

**St. Matthew Child Care
Ministry**

Handbook and Policies

2018– 2019

COME GROW WITH US

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838-1995

Programs

St. Matthew Child Care Ministry operates from August through May and follows the MSD of Mt. Vernon school calendar. The CCM is closed when the MSD is closed; however, the daycare is open on staff development days. The CCM is open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Class time begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m. Daycare is provided from 2:30-5:30 p.m. St. Matthew Child Care Ministry offers classes five days a week. You may sign-up for 2 days, 3 days, or 5 days of care. Your child must be 3 years old and potty-trained in order to attend. Tuition is due each week regardless of illness.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Policies

Your children may be dropped-off at the Child Care Ministry beginning at 7:00 a.m. and must be picked-up by 5:30 p.m. A late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged to your weekly tuition if your child has not been picked-up by 5:30 p.m. Your child must be brought-in and picked-up by an adult 18 years of age or older. If you are running late, you must call the CCM at 838-1995 by 8:30 a.m. to order your child's lunch. St. Matthew School does not accept lunch orders after 8:30 a.m. Only individuals listed as **acceptable** to pick-up your child on the original registration forms are allowed to pick-up your child and they will be required to show us a photo ID. **During the first two weeks of school, as the staff becomes familiar with you, we ask that you have your ID ready for us to see.** Any changes that you may need to make must be in writing from the custodial parent or legal guardian. **We are never allowed to accept changes over the telephone.** If someone is not allowed to pick-up your child, you must show us a legal court document stating so.

Tuition

We require that you select a 2 day, 3 day, or 5 day care option for your child. You will be responsible for paying the full amount of tuition for your child even if your child was absent or unable to attend class each day. Full tuition is not charged for the week during Thanksgiving vacation, Christmas vacation, and Spring Break. The preferred method of payment is by check or money order. Cash is not available for making change. Checks and money orders should be made payable to St. Matthew Child Care. Tuition may be paid weekly or monthly. If you choose to pay weekly, tuition is due each Monday of the week of care. You will be charged a \$5.00 late fee each day past Friday that tuition is not paid. If you wish to pay monthly, tuition is due on the first day of the month. Again, you will be charged a \$5.00 late fee each day past Friday that tuition is late. If you fail to pay tuition for two weeks or more, your child will be dismissed from the program. Please place your tuition payment in an envelope with your

child's name on the outside. Envelopes are available next to the tuition basket. Statements showing payments received, late fees, and money owed will be available each Friday upon request.

Tuition Payments are as follows:

Two Day Program: \$60.00 per week.
 Three Day Program: \$90.00 per week.
 Five Day Program: \$150.00 per week.

Termination Policy

St. Matthew Child Care Ministry has the right to dismiss a child from the center if necessary. The CCM leaves this decision to the discretion of the Director.

Reasons for dismissal include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Failure to pay tuition**
- **Lack of updated physical or shot records and any other paper work that is required in child's folder**
- **Not following Child Care Ministry policies**
- **Causing harm to other children or staff members**
- **Using bad language**
- **Numerous dress code violations**
- **Parents acting in a non-Christian manner or threatening a staff member or other child**

Withdrawals

It is the parents' responsibility to submit a written notice two weeks prior to their child's withdrawal from the Child Care Ministry. If no advance written notification is received, parents are held responsible for their child's contracted tuition fee for the two weeks.

Non-Discrimination Policy

St. Matthew does not discriminate on the basis of national origin, race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, or disability.

Illness

If your child becomes ill or is injured, you will be contacted to pick him/her up. If you cannot be reached, we will contact the individuals listed on your child's enrollment form as emergency contacts. If your child is running a temperature of 100 degrees or more, he/she is not allowed in the building. Your child must be fever-free and vomit-free for 24 hours before he/she is allowed to return to the CCM. Children are not allowed to return to the CCM with any type of rash until

they have a written note from a doctor stating that it is not contagious. If a child is diagnosed with a contagious illness by his/her physician, the other families will be notified of the symptoms, treatment, etc. Health department guidelines will be followed for illnesses and exclusions. Guidelines are posted at the Child Care Ministry.

Attendance Policy

We strongly encourage you to have your children at the center by 8:00 a.m. so that they do not miss valuable instruction time and learning activities. If your child is out of school for more than five consecutive days, he/she must return with a doctor's statement, unless you have notified the CCM office at least one week in advance of a family vacation. Please understand that this prevents illnesses from being spread and ensures the center that your child has received medical attention for his/her illness.

Required Documents

As a registered child care ministry, we are required to have the following documents on file for every child in our care before his/her first day in the building. These documents must be dropped-off at the CCM office at least two days prior to your child's first day of care for review and approval.

- Yearly physical
- Current immunization records
- All enrollment forms completed and signed

We also require that you attend an orientation prior to your child attending the program. We offer this during the summer. If you are enrolling after the summer, you are required to arrange a time to meet with the Director before your child begins his/her first day.

