



Maitland Community Preschool

Parent Handbook

2023-2024

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Welcome to Maitland Community Preschool!

We are thankful to have your family with us
and look forward to a great year together!

Our Mission:

To lead our children to know God and His world by providing a solid foundation for life and Learning.

Our Vision:

That each child who attends MCP will grow spiritually, intellectually, socially, emotionally and physically.

Our Philosophy of Education:

We believe that each child is uniquely created by God. We believe parents should be the primary teachers of their children; therefore, our role is to support and encourage parents in the nurture and training of their children. We believe that children learn best in a safe, loving, caring environment where they may experience the awe and wonder of God's world through hands-on, developmentally appropriate activities.

MCP admits children of any religion, gender, race, national or ethnic origin.

MCP is accredited by Christian Schools of Florida and NCPSA

2023-2024 Calendar

August 7 - 11	Teacher Planning Days
Weds. Aug 9	Parent Orientation (7pm)
August 10 - 11	Meet The Teacher
Mon. Aug. 14	Classes Begin
Aug. 21 - 25	Early Birds/Fun Fridays Begin
Mon. Sept. 4	No School – Labor Day
Weds. Sept. 13	Room Parent Meeting (9:15)
Fri. Oct. 13	No School – Teacher Workday
Oct. 23 - 27	Parent Conference Week
Nov. 20 - 24	No School – Thanksgiving Break
Tues. Dec. 12	Christmas Parade (9:30)
Fri. Dec 15	Last Day before Christmas Break
Dec. 18 - Jan. 3	No School – Christmas Break
Jan. 4 - 5	No School – Teacher Workdays
Mon Jan. 8	Classes Resume
Mon. Jan. 15	No School – MLK Holiday
Fri. Jan 26	Re-Enrollment for 2024-25 DUE
Jan. 29 - Feb. 2	2024-25 Early Registration
Mon. Feb. 5	2024-25 Open Registration (8:00am)
Feb. 19	No School – President’s Day
March 15 - 22	No School – Spring Break
March 27 & 28	Easter Egg Hunts/Family Chapel
March 29 – April 1	No School - Easter Break
April 15 - 19	Parent Conference Week
May 7 & 8	Water Days
Weds May 22	Last Day
May 23 & 24	Teacher Post-Planning Days

Clothing:

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes and closed-toed shoes. Clothing should be easy for the child to manipulate when using the bathroom. Dress your child in clothes you don't mind getting messy. Flip-flops are not acceptable shoes for school. Outside play is on our schedule each day, so consider the weather conditions when dressing your child. PLEASE label all jackets with your child's name!

At the beginning of the year, please send in a complete change of clothing (including socks) in the labeled gallon Ziploc bag provided for you by your child's teacher. In the event your child has an accident (potty or spill), we will send the dirty clothes home in the plastic bag. Remember to return the bag with fresh clothing the next school day.

Communication:

We consider communication between home and school to be of utmost importance. Remember that changes at home affect a child's behavior at school. Please let us know the joyous happenings, the upsetting experiences, or important changes at home that may affect your child. It is also important to let teachers know what a child has been told about an impending birth, serious illness, adoption, or a recent death, so that any conversations with your child can follow with complete empathy. In all events, we consider this school year a joint venture with you in the continuing development of your child.

Our main source of communication is through the Brightwheel app. Your child's teacher will update the app often, including photos from class, so be sure to log in to see what's happening. Our goal is to use this app to help connect our families to MCP. Please be sure to watch for and accept the email invitation to join MCP on Brightwheel. Once you download the app, be sure to set notifications so that you will be alerted when there are updates. Also, let us know if you do not receive this email so we can get you connected. You may update your child's page, especially things like address changes and adding others who may pick up your child. When adding others to pick up, be sure to include their cell phone number and have them add the Brightwheel App to their phones.

