



“Children are a Heritage from the Lord” Psalm 127:3

FAMILY HANDBOOK

2016 - 2017

Vine Preschool

2501 Gallows Road
Dunn Loring, VA 22027

703.953.4599/preschool@thevineva.org

www.vinepreschool.org

Vine Preschool is an Outreach Ministry of Vine Church

Dear Preschool Families,

Welcome to Vine Preschool, a vital ministry of Vine Church. Our program exists for you and your child. Through our curriculum and staff, we strive to provide the loving care and guidance that your child needs as he or she grows and develops. We know that you have many choices about how and where to educate your preschooler. We consider it a tremendous privilege to have your child enrolled as a student.

Families, especially parents, play a vital role in our ministry to your child. This handbook is designed to help you understand our program, its mission, and the guidelines under which we operate. You are always welcome to visit, ask questions, and make suggestions. Strong partnerships between families and our staff will contribute to a successful experience for your child. Our church values children and believes in families. We sponsor this weekday early education program as a ministry of the church to provide a learning environment that will help preschoolers grow as Jesus grew. The New Testament reminds us, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52)

Once again, welcome! The Vine Preschool is a great place to grow!

Blessings,

Vine Preschool Staff

Table of Contents

Philosophy of the Program 4

Standards for Licensure 4

Licensing Requirements & Information..... 5

The Preschool Program 6

 Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)..... 6

 What Do I Learn When I Play? 6

 Enrichment 7

 Sample Daily Schedules..... 8

Policies: the ABC’s of the Vine Preschool 9

Parent Agreement.....14

Philosophy of the Program

A child develops intellectually, physically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally. We are committed to providing biblically based, developmentally age-appropriate experiences to allow each child to progress in these areas at his or her own level of ability while enjoying feelings of success. This is primarily done through: 1) providing time for independent exploration and play 2) hands-on activities in a variety of learning centers, 3) enrichment curriculum, 4) monthly chapel, and 5) positive Christian role modeling by the staff.

We recognize that each child has unique talents, learning styles and personalities that have been nurtured in their home environments. Our hope is that The Vine Preschool is the next best place to a child's home. Our purpose in partnering with families is to extend a child's learning by giving them a wide variety of opportunities each day, providing time for learning through activities planned by the teaching staff and balanced with time for learning through independent exploration and play. Our goal at The Vine Preschool is to provide a structured, nurturing and fun learning environment for young children.

The Vine Preschool is an integral part of the ministry of The Vine Church and as such it provides a wholesome learning atmosphere for every child in its care within a Christian community. The school warmly welcomes students of any race, color, creed, national and ethnic origin to participate in all the rights, privileges, programs and activities available to children in the school.

Standards for Licensure

The Vine Preschool operates under the standards of The Commonwealth of Virginia, which assumes that child day programs take responsibility for the supervision, protection, safety and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour period. Title 63.1 of the Code of Virginia gives the Department of Social Services the authority to license these programs.

The Code of Virginia, Section 63.2-1716, allows child day centers operated by religious institutions the opportunity to file for an exemption from licensure by meeting documentation and other requirements specified within the religious exemption law.

Criminal record checks and specific qualifications for staff and most volunteers working directly with children are also required. Furthermore, these standards require that The Vine Preschool meet Fairfax County fire, health, and building codes as well.

Compliance with standards is verified through annual announced visits as well as periodic unannounced visits to the program by licensing staff within the Department of Social Services. For additional information about religiously exempt child day centers or licensing of child day centers, please contact the Fairfax Area Licensing Office, (703) 934-1505, or go to the website for the Virginia Department of Social Services.

