

Bethel Lutheran
Educational Services Preschool



BLESS
Parent Handbook

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Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me..."
and (He) blessed them. Mark 10: 14, 16

Who Are We

Bethel Lutheran Educational Services (BLESS) Preschool is a ministry of Bethel Lutheran Church.

It is a joy to welcome all children and partner with their parents in providing a loving, Christ-centered learning environment during the children's early years.

BLESS believes that each child is created by God in His image, with a unique personality and special gifts. It is our desire to provide a preschool program that will meet the children's spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and academic needs. Nurturing the children in these areas is important for future growth and development in all aspects of their lives.

Admission

Children who are 3 or 4 years old and are toilet trained are eligible for enrolment.

It is our desire to welcome all children to the program, provided we are able to accommodate their needs. If your child has a special need, please speak with the preschool administrator prior to registering.

Admission is first granted to returning families and families whose children have previously attended BLESS Preschool. Following this, admission is open to new families based on the order the registration form and fee is received. Once a class is full, a waiting list will be started.

Teacher Qualifications

Heather Book - BED, ECS Diploma, Level 3 ECE, First Aid

Cheryl Skorobohach – Level 1 ECE, First Aid

Registration

There is a \$50 non-refundable/non-transferable fee per child required at the time of registration. For families on a waitlist, this fee will not be charged until a space becomes available for your child.

Tuition

Tuition fees for September 2023 – May 2024 are:

M/W/F four year old class: \$170/month

T/Th three year old class: \$150/month

Activity Fee: MWF four year old class - \$70 (one time)

T/Th three year old class - \$55 (one time)

Payment for monthly fees is by automatic withdrawal on the 1st of each month.

Registration and Activity Fees can be made by cash, cheque made out to Bethel Lutheran Church, or e-Transfer to admin@bethelchurch.com.

Tuition is non-refundable for absences or holidays.

NSF cheques or withdrawals will be charged \$20.

One month's written notice is required for early withdrawal. Failure to provide notification will result in a forfeit of one month's tuition fee. There will be no refund of tuition for withdrawals after April 1st.

BLESS is a non-profit licensed preschool and does not participate in fundraising activities.

Daily Activities

Young children are active learners. It is important for them to wear clothing that allows them to move freely in the classroom, gym, and at the playground, as well as possibly be stained by paint or other liquids.

Appropriate footwear is required. At the beginning of the year, please send a pair of shoes with non-marking soles, labeled with your child's name, which can be left at the school.

Each day, please send the following items with your child:

- Nutritious snack (please see p. 9 for more details)
- A change of clothing
- Appropriate outer clothing for playing outside



Daily Schedule

9:00 – 9:15 am	Settling Time 15 minutes
9:15 – 9:35 am	Gathering Time 20 minutes
9:35 – 10:35 am	Centres/Learning Time 60 minutes
10:35 – 10:55 am	Snack Time 20 minutes
10:55 – 11:20 am	Gym Time 25 minutes
11:20 – 11:30 am	Bible Time & Closing 10 minutes

Settling Time: Quiet centres will be set up at the tables (puzzles, colouring sheets, manipulatives, books, etc.) to welcome the children each day.

Gathering Time: is when the children come together for large group learning: calendar, weather, introduction to the letter and/or number of the day, show and tell, birthday celebrations and short devotion.



Learning Time: The Saxon Early Learning curriculum will be the basis for Learning Time, which includes age-appropriate activities related to Language Development, Math, Science, Social Studies, Music, Art, and Centres. Learning through play will be the focus of the Tuesday/Thursday program. There will be more emphasis placed on Kindergarten readiness skills and concepts during the Monday/Wednesday/Friday program.

Snack Time: is an opportunity for children to talk to their friends, and learn about nutrition and appropriate table manners. Prior to the children sitting down to eat, there will be a washroom break.



Gym Time: BLESS Preschool has access to a large gymnasium for the children to participate in movement activities, games, and dance, all with the focus of developing large motor skills, cooperation, and listening skills.

Bible Time: is learning about God's Word through Bible events, songs, crafts, and lessons.

During the *Closing*, children review a new concept, read a story or sing a song, share about a special time during the day and say their closing prayer.

Arrival and Pick Up

Please accompany your child into the building each day. Help them hang up their coat and backpack in the designated area and put on their indoor shoes. Upon arriving at the classroom, you will be required to complete the attendance sheet.

Quiet learning centres will be set up to assist your child in making the transition to being at school. Please do not leave your child unsupervised in the room.

Please arrive no earlier than 5 minutes before class to accommodate the teachers' needs to prepare for the day.

You are invited to greet your child in the classroom at the end of the day. Please wait in the hallway until the BLESS staff opens the doors following closing prayer as the children will become distracted by your presence.

Your child's safety is of the utmost importance. Children will not be permitted to leave the classroom until their parent, or designated individual, has arrived and signed them out. If your child is being picked up by someone other than the parents, written notification must be provided to the BLESS staff.

Extreme Weather



In the case of extreme weather resulting in a school closure, families will be called by a member of the BLESS staff informing them of this decision. It is the parents' discretion as to whether or not their child comes to school during inclement weather.

Snacks

Due to the number of food allergies and dietary restrictions that children have, parents are required to provide a snack for their child each day. We ask that children be given healthy nutritious snacks, with two items from Canada's Food Guide, in appropriate containers labeled with the child's name. Peanut and nut-based products are not permitted.