Urgent or emergency information will also be communicated through alerts and texts through the Brightwheel app. We will use this communication when we consider it of utmost importance to reach all the parents in your child's class quickly such as arrival or dismissal changes due to severe weather or emergency situations. If you have more than one number you would like to receive these texts, please let our Administrative Assistant know. Please check your preferences on your phone to be sure you see notifications for these.

Your child's school bag is also a vehicle we use for daily communication. Please check your child's bag daily for notes and artwork. You are also welcome to send tuition checks in the bag. Be sure your child brings his bag to school daily.

Discipline Policy:

We believe that children learn best in an environment where the uniqueness of each individual child is valued and respected. We believe that an important part of our teaching task involves helping children develop self-discipline. This means we must provide reasonable rules and limits, which are clearly defined and consistently maintained, while being willing to give more personal responsibility to children as they are able to assume it.

We will utilize positive discipline techniques such as modeling appropriate behavior, redirection, anticipation and removal of potential problems, positive reinforcement, and encouragement. We will help children recognize and accept logical or natural consequences of their behavior, taking time to talk through both positive and negative outcomes related to their choices of behavior. We will develop and maintain daily routines to help children understand our expectations.

If the circumstances require it, we will use supervised time apart from the group to help the child control his behavior. In the event of a persisting problem, the teacher and parent will work closely together to develop a plan to direct the child's behavior. If a child has repeated difficulty controlling his behavior to the extent that it continually disrupts the class, making it difficult for others to have a positive school experience, the teacher, parents, and Director will work together to determine whether the child can continue in our program. MCP staff members will not use corporal punishment.

Early Birds and Fun Fridays:

Early Birds is our optional childcare program running from 8:00-9:00 each morning. Children are welcome to join Early Birds at a cost of \$10/day. Fun Fridays is an optional Friday school day where children enjoy themed activities at the cost of \$35/day. Early Birds and Fun Fridays begin the 2nd week of school.

Families must sign up and pay in advance for the days they wish to participate in Early Birds or Fun Fridays. Please be sure to return the form and payment by the due date. To ensure appropriate staffing for our programs and to avoid bookkeeping issues, we cannot allow drop-in attendance in these programs. We understand that occasionally circumstances will change, and you may desire to add an Early Bird Day or Fun Friday after the deadline has passed. To add an additional day, please call MCP or message through Brightwheel at least 24 hours in advance and we will let you know if we have space available for your child. Adding on days should be more of an exception, not a regular occurrence. **Early Bird days paid for but not used do not carry over to the next month and are non-refundable. We will issue a credit for missed Fun Fridays to be used the following month.**

Early Bird Drop off: meet us on the MCP playground between 8:00-8:40. Be sure to check your child in on Brightwheel using the Early Birds drop down, not their regular class. If you are early, you are welcome to play with your children on the playground until our staff comes out at 8:00. If the weather is bad, please bring your children to the main MCP door as they will play indoors. Our Early Bird staff will bring your child to class at 9:00.

Fun Fridays: Drop off and pick up as usual, 9:00-1:00. Send a snack, lunch, and water bottle in your child's school bag. Each week has a special theme and is taught by Amie Harper. Our Two's are invited to join beginning in January if they have turned 3, are independent in the bathroom, and ready for an extra day in their week.

Illness

The school makes every effort to protect the health and safety of all our families. For your child's protection and the health of others, your child must not come to MCP if he exhibits any of the symptoms listed below. If your child develops any of these symptoms at school, he will be isolated from other children, and you will be called to pick him up immediately.

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher or that is only reduced by medication, even if it is low grade
- Persistent cough or congestion
- Frequent/consistent runny nose
- Skin rash
- Sore throat
- Swollen glands
- Muscle aches
- Earache
- Inflamed eyes
- Vomiting (1 incident)
- Diarrhea (2 incidents)
- Tired or listless
- Fussy or cranky, just not himself

Children must be fever-free without the use of fever-reducing medication, have no incidents of vomiting or diarrhea, and have improving overall symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.