Discipline Policy

Constructive discipline guidelines will be followed at all times by all staff members, parents, and volunteers. Discipline will be constructive in nature and reflect the views of the Catholic Church. Corporal punishment is never permitted. Hitting, spanking, pinching, shaking, or any other measure of physical discomfort is never permitted when correcting a child. Instead, the child will be removed from the situation, and a teacher will talk with him/her one-on-one. The staff member and child will discuss ways the situation should have been handled. Time-out will only be used to give the child time to calm down and regain control. Food, toileting needs, or rest time shall never be used as a form of punishment. Children shall not be punished for toileting accidents. If a child becomes harmful to staff members or other children, or if a child cannot be reasoned with, he/she will be removed from the room. If this behavior continues, the parents will be

notified to come pick him/her up. A child will only be restrained if it is necessary to ensure the safety of the other children or themselves. All incidences will be documented and recorded in the child's file. After three incidences, a conference will be held with the parents and Director. Every means shall be exhausted before dismissing the child from the program. However, physical harm to a staff member or another child may be cause for immediate dismissal from the Child Care Ministry. If a child bites another child or staff member on three occurrences they will be dismissed from the CCM. Individual rooms/teachers may incorporate their own discipline cycle to be used for smaller infractions of the rules. A child who damages or destroys property will be expected to replace the item. No personal items are to be brought from home at any time. If items are brought without a teacher's permission, they will remain in the office until the school day ends. We will not be responsible for any personal items that are lost or stolen.

Open Door Policy:

St. Matthew Child Care Ministry has an open door policy. Parents and family are welcome to visit at any time during operating hours. We invite parents or relatives to also volunteer. For the safety of the children, adults who wish to work with the children on a regular basis will be required to have a criminal background check. These forms may be obtained at the St. Matthew Parish office.

Dress Code

The following dress code is to be followed from August through May and will be strictly enforced. If your child comes dressed inappropriately, he/she will be expected to return home and change.

Shoes- tennis shoes are preferred, absolutely no flip flops or backless shoes

Shirt—no spaghetti straps, off the shoulder tops or shirts showing the stomach

Shorts--Weather-permitting, must be fingertip-length or longer

Dresses and Skirts-Shorts or leggings must be worn underneath

No jewelry

Field Trips

Each year field trips are planned when possible. You will receive a field trip permission slip which must be signed and returned by the designated due date in order for your child to attend. Permission slips will not be accepted the day of the trip. You are welcome to join us. When volunteering to join us on a field trip, you may be asked to supervise a small group of children. .

PTO

St. Matthew Childcare Ministry participates with St. Matthew School's PTO program. The PTO meets once per month and welcomes all parents as volunteers. Several fund raisers are planned throughout the year. All profits are used for the benefit of the children. CCM is a non-profit organization and we rely on PTO funds to supplement our needs. Please consider volunteered. Meeting schedule will be announced in the monthly CCM Newsletter.

CURRICULUM

At St. Matthew Child Care Ministry, we work as a team to support and build on children's interests and strengths. We also understand that each child is unique and learns at his or her pace. Each teacher recognizes and supports your child's level of achievement.

St. Matthew Child Care Ministry uses BIG DAY for PREK curriculum. . BIG DAY is a comprehensive, joyful, and playful early childhood system. We recognize that the power to learn resides in the child. We accept that each child's learning comes within, and the teacher's role is to support and guide young children through active learning activities and experiences.

The preschool classrooms are organized into specific learning centers, and classroom items are labeled and organized. What might look like play at first sight is really an important learning activity.

We use the Letter People program daily for early literacy, writing, and math skills. We are introducing a new National Geographic Science program. This program has many hands-on ways for our children to learn and understand the many different aspects of science. This program is being used in our elementary school and has great reviews from teachers and students. Our religion program is entitled "Stories of God's Love" for preschoolers. This religion program teaches children appropriate Scripture stories that tell them of God's love and connects the stories to the children's lives. This program incorporates a weekly hand out for the children to take home and share with their family.

Volunteers

We invite parents or relatives to volunteer at any time. Volunteers are needed to help with class parties, field trips, special events, share special talents, serve as classroom subs, and much more. If you are interested, please contact the daycare at 838-1995. For the safety of the children, adults who wish to work with the children on a regular basis will be required to have a criminal background check. These forms may be obtained at the parish office.

Snow Days and Daycare Closures

When MSD of Mt. Vernon is closed due to bad weather, the Child Care Ministry will also be closed. When the MSD operates on a delay, the daycare will open at its normal time. In the event that the CCM would lose power, we would be forced to close.

Alternate Emergency Site:

In an event of an emergency situation, the children will be moved to St. Matthew School across the street. Parents will be notified as soon as possible of the relocation. Alexandrian Public Library will be used as an alternative site in the event that St. Matthew School cannot be accessed.