minor Injuries

Minor bumps and scrapes are an everyday part of your child exploring and learning through experience. Minor injuries sustained at school are reported to parents on an "accident" report. A copy of the report is given to the parent and one copy is retained in the child's file. Parents are called immediately in the event of any serious or questionable injury.

State Mandate on Reporting Child Abuse

All staff of Valley Christian Preschool is required by California State Law to report any sign of or suspicion of child abuse.

California Department of Justice Background Check/Megan's Law

In keeping with the policies and procedures of Valley Christian Schools to protect our students, staff, and families, and to promote a safe school environment, we will utilize publicly available search engines, databases and websites such as the Megan's Law website (convicted sex offenders) and the Department of Justice databases. The names of all parents and legal guardians will be run through a background check prior to the beginning of the school year.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION AND PROCEDURES

All of our teaching staff is certified in infant/child care CPR and first aid. In the case of a minor accident, assessment and treatment of the injury will be given under the supervision of the teacher, Director and/or office staff. You will also be notified. If further treatment is deemed necessary, the parent, guardian, or emergency contact person will be called per the policy of Valley Christian Preschool.

As we all know, we are living in earthquake country. With this in mind, the preschool purchases every year all necessary food, water, and supplies. Your child will be well cared for to the best of our abilities.

Our facility is inspected on a regular basis by the Fire Marshal. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in each classroom as well as other areas of the facility. Our teachers and children will practice fire drills, lock-down drills, and earthquake drills in conjunction with their regular routines.

In the event of an unexpected school closing or delayed opening, early dismissal, or other emergency such as fire we will implement the **ParentBroadcast** school-to-parent notification service. This service allows us to quickly contact all preschool families in a matter of minutes with any urgent school news. A letter detailing this service will be provided to you before the start of the school year.

REDIRECTION AND DISCIPLINE

Redirection and discipline has an important place in an early childhood education program. Parents and teachers need to work together in order to be consistent and effective in training young children to make appropriate choices in a classroom setting. Questions or concerns should be addressed **first** with the appropriate staff member, then if further interaction is needed for resolution, with the staff member and/or Director. We want to be compassionate to our young children and their families knowing that the children bring into the classroom what they are familiar with from home.

We believe our program provides a formula for discipline that is appropriate in shaping and encouraging responsible behavior. We strongly believe in and practice assertive discipline and prevention. Positive reinforcement, praise and modeling are the main methods used to maintain a child's behavior. In cases where a child needs to regain self-control or is in danger of hurting themselves or others, the child may be momentarily separated from the group for a "time out." No child shall be shamed, humiliated or otherwise intimidated as a part of correction. Corporal punishment is not practiced at Valley Christian Preschool. We strive to facilitate conversation and communication among the children even in discipline issues. Our goal is to be proactive in preventing potential problems by redirecting a child or helping children resolve conflicts by using their words to communicate their feelings and thoughts.

It is important to remember that at times mildly aggressive feelings in young children are a normal part of the developmental process of growing. Each teacher has a goal to help the child develop self-control over those feelings while still helping to build positive self-esteem. Most aggressive tendencies at preschool can be controlled by various techniques. Teachers are trained to be alert to potential areas of frustration both in the classroom and outdoors. When possible, teachers intervene before physical disruption takes place.

However, excessive biting, scratching, kicking, and hitting behaviors can jeopardize the safety of other children. If aggressive behavior becomes excessive, the preschool will communicate with parents through verbal conversations or an "incident" report. One copy of the report will be given to

the parent or authorized adult and a copy will be retained in the child's file. We will also implement discussion with parents regarding the inappropriate behavior, redirection that has been effective at home, and agreed-upon procedures for when at school. Continued occurrences may necessitate picking up your child from school immediately following an incident. Also, we may request that the child stay home the following day. If, however, after efforts between home and school are exhausted and the pattern of behavior continues, we will require that you withdraw your child from the preschool.

Discipline is designed to promote self-direction, self-control, understanding of choice and consequences, and respect of others. This is accomplished through consistency and fairness.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Nutrition education is one of the components of our program. We continue to educate children and others in the preparation of well-balanced meals and children are encouraged to try new foods. Although young children usually have food preferences, often a fruit or vegetable in a different form or consistency will be appealing to them. Food is never denied to a child as a form of punishment or redirection. Menus for snack and lunch are posted in advance on the Parent Board.

At preschool, snack and lunch times are pleasant social learning experiences for children. Conversation is encouraged, self-help skills are fostered, and good nutrition habits are promoted.