Please notify the front desk immediately if your child contracts a communicable disease (such as covid, strep throat, chicken pox, pink eye, H1N1 virus, or hand, foot & mouth virus) or any other condition, such as lice, that could be spread through our school so that we may take appropriate precautions at MCP.

Lunch & Snack:

Helping your child develop healthy eating habits is important to the staff at MCP. Our teachers will encourage children to try new foods and to eat all (or most) of their lunches. Please be sure that you are sending snacks and lunches that include fruits, vegetables and protein, while limiting fats and sugars. We will repack uneaten food in lunchboxes to help you gauge the amount of food to pack. Please do not send sugary snacks, cookies, cupcakes, chips, or candy for snack. Your child's teacher will make you aware of any restrictions due to food allergies in your class. Your child's teacher is also happy to share ideas/suggestions for packing kid-friendly, healthy snacks and lunches.

Please label all lunchboxes and water bottles with your child's name, as well as any plastic containers you would like returned. Please be sure all food is properly cut to avoid choking hazards. Don't forget napkins and utensils when needed. We do not heat lunch items for the children.

Parent-Teacher Fellowship/Volunteers:

All families and staff members are part of our Parent Teacher Fellowship (PTF). Parents are encouraged to help with PTF in a variety of ways, including staff appreciation, fundraising, and school-wide events.

Each class will have 2 Room Parents and a Playdate Parent. Some, but not all, teachers also request a Library Parent and/or Playdough Parent.

- *Room Parents* work with the teacher to help with class events such as our Christmas and Easter parties, and helping the teacher as she requests.
- *Playdate Parents* organize monthly playdates for the class.
- *Library Parents* check out and return books from their local library for classroom use. Teachers will work with the library parent to select specific titles or themes of books for the classroom.
- *Playdough Parents* provide fresh playdough for the class monthly.

Parents who wish to volunteer on a regular basis in the classroom must first be fingerprinted and pass a background screening if volunteering 10+ hours/month. Parents are invited by the teacher to volunteer in the classroom. Not all classes will involve volunteers on a regular basis. Volunteers will never be left alone with another child or with the class. The teacher is always responsible for the supervision of the children. Parents coming for holiday parties or birthday celebrations or occasional volunteering do not need to be fingerprinted.

Parties:

We enjoy special celebrations at MCP for Christmas and Easter. At Christmas, we hold our annual Christmas Parade, where each class has a theme and marches in our parade around the school. Easter brings Egg Hunts followed by a special Family Chapel time and class picnics. Parents, Grandparents, and siblings are encouraged to join us for both the Christmas Parade and Easter Celebration.

Each class will have a Christmas Party planned by the teacher and Room Parent. They are kept simple, usually consisting of an activity and special snack. They do not include gifts or favors. We ask that you not bring younger siblings to your child's class Christmas party. This is a special time for you to celebrate with your MCP child, and younger children in the room tend to remove the focus from the children in the class. We also appreciate your help in supporting our teachers by being actively involved with the children during the parties.

Families are invited to join the class for our End of the Year Popsicle Parties as we celebrate the year and say goodbye.

Other holidays, such as Thanksgiving and Valentine's Day, may be recognized with a small celebration by the teacher in the classroom during regular classroom activities, but not with a party.

Parents are welcome to come celebrate their own child's birthday with a special treat. Please check with your teacher regarding the best time to come. No gifts or party favors please.

Photos/Social Media:

Please do not post any photos taken at MCP that include children other than your own on any public social media platforms. Thank you for respecting the privacy of other families in this regard.