Licensing Requirements & Information

The Vine Preschool is required to provide the following information in our parent handbook. The following statements are in accordance with Virginia State Law:

1. **Qualifications of Personnel:** Each Vine Preschool staff member meets or exceeds the qualifications and standards of the Virginia Department of Social Services Licensing Division and the Vine Preschool's Personnel Policies. These standards may be viewed online at the department's website, www.dss.virginia.gov. These standards include academic training or experience in childhood education, a background that encourages planned and spontaneous opportunities to share Bible stories, as well as prayers and songs to nurture the development of faith; and a loving and positive attitude toward children. Copies of Lead Teacher and Assistant Teacher job descriptions are available in the preschool office.
2. **Description of Facilities:** The Vine Preschool primarily uses the educational wing of The Vine Church, which includes three classrooms and the teacher's lounge; it also uses the worship center/multipurpose room, kitchen, outdoor chapel, children's garden, and fenced-in playground. The size of the building is 8,342 square feet. The preschool has access to all other church facilities as needed.
3. **Enrollment Capacity:** The Fairfax County Board of Zoning allows our program a maximum of 60 children daily at any one time. The student to teacher ratio complies with state licensing standards.
4. **Food Service:** The Vine Preschool intends to provide limited food service, consisting of mid-morning snacks.
5. **Health Requirements for Staff:** The Vine Preschool staff is annually certified by a practicing physician to be free from any disability preventing safe care of children, and a negative TB test result every 2 years. The Vine Preschool requires First Aid and CPR certification for all teachers and administrative staff. Documentation is on file in the Program Director's office.
6. **Public Liability Insurance:** The Vine Preschool is covered by public liability insurance, which provides coverage in the event that someone brings suit for personal or bodily harm suffered during the operation of the preschool as a result of negligence.
7. **Organizational Structure:** Any parent has the right to contact persons on the organizational structure listed below:
 - Teachers/Assistants
 - Director of School
 - School Board
 - Pastor

The Preschool Program

We believe that play is an effective method of learning. Play is a child's way of exploring, experimenting and learning cooperative behavior. The teachers and assistants use play situations to provide beginnings in language and early literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, physical development, personal and social development, music and creative arts.

Additionally, The Vine Preschool curriculum includes, but is not limited to, directed activities, outdoor physical development, thematic activities, instructional materials, special guests, and outings. The curriculum is thoughtfully planned, comprehensive, cohesive, and integrated across the domains of learning and development.

Day-to-day, children will discover that the curriculum is predictable yet flexible and responsive to their individual needs and interests. Character building stories around the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22 – 23), music, prayer, and bible stories are also woven into our curriculum. Over the course of the year, children are able to learn that God loves us, the Bible is God's Word and prayer is our time to talk with God.

Development of the whole child is a team effort, with instruction and experience in the classroom being supported and reinforced at home. Parents and families can help children get the most out of classroom learning opportunities by continuing the learning experience at home. Teachers will provide "talking points" and suggested "extension" activities to reinforce what is being taught in the classroom.

Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP)

The Vine Preschool embraces Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP). Different levels of activity, development and learning styles are expected, accepted and used to design appropriate activities for each class. In all activities we strive to build each child's self-concept in a loving, secure and accepting environment. With a balance of appropriate free choice and planned activities, children are offered the opportunity to learn through their play.

What Do I Learn When I Play?

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.

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 a thoughts and ideas in the plot of the story. These are all pre-reading skills that pave the way to literacy.

Sensory Activities: 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.

Nature / Science: During our “nurture through nature” science curriculum, 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 Center: 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.

Art: 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 reading and math skills.

Circle Time / Morning Meeting: In circle time I learn to listen, sit still and pay with and understand language. In morning meeting, I learn to listen to others and help build a loving community of engaged learners.

Snack 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 and learn to recycle. I am learning to be independent and sometimes through snack I even learn about other cultures.

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.

Enrichment

Music & Movement: Music is a natural and important part of a young child’s growth and development. During weekly group music and movement classes, our music enrichment specialist exposes each child to a rich music program of singing, rhythm, movement, dance and creative dramatics.

Chapel: All children attend a monthly chapel service in the Children’s Worship Center. One of the pastors on staff leads the 15-20 minute chapel service. Teachers attend with the children and parents are welcome.

Nurture through Nature: The Nurture through Nature enrichment program uses a simple vegetable garden to teach children about environmental stewardship, science, and making healthy choices. The garden is also a vehicle for teaching children about sustainable practices, worms and biology, composting, water usage, weather, and wildlife.