Snack

A nutritious snack is served to all Valley Christian Preschool children. Children who attend full day programs are provided two snacks on a daily basis, one in the morning and one after rest or naptime in the afternoon. Children who attend half days are provided one snack. Snack is included in your tuition. All children will be served milk unless otherwise arranged by parents and/or if the child has an allergy to milk.

Lunch

Children who attend full day as well as Junior Kindergarten children are offered the opportunity to purchase a hot lunch at an additional cost or to bring a cold lunch from home. Please pack a healthy lunch for your child. A nutritious, well-balanced lunch is very important not only to a child's physical growth but to a child's social adjustment as well. **Please do not pack soda or candy for your child.** Lunches should include vegetables and fruits, breads or bread alternatives such as crackers, and meat or meat alternatives such as cheese along with a beverage of milk, water, or 100% fruit juice.

FIELD TRIP INFORMATION

Field trips enrich the class learning themes. Teachers plan their own field trips. The teachers will give you prior notice regarding a field trip opportunity. If you choose to have your child not participate in a field trip, we ask that you make other arrangements for your child during the time your child's class is on the field trip. The main source of transportation will be from parents of each class. Each driver must be at least 25 years of age and provide a copy of proof of current car insurance. Only parents or guardians are allowed to drive children on our field trips. Children are asked to wear their Valley Christian Preschool T-shirt on all field trips. A T-shirt will be given at no cost to new Valley Christian Preschool students at the beginning of the school year.

If you have more than one child at Valley Christian Preschool in different classes and only one of the classes is going on a field trip, we ask if at all possible that you go with that class and leave the other sibling at school in his/her class. Younger siblings not yet in school may accompany parents on some field trips. Many places have their own rules and requirements for field trip visits and our teaching staff must abide by those rules. Watch the newsletters from your child's teacher for details.

Please note that if a teacher feels a child in her class may need special attention on the field trip, she may ask a parent to accompany their child on the field trip.

Car and Field Trip Safety

All safety precautions are observed on Valley Christian Preschool field trips. Car seats or booster seats must be used according to the Department of California Highway Patrol regulations.

- As of Jan. 1, 2002, **ALL** children must be in a car seat until they are either six years old or 60 pounds.
- All other children and adults must wear seatbelts.
- Children may not ride in the front seat.
- No smoking in cars with children.

STAFF

At Valley Christian Preschool all staff are committed believers who have a strong personal walk with Christ and a sincere love for children.

All staff members meet or exceed the requirements of the State of California for training experience and early childhood education. All staff members have been fingerprinted, and have a Child Abuse Index clearance. Our teaching staff is certified in First Aid/CPR and trained in blood-borne pathogens and universal precautions. Our staff continues to grow professionally by participating in early childhood workshops, seminars, classes, and more.

COMMUNICATION

Parent Information Areas

We will be intentional about communicating with you in our parent information areas...these areas include our Parent Information Board, school and classroom newsletters, classroom bulletin boards, and your child's cubby where we will place information for you regarding events at our school as well as pertinent information related to your child. Please check the **Parent Board** periodically for special school wide events, preschool lunch and snack menus, and other important items. **Please take the time to read everything we give you. In that way you will be informed.**

Ongoing Check-Ins

We value the ongoing communication between parents and teachers. It is beneficial to children for parents to explain to staff about events occurring at home that may influence changes in a child's behavior at school. Please feel free to call the school, stop in the office or ask for time to talk with your child's teacher or the Director. It is our hope that quality care and clear communication with parents will provide children with the best opportunities for success. We will continue to do our very best to make time for all families who wish to speak with us.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Classroom teachers do observations of the children throughout the year. A progress report will be provided to you and will address a variety of aspects of your child's development. Parent Conferences are scheduled once a year. Please check the school calendar for dates. Conferences can, however, be requested anytime by the parent, child's teacher, or Director. It is our desire to keep the lines of communication open at all times, so please feel free to talk with your child's teacher or the Director. Please be mindful that when children are present, the teacher's primary responsibility is for the safety and well being of the children. Please make conversations *brief* or schedule an appointment to talk at a later time.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Classrooms and Field Trips

We welcome parent involvement. Parents are encouraged to participate in the classroom. Each teacher will let you know when the best times are to participate. Parents can participate in their child's school experience in a variety of other ways, too, such as chaperoning preschool field trips, assisting teachers in prep work for activities (cutting out items, filing), special day themed events, and various parent-teacher events such as Teacher Appreciation. All parent volunteers must check in at the office. This allows us to be aware of who is in the preschool at all times.