Safety/Security:

We consider the safety of your children one of our highest priorities. We have many policies and procedures in place to help keep MCP secure. We have 2 full time security guards patrolling the building and outdoor areas of our campus in conjunction with Orangewood Christian School. We conduct regular fire, tornado, and lockdown drills as prescribed by our accreditation association requirements. All exterior doors to the campus and classroom doors are kept locked. We participate in annual school safety training as well as keeping CPR/First Aid certifications active and follow specific child protection policies. For more information about these policies, please see www.orangewood.org/mcp

Student Arrival and Dismissal Procedures:

Arrival

Arrival time for all children is 8:55-9:15

Note: The gate from Sandspur Road does not open until 9:00. This is a city decision over which we have no control.

Our staff prays together each morning at 8:45. We then open our doors at 8:55.

You have the option to park and walk your child to the classroom or use our carline in the mornings.

Walking in:

- Park in the gravel lot beside the preschool entrance or in the main parking lot, but not in the carline lane.
- Stop to check your child in on Brightwheel at the MCP door.
- Walk your child to his classroom door, but do not enter the classroom as crossing into the classroom makes it more difficult to leave your child.
- After dropping off, you are welcome to stay and visit with other parents outside but please do not remain in the MCP hallway – it gets too crowded and distracting for the children.

Carline:

- Pull up along the sidewalk in front of the building and remain in your car. We pull up to the crosswalk at the center door to the building. For safety reasons, please do not allow children to hang out of the car windows or sunroof while in line.
- A staff member will come to your window to check your child in on Brightwheel. Please have your app open and ready to scan the QR code. Be sure to follow all of the prompts – your child is checked in when you see the green checkmark on the screen.
- Please have your child's car seat on the passenger side of the car.
- Do not allow your child out of the car until a staff member comes for him.
- If you need a few minutes before dropping off (to get shoes on, bag packed, etc) please park and prepare before joining the carline.
- If you arrive after our carpool is completed (9:15) please park and walk your child to the MCP door and a staff member walk your child to class.

Dismissal

Dismissal for 2's-PreK is 12:55-1:10.

Kindergarten students and their siblings are dismissed from 1:15-1:30

All children will use the carline for dismissal.

- As you enter our lot, please follow the directions of our security officer or staff member. Once the line backs up, we will direct you to circle through the gravel lot and then the front of the school. This keeps traffic from backing up and blocking cars that are exiting.
- Pull up to the crosswalk along the sidewalk in front of the building.
- Do not leave gaps in the line.
- A staff member will come to your window for you to scan the QR code on your phone to check your child out. Please have your phone ready and the Brightwheel app open.
- Keep your carpool number(s) displayed in your windshield until your child is in your car.
- Stay in your car. Our staff will help your child into the car and car seat but not fasten the buckle. If your child cannot buckle by himself, please pull into a guest parking spot to buckle your child. Do not hold up the line getting children buckled up.
- Stay in the car line until the cars ahead of you leave and you can safely exit the parking lot. Please do not pull out of the line ahead of other cars.

Please be sure to share these routines with anyone else (grandparents/sitters/friends) who will be dropping off/picking up your child.

You can update Brightwheel with names of others that may pick up your child. If you need assistance adding them, please contact our Administrative Assistants. When someone who does not regularly pick up your child is coming, please be sure they are listed on Brightwheel, have their ID available, and have the Brightwheel App or your code. **We will not release your child to anyone other than those you list on Brightwheel.**

On your MCP application we asked if there is anyone who is NOT permitted to pick up your child from school. Please keep this list updated with our front desk. If it is a parent, we must have a copy of the legal papers denying that parent permission to take the child.

Arrival/Dismissal During the School Day:

If you arrive late to school or need to pick up your child early, please come to the MCP door to check your child in/out. We will then bring your child to/from the classroom. The preschool entrance is always locked, so please ring the bell and our Administrative Assistant will come to meet you.

If you need to pick your child up a bit early, you must arrive before 12:40 so that dismissal is not disrupted. If you arrive after 12:40, please use our usual carline procedure.