Sample Daily Schedules

2 ½-Year-Old Program

9:00 – 9:30	Welcome, Arrival and Circle time
9:30 – 10:00	Music & Movement Enrichment
10:00 – 10:30	Outdoor Play
10:30 – 10:50	Wash Hands, Blessing, & Snack
10:50 – 11:50	Learning Centers and Craft Time
11:50 – 12:00	Closing songs & story

3-Year-Old Program

9:00 – 9:30	Arrival, Welcome, and Circle time
9:30 – 10:00	Music & Movement Enrichment
10:00 – 11:00	Learning Centers
11:00 – 11:20	Wash Hands, Blessing, & Snack
11:20 – 11:40	Craft and Activity
11:40 - 11:50	Wash Hands
11:50 - 12:00	Closing songs & story

4-Year-Old Program

9:00 – 9:30	Arrival, Welcome, and Learning Centers
9:30 – 9:50	Circle time
9:50 – 10:00	Bathroom and Hand Washing
10:00 – 10:30	Music & Movement Enrichment
10:30 – 10:50	Wash Hands, Blessing, & Snack
10:50 – 11:20	Outdoor Play
11:20 – 11:30	Bathroom and Hand Washing
11:30 – 12:00	Story, Poem, Closing Circle, Song

A Daily Class Schedule will be posted outside the classroom.

Policies: the ABC's of the Vine Preschool

Absences – Please notify the school office at 703-953-4599, if your child will be absent or late for the school day.

Accidents – Every precaution for safety is taken; however, if a serious accident occurs, parents are notified immediately. Please make sure all telephone numbers are kept current.

Incident/Accident forms are completed by the classroom or witnessing teacher and signed by the director. The incident/accident forms are kept in an incident/accident form file to aid in completing an end of the year report regarding the number and nature of incidents/accidents. It is our hope to always be working towards minimizing the occurrence of incidents and accidents from year to year the program is operating. The incident / accident forms do not go into a child's personal preschool file.

Age of Child – The Vine Preschool enrolls children ages 2 ½ to 5 years old. Children must meet the appropriate age requirements as of September 30 for 3 and 4 year old classes, or must be 30 months old to begin school.

Allergy Information – The Vine Preschool is committed to providing the safest possible environment for all students. Depending on the severity of a child's food allergy, parents may be asked to provide their own snacks. Please see the "snack" section for more information.

Arrival and Departure – Parents, or caregivers, **must** escort children to their classrooms. Children may not be dropped off to enter alone. The main entrance for the preschool will be locked until 8:55 am each morning. After children arrive, the door will be relocked at 9:10AM. Children may only be picked up at the entrance to their classrooms or the playground. For safety reasons, please do not allow any child to run freely throughout the building or without supervision on the church grounds. Prompt pickup, beginning at 12:00 noon, is a must and fees will be assessed for late pick up after 12:10 pm beginning with a \$5 fee and an additional \$1 for each extra minute that the parent is late.

Authorized Pick Up – Your child will only be released to persons listed on the "Authorized to Pick Up" form in your child's enrollment packet. Please inform all persons authorized to pick up your child that if the 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 preschool office and make changes to the Authorized Pick Up form OR leave a signed and dated note with the front office staff authorizing the preschool staff to make the changes.

Birthday Celebrations – Birthdays are special days in your child's life. And as such, parents are welcome to share their child's birthday with the other children in the class. If you prefer to celebrate this day by donating a book, cd, or other toy, please contact the teacher or director for a wish list. If you plan to bring in a special snack, please notify and coordinate with the teacher in advance. Your teacher will be able to make you aware of any special dietary restrictions in your classroom. 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 emailed or mailed to the home. Your sensitivity in this matter will help us avoid hurt feelings. We also ask that you do not send in gift or treat bags to be sent home with the other children.

Child Abuse – If the staff of The Vine Preschool becomes aware of any indication of child abuse or neglect, we are required by law to contact Child Protective Services.