Family Events

We also plan several family events throughout the school year such as the Ice Cream Social, Christmas program, Harvest Festival, Teddy Bear Story Night, Art Show and Science Fair, Fun Day, Muffins for Moms, and Donuts for Dads. We find these to be special, enjoyable times to spend with your child and other Valley Christian families and we encourage you to take part in them.

Parent Education Programs and Classes

Valley Christian also offers special parent education and interest programs at various times during the school year. As a body with common concerns, you are invited to connect with others and share, learn, and grow together. We will keep you posted throughout the school year as classes become available.

Fundraising

Our fundraising activities have included a cookie dough sale, a walk-a-thon, and/or a Scholastic Book Fair. Information will be provided as to what the fundraiser will be, when it will take place, and what the proceeds will go toward. We strive to limit the number of fundraising activities and participation in any fundraising activity is optional although **greatly** appreciated.

Missions

As a community we are blessed in ways that most of the world will never experience. We believe it is important for children to learn to give as well as receive. During the year Valley Christian sponsors several opportunities to bless others.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Dress- Clothing and Shoes

Please dress your child in comfortable, easily washable play clothing.

Young children can get messy and dirty in the course of activity and active learning. Play is their “work.” **For safety reasons, thongs and other flip-flop or plastic type footwear are not permitted.** We find that well-built, washable tennis shoes allow the greatest freedom of movement and highest degree of safety. If appropriate footwear is not worn, your child will not be able to participate in certain activities on the playground or during perception for safety reasons. Please be certain that all items are clearly labeled with your child’s name. Since we are located up on a hill and the weather can be unpredictable, dressing your child in layers is most helpful. Layers will help keep your child comfortable in any type of weather. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Violent Toys and “Power” Clothing

Toy guns or other warfare objects (i.e. knives, swords, etc.) are not permitted on school grounds. If a child does bring in a questionable item, it will either be sent home upon arrival or be put in the cubby and not shared. Please check with your child’s teacher if you have any questions.

We have discovered that when children wear clothing with pictures representing “super powers” such as Power Rangers, etc. they naturally feel empowered to imitate their favorite characters. This imitation may lead to play that can hurt others. We ask that you keep “power” clothing for home-wear only.

Personal Items, Toys and Show and Tell

While we realize that all children have special treasures such as stuffed toys, recent gifts, etc., we encourage these to be left at home except on Show & Tell Days. Each class has a scheduled time and/or theme for sharing set by your child’s teacher. Your child’s teacher will notify you in advance of share days. Remember to take your child’s share day treasures home at the end of the day. We cannot assume responsibility for items left at the school. **Please do not permit your child to bring any fragile items or items which have small pieces that can become detached and thus be a hazard to our younger children.**

For children enrolled in our full day programs a short rest period on cozy mats is scheduled in the afternoon after lunch and play. Some children like to bring a “cuddly” toy from home as a familiar object to use during this time of rest. These objects take on a very real and emotional importance to children and our staff is sensitive to this need. If you wish to bring a small stuffed toy for your child, please mark it with your child’s name and place it in his/her nap sack along with the bedding.

Photographs and Publicity

Photographs are taken of the children for use in the classrooms and documentation purposes only, i.e. portfolios. We do ask for parental consent in writing prior to the use of photographs for publicity purposes.

Parking

For the safety of your children and others, adhering to the parking lot and traffic regulations on our premises and exhibiting caution while driving in the parking lot is necessary.

No Cell Phone Zone

Valley Christian Preschool is a “no cell phone zone.” As a courtesy to the staff, other preschool families, and for the safety of the children, we request that you refrain from using your cell phone while in the preschool.

Inspections and Consultants

Valley Christian Preschool is licensed by the California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, No. 010205821. The State of California Department of Social Services has the right to visit Valley Christian Preschool and perform inspections of the classrooms and programs, including interviewing of students and staff, as well as to examine all childcare and facility records without prior consent.

There are also times during the school year that in addition to the California Department of Social Services, early childhood consultants or specialists outside of Valley Christian will observe our classrooms, teachers, children, or our environment.