Late Pick Up:

If you are running late, please contact the front desk and leave a message (407-215-0990) so we know when to expect you. You will need to park and walk up to the MCP door if carline is finished. Beginning at 1:20 (1:35 for K), you will be charged a late fee of \$10. An additional \$10 will be charged for every additional 10 minutes. Note: we do not answer the MCP phone during arrival and dismissal but do check our messages as soon as we have finished.

Bad Weather Plan:

If it is just raining during arrival/dismissal time we follow our normal procedures. Our staff uses large umbrellas to walk children in/out of the building for carpool.

If it is storming (but not lightning) please stop your car at the awning in front of MCP. We will load/empty one car at a time from the covered walkway.

If there is **lightning** in the area, we must stop using the carline and wait the required 30 minutes after the last lightning strike before restarting carline. Please be patient, as this procedure takes longer than our usual carpool routine. We will send out a Brightwheel text letting you know when we are using this plan.

Only under a lightning alert: Parents may park and walk up to our door to get children as they feel safe in the weather.

Teacher Qualifications

All staff members have been background checked, hold current First Aid/CPR certification, and have completed DCF, Abuse & Neglect, and Blood Pathogens trainings. They participate in annual inservice trainings. Our Teachers hold Staff Credentials as well. Our Kindergarten teachers also hold current Florida Teaching Certificate or BA (or higher) degrees and at least 3 years of teaching experience in public or private schools.

Toilet Training:

We expect the children in our 3's, PreK, and Kindergarten programs to be independent in the bathroom. This means your child can get pants up and down, manage himself on the toilet, wipe, flush, and wash hands independently. Children should be good at knowing when they need to go to the bathroom. We will certainly remind children to visit the bathroom, as well as to flush and wash. We do expect occasional accidents, but these should be infrequent, and really more of a surprise to the child. If your child is having accidents often, his teacher will work with you in helping your child become more independent. Wearing pull ups to school is not the same as being toilet trained. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns about your child.

Children in our 2's program do not need to be toilet trained to attend MCP. We follow accepted procedures for safely changing children's diapers as well as assisting them in the bathroom as they become toilet trained. Please let your child's teacher know when you are working on this at home and she will encourage children to use the bathroom at school as well. Please be sure children have fresh diapers on or have been to the bathroom before you drop your child at school.

Tuition:

Tuition is an annual fee divided into 10 equal monthly payments. Monthly tuition is due on the 1st of each month. MCP accepts payments through Brightwheel as well as cash or checks (payable to MCP). A \$20 late fee will be charged for tuition payments received in the office after the 10th of the month. A \$25 fee will be charged for returned checks. Please contact our Bookkeeper, Susie Chiaro, at schiaro@orangewood.org with any financial questions or concerns.

VPK Attendance Policy:

The VPK funding payment to MCP is based on student attendance. All VPK children must be checked in and out daily on Brightwheel to verify attendance. Parents will also need to sign the VPK Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate monthly to confirm that MCP is still your VPK provider. We will have these sheets available for you to sign at the beginning of the following month, both at the front desk and in the carline. We will be randomly audited during the school year, so appreciate your help with this record keeping.

The VPK attendance policy states:

“... providers will be paid for the entire annual student allocation, unless a child misses more than 20% of the program. For those cases where a child is absent over the 20% absence threshold, the provider will not be paid for hours over 20% under any circumstances.”

What this means at MCP:

VPK will not pay us tuition for absences after your child has missed 27 school days. Therefore, beginning with your child's 28th absence, MCP may drop your child from our VPK program. Your child may continue to attend his class as usual, but tuition from that point forward will be the parent's responsibility, no longer paid by VPK funding.

We hope that the VPK attendance policy will not affect any of our families. We would not expect any of our children to have more than twenty-seven absences in one year. Our Administrative Assistants track daily attendance, so they will let you know if you are in danger of having too many absences. You are also welcome to contact them to check your child's number of absences if you are concerned.

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook. We hope that you find the information helpful. Please contact the school any time you have questions or concerns. We are looking forward to a wonderful year with your family.