Clothing –Washable play clothes are recommended for weekday activities. A complete change of clothes (including socks, underpants, shorts or pants, and shirt) will be in the child's bag each class session. Rubber-soled, **closed toe shoes are required for school**. To aid in the development of self-help skills, it is important that your child **wear clothing that is easily managed by the child at bathroom time, e.g. elastic waist vs. belts or overalls**. Please label all extra clothing with your child's first and last name.

Communicable Diseases – Please notify the preschool office within 24 hours, or the next business day, if your child or any member of the immediate household is diagnosed with, or develops a reportable communicable disease – such as, but not limited to, chicken pox, measles, Fifth disease, Hepatitis A, impetigo, meningitis, head lice, pinworms, hand/foot/mouth disease. In the event of a life-threatening disease please notify the Program Director immediately. In the event of exposure to a contagious disease within the group, you will be given written notice.

Communication – Teachers will provide electronic weekly communication along with verbal communication during drop off and pick up times. The Director may be reached by leaving a message on the preschool phone or by email.

Diapering Policy – Disposable diapers and wipes are provided by parents, if used, for the two day 2 ½ year old class. If diapers are not supplied and the child's diaper is soiled, the parent will be called to bring supplies and change the child. Diaper changing will be performed, as needed, only in the 2 ½-year-old classes when a child's diaper is wet or soiled on a diaper changing table. The staff person will wear single-use gloves when a diaper is changed. Soiled diapers shall be disposed of in a leak-proof plastic lined storage system that is not hand operated. After changing gloves, the staff member will use a disinfectant solution to wash their hands and clean the entire diaper changing area.

Children need to be toilet trained for the three and four-year-old classes. Parents of a child who is not toilet trained or regresses during the school year will be consulted to explore the possibility of delaying enrollment.

Emergencies –The program exercises reasonable care and judgment in all matters related to safety. In all emergencies the program has permission to take such reasonable measures as are, in the judgment of the teacher or director, necessary for the welfare and safety of the child until a parent can be reached. Parents are required to update emergency contact numbers when changes occur.

Field Trips – Field trips provide valuable learning experiences and are an important part of Vine Preschool. A minimum of one away field trip will be taken by the 3 & 4 year olds classes. Parents are needed to accomplish this as both chaperones and drivers. Notification will be made early to provide adequate time for parents to be available to accompany the children on field trips. Additional in house field trips will be made available throughout the school year.

Hand Washing – Children and staff will wash their hands with soap and water before the start of the school day, when handling any food, after toileting and at any other times deemed necessary during the school day. Staff and children over the age of 3 may use hand sanitizer throughout the day in addition to hand washing.

Head Room Parent - Each class shall have a designated head room parent. This parent will be the coordinator for all of the class activities that involve volunteers (class parties, etc.). It is up to each teacher to designate the head room parent and pass on the duties that are expected for the parent in that position.

Health and Safety – The Commonwealth of Virginia requires a current completed Virginia health form, signed by a physician on file in our office.

Children who have a contagious illness or exhibit signs of illness may not attend. If a child becomes ill during the day, he/she will be isolated from the group and families will be called to pick their child up immediately. Please keep your child home if he/she shows any of the following symptoms:

- A fever of 100 (orally) or higher, or a fever of 100 (orally) or higher during the previous 24-hour period. (Do not give your child fever reducing medication and send them to school.)
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the previous 12 hours
- Heavy nasal discharge
- A constant cough or upset stomach, or is fussy, cranky and/or generally not him/herself
- Symptoms of a possible communicable disease
- Symptoms of conjunctivitis (“pink eye”)
- Less than 24 hours since beginning antibiotics
- Too ill to play outside

Please note: the Program Director will be the final authority in determining the daily health and fitness of a child.

If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact persons listed on the Authorization for Emergency Treatment Form will be called to take the sick child home.

Inclement Weather

School Closing- If Fairfax County Public Schools are closed, Vine Preschool is closed.

Two hour delayed opening - Classes will begin two hours late (11 AM) and end one hour (1PM) after regular dismissal time. Lunch Bunch will be from 1PM-2:30PM.

Early Closing - If Fairfax County Public School announces an early closing, then there will be no Lunch Bunch.