Access to Information in Child's File

It is the policy and practice of Valley Christian Preschool that only the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) whose signature(s) is on the child's Admission Application may view the contents of said child's file. The term "file" is used to refer to the information inspected by the State of California Community Care Licensing that contains all enrollment paperwork and required forms including medical and contact information. Copies of custody agreements or court orders are also kept in this file. Absent any restraints placed on parental rights subsequent to enrollment application, parent/guardian signers on the Registration and Admission Application will be permitted to view child's information as defined above.

Class Celebrations and Birthdays

Many classes hold special theme or holiday celebrations such as Thankful Feasts, birthday parties for Jesus, Easter celebrations, Chinese New Year or Mexican fiestas. It is the policy of Valley Christian Schools that Halloween shall **not** be observed in any of the schools, nor shall any of the customs, symbols, or activities associated with Halloween be encouraged or permitted. Such customs include, but are not limited to, the wearing of costumes and/or display or promotion of items associated with Halloween.

Each class may observe or celebrate birthdays differently. Your child's teacher will share with you how your child's class will celebrate birthdays. Parents may send a special treat for the class to share on their child's birthday. Some ideas would be muffins, frozen yogurt, fruit salad, or mini cupcakes.

Invitations

In consideration of the feelings of our young students, **please do not send birthday or other invitations to school unless every classmate is invited.** Due to space limitations, etc. we know that it may not be feasible to invite all of your child's classmates. In that case, we ask that invitations be mailed to the home. Your sensitivity in this matter will help us avoid hurt feelings.

Graduation

We will not formally acknowledge or "graduate" children that are completing a class or moving to another school. In the eyes of a young child **all** children are growing and transitioning. It is our desire to recognize the accomplishments and celebrate the growth and development of all children at our school; therefore, each of our classes will have a "Recognition and Awards" celebration of all children at the end of the school year. Parents, family, and friends are encouraged to attend the celebration.

Book Club

We strongly believe in the importance of reading and urge parents to read to their young children regularly. Offering books through Scholastic is one way to provide literature for children at a reasonable cost. However, we do not endorse every item offered through Scholastic. We urge you to carefully screen all book orders before making selections. Your child's teacher will provide you with monthly book order forms.

Special Events Plan

Daytime Events - Due to space limitations and the increased supervision that is required when **all** children enrolled in preschool are present, all special daytime events held during regular school hours will be guided by the following plan. During daytime special events, the children who are regularly scheduled to attend preschool on those particular days may attend during their normal schedule. Children who are not scheduled to attend on those days may attend with a parent or guardian during the times designated or "advertised" in our monthly school newsletter. We will do our best to rotate special events, alternating different days of the week as much as possible.

Separation and Adjustment Period

Starting school for the first time can cause anxiety in some children and parents, too. We recommend that you visit our school before the first day of preschool with your child, allowing him/her to meet the teacher and see the environment. Time will be made available in August for "Meet Your Teacher Day." Please check the preschool calendar for dates. For those children entering our school mid-year, we suggest you visit the school with your child before leaving him/her for the day. We will make every effort to work with you to make this adjustment period a positive experience. We recommend that you give your child at least one month to adjust to the preschool experience. Please do your best to keep goodbyes cheerful, positive and reassuring at drop off. Maintain your positive attitude even through the tears. If you believe in us your child will, too. Please, please no sneaking out of the classroom!

Inclement or Excessively Hot Weather

On days of inclement or excessively cold or hot weather, children's activities will be kept inside the classrooms as appropriate. Special activities will keep children involved and comfortable. The preschool building has both heating and air conditioning for your child's comfort.

Rest Period

Children who participate in our full day programs are required to have a rest period available to them each day. A mat is furnished for each child in our full day program for a daily nap or rest period. **ALL FULL DAY** and **JUNIOR K** students must bring a **crib sheet** and a **small blanket**. All full day students must purchase a "nap" sack from the preschool office before the beginning of the school year. **ALL** nap items **must** fit in the nap sack. Please **LABEL** all

items. Bedding will be left here all week and you are to take it home on Fridays for cleaning and return it on Mondays.

Art Show and Science Fair Open House

Our Art Show and Science Fair is held in the spring. Parents, family, and friends are invited to visit the preschool and enjoy the artwork and science projects by the children on display.

School Pictures

We hire a professional photographer to take individual and class pictures in the fall. Purchase of these pictures is entirely optional.

Evaluation

We welcome parent suggestions and comments. Annually, parents will have the opportunity to evaluate our program.