Late Arrivals/Early Pickups – If a late arrival is necessary, please enter through the Preschool Office entrance. Students must be brought to the classroom by their parent or caregiver. Parents must ensure a classroom teacher is aware of their child's arrival. If parents need to pick up children early, please notify their teacher during drop off, or call the office.

Lunch Bunch – This is a for-fee optional after school program provided for children attending school on Monday, Wednesday, and Fridays. 2 ½ year old Tuesday and Thursday attendees are not eligible. Children bring their lunch from home and enjoy eating with the other classmates and have the opportunity for extended play time. Lunch Bunch operates from Noon-2:30PM at a cost of \$15 per session with a minimum of a one month signup. A total of 14 children are accepted on a first come-first serve basis. Contact the director to sign up.

Medication – Generally no medications will be given to a child by any staff member. A parent may sign a form indicating that topical sunscreen, diaper ointment, and/or insect repellent may be administered. If elected to agree, the parent will need to supply these items and notify the teacher when they should be administered. A detailed log will be kept in the director's office regarding any application of these approved items. Please contact the director if your child has an inhaler or EPI pen so that the appropriate paperwork can be completed.

Outdoor Play – The children at the Vine Preschool go outside every day for at least 15 minutes, weather permitting. Dress your child appropriately including coat, hat, and gloves to enjoy God's beautiful world.

Parking Lot Etiquette – For the safety of all children, please exhibit caution while driving in the parking lot – this includes refraining from the use of any cellular phones or devices. Adhere to all parking lot and traffic regulations.

Progress Reports & Conferences – Written developmental progress reports are provided twice each year – once in the fall and then again in the spring. Teachers are available to discuss parents' concerns anytime there is a need.

Records – Attendance, health, and identification records are kept for each child. All information and forms are required in writing prior to enrollment.

School Pictures – We hire a professional photographer to take individual pictures in the fall. Purchase of these pictures is entirely optional. A class picture is provided to all students as part of the supply fee.

Show and Tell – “Show and Tell” is designed to foster language development, promote positive self-esteem, and develop confidence. This is an opportunity for children to learn good listening, as well as speaking skills. “Presenters” practice expressive language, while “listeners” practice self-discipline and self-control as they learn to focus, ask questions, or make comments.

“Show and Tell” days are determined by each classroom team. We do our best to protect these items. If something has special value, please do not send it to school. Children are encouraged to bring books, nature objects, and pets (with teacher’s prior approval). Unacceptable items include toy weapons or other items that encourage or promote violence.

Snack Time – Snack times are designed to be a pleasant social learning experience for children where conversation is encouraged, self-help skills are fostered, and good nutrition habits are promoted. The school provides water and healthy snacks on a daily basis, and occasionally juice. Snacks may include but are not limited to: cereal, fresh fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, multi-grain crackers, pretzels, bagels, pudding, muffins, applesauce, graham crackers, etc. All peanut and tree nuts products are NOT ALLOWED at the preschool due to severe allergies.

Student Conduct – The social and emotional development of each child is very important to us. Children are encouraged to become increasingly autonomous, to feel secure in their relationships with adults, to begin to resolve conflicts, to cope with fears and anxieties constructively, and to not be easily discouraged. Teachers are trained to guide children in seeking alternatives and solutions to conflict, and to offer different points of view. If any behavior creates an unsafe situation, or is harmful in word or deed, it will be addressed.

Behaviors involving harm toward other children are not tolerated. Teachers attempt to correct behavior through redirection. If harmful behaviors persist, parents / guardians are called to take children home. If these behaviors continue, the Vine Preschool may withdraw a student from the program for the welfare of others.

Withdrawal of a Child – 30-days written notice is required for withdrawal and is to be submitted to the Vine Preschool office.

Parent Agreement

I, _____, whose child _____

Is enrolled in the 2016-2017 school year of the Vine Preschool, have received a copy of the Family Handbook. I have read and understood the policies and guidelines as described in the Handbook, and I agree to abide by them.

Signature of Parent / Guardian

Date