FAMILY VALUES STATEMENT

Valley Christian Preschool is a ministry of Valley Christian Center and exists to demonstrate God's love for children and parents of this community. We are a Christian preschool and because we believe in the truth and relevance of the Bible we honor the parenting roles and child development principles taught in Scripture. *"So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them."* Genesis 1:27 We believe that the family as God intended is, whenever possible, a partnership between a husband and a wife who share responsibility and submit to one another out of love and respect for each other and respect for God. The parents in turn, out of that same kind of love and respect, honor their children as created in the image of God. *"And further, you will submit to one another out of reverence for Christ... Don't make your children angry by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction approved by the Lord."* Ephesians 5:21, 6:4

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Occasionally during the course of the year, questions or concerns about activities, curriculum, classroom procedures, or other incidents may occur. Differences and disagreements are a part of life, and Valley Christian Preschool recognizes the need for healthy communication and a way to handle grievances based on Jesus' model in Matthew 18.

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or tax collector. I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

If you have a concern, first and foremost pray about it. Ask God to help you express your concerns in such a way that it will result in the betterment of our school. Concerns or complaints should be expressed first to the individual in question. Please set up an appointment to talk with the individual privately. **Please express your concerns only to the person(s) who should hear it. Unneeded worry, harm and hard feelings results when problems and dissatisfaction are expressed to persons other than those directly involved with the problem or situation.** If the situation cannot be worked out, the parents should meet with the teacher and/or the preschool director to seek resolution with a spirit of reconciliation. The Director will notify her immediate supervisor and/or the School Board, who calls on all parties as deemed necessary, all in the spirit of reconciliation. Our goal is to promote opportunities for mutual esteem, trust, and most of all unity.

PARENTS' PLEDGE

Valley Christian Preschool is committed to providing a loving learning environment for your child that is free from any form of harassment or intimidation. In an effort to protect your child and ensure their development in a positive way, we ask you as parents make the following pledge. This pledge is a reminder of the appropriate channels and ways to communicate with children, staff and other parents as in accordance with Valley Christian's biblical beliefs and grievance policy.

- We will strive to support the school in the way we communicate with our children, the staff of the school, and other parents. We will not be discourteous to, threaten or use inappropriate language or actions towards any child, teacher, administrator, parents, guardians or any person acting on behalf of the school.
- We will not approach any children other than our own to obtain confirmation, clarification or "their view" on school related issues, disputes or disagreements between children at school. Such matters or concerns must be brought to the attention of an appropriate staff member.
- We will take any questions or suggestions to the teacher, Director, or other staff members directly.
- We will in our communication and conduct at school and with children of the school act with the "Law of Love" James 2.8. *"Love your neighbor as yourself."*

CLASS PLEDGES

American Flag

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Christian Flag

I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag and to the Savior for whose kingdom it stands; one Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again, with life and liberty for all who believe.

Bible

I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path and I will hide its words in my heart that I may not sin against God.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PRESCHOOLER

Block Area: When I play with blocks I learn concepts of shape, size, length, and location as well as reading and math skills. I also learn to use my imagination and cooperate with others.

Dramatic Play: In the dramatic play area I learn to improvise and use things in a symbolic way to represent something else. This is abstract thinking. I also am able to try on different big people roles and to solve social problems through negotiation with friends.

Circle Time: In circle time I learn to listen, sit still and play with and understand language. I learn to listen to others.

Story Time: At story time I learn that letters on a page represent words and to interpret a picture to represent words and ideas. I learn to follow the development of thoughts and ideas in the plot of a story. These are all pre-reading skills.

Sensory Activity: During sensory activities I learn to use new vocabulary while exploring concepts of texture, color, weight, and size. I observe differences and similarities. These are math and science skills.

Science: During science I use my fine motor skills and tactile senses. I learn about real-life situations and experiences, cause and effect, questioning and logic.

Coloring/Writing: During coloring and writing I learn to hold a crayon and a pencil. I learn to control the pressure when using writing tools. I learn to express myself through pictures and words.

Outside Play: When I am outside I use my energy in a constructive way. I am able to show my physical strength, coordination, and balance. I use my imagination and learn to cooperate with others when involved in group play.

Arts and Crafts: I am able to use my imagination, creativity, and express my feelings. I learn about space, size, and concepts of symmetry, balance, and design. These are math and reading skills.

Snack and Lunch Time: At snack time I practice using my manners. I visit with my friends and teachers as we eat snack and when we are done I throw away my trash. I am learning to be independent and social skills, too.

Clean-up Time: At clean-up time I learn to cooperate and work with my classmates to put toys back where they belong. When putting the toys away, I learn to categorize.