In the event that a child does not bring a snack to school, a supply of nutritious snacks and unsweetened fruit juices will be kept in the classroom, to ensure that no child goes without. When the child is picked up, parents will be informed of what the child was given to eat.

Families are invited to send treats to celebrate special occasions, such as birthdays. Parents are asked to talk to the teacher prior to bringing in any foods to ensure it is appropriate for all children to eat.

Special Events

Chapel: Parents and siblings are invited to join the children for a special chapel service in the sanctuary. Check the monthly calendar for specific dates and times.

Theme Days: During the school year, there are special days planned around a particular theme, eg: Western Day, Pajama Day, Beach Day.

"In School" Field Trips: Special guests will be invited to the class to share with the children, eg: Zoo 2 U

Concerts: There will be special Christmas and Spring programs to which families and guests are invited.

Behaviour Expectations

The children will learn the behaviour expectations and classroom routines through a variety of methods. Positive behaviours will be reinforced using verbal recognition and 'mini-celebrations' (ex. High Five). The goal of the positive reinforcement will be to guide the children to self-correction of behaviour using minimal intervention from the teaching staff.

When a disagreement between children occurs, they will be encouraged to work through the situation using their words, rather than actions. A staff member will assist the children in coming to an amicable resolution when necessary.

When a staff member must intervene in a situation, the child behaving inappropriately will be given a warning, along with a quick explanation of the desired behaviour. Redirecting the child to another activity often helps to refocus his/her attention.

Our Heavenly Father forgives each of us for our wrongdoings. At the end of any conflict or discipline situation, forgiveness will take place between children or the child and teacher, with the reassurance that they are loved and cared for.

Sickness and Medication



Due to the limited hours the children are at BLESS Preschool, the staff will NOT administer any medication to children. The only exception to this is emergency medicine for severe reactions, such as an epi-pen. This medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name and directions for administering the dosage.


On days when your child is sick and will not be attending class, please contact the church office (780-417-7775) to let us know of your child's absence.

Out of respect for the other families in BLESS Preschool, we request that children who are ill be kept at home in order to avoid passing along viruses and communicable diseases. This includes (but is not limited to): fevers, vomiting, diarrhea, body rash, chicken pox, measles, mumps, pink eye, strep throat, and head lice. Children must be symptom-free for a minimum of 24 hours prior to returning to school. If you are unsure when it is appropriate for your child to return to class, please contact your family doctor or Alberta Health Services.

If a child should become ill while at BLESS Preschool, he/she will be kept comfortable and supervised until parents can be contacted to make arrangements for pick up. If the staff is unable to reach the parents, the emergency contact names will be phoned.

Accidents

While every effort is made to provide reasonable supervision for the children, it is not possible to prevent accidental incidents as children are active learners. Therefore, the staff of BLESS is trained in first aid. If a child incurs an injury while participating in the BLESS preschool program, the BLESS staff will survey the situation and make a decision to proceed with one of three first aid treatments:

1. For minor injuries (scratches, minor cuts, bumps), the BLESS staff will provide first aid to the child, along with lots of TLC. An accident report will be completed by the teacher and signed by the parent at the time of pick up. The report will be kept on file. 
2. If the injury requires immediate medical attention, but is non-life threatening, the teacher will provide initial first aid and comfort the child until the parents can be contacted and arrive at the school. If neither of the parents can be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts will be phoned.
3. If the injury is life-threatening, an ambulance will be called and the teacher or administrator will accompany the child to the hospital. The parents will be contacted to proceed to the hospital. If neither of the parents can be reached, the individuals listed as emergency contacts will be phoned.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Ensuring the children know the appropriate procedures for evacuating the building is essential and required by our fire inspector. Fire drills and safety procedures will be taught to the children and regularly practiced throughout the school year.



When the fire alarm is heard:

1. Children form a line at the classroom door.
2. Classroom teacher collects the attendance book.
3. Following the teacher, the children exit the building through the doors at the north east corner of the building.
4. The classroom aide will check play areas, centers, washrooms, close windows, turn off lights, close the door, and follow the class.
5. The class will proceed to the designated meeting area where attendance will be taken.
6. The class will return to the building once permission has been granted by the appropriate authorities.
7. In the event that the children are unable to return to the building, they will proceed to The Sierras condominium complex (200 Bethel Drive). Parents will be contacted to pick up their children at this location.

Parental Involvement

Parents are invited to come to class and participate in the activities. Some specific ways in which parents can assist are:

- Reading with the children
- Helping with special projects, such as holiday crafts
- Cooking/baking
- Sharing about their career
- Assisting with in-school field trips
- Helping with holiday programs

Parents who chose to help out in class will be required to complete a volunteer information sheet, sign a volunteer confidentiality form, and submit a current RCMP or EPS Criminal Record Check prior to becoming involved in the classroom. More information about how to be involved will be provided at the parent orientation session and after school begins.



Communication

Keeping the families of BLESS Preschool informed of classroom activities and events is extremely important. There will be a monthly calendar and frequent newsletter sent home to share upcoming events and celebrate learning experiences.

Open communication between BLESS staff and parents is necessary. Following Matthew 18:15 – 17, parents are asked to speak directly with the teacher if there are any concerns. If an amicable solution can not be reached, please contact the preschool administrator. In the same way, BLESS staff will make arrangements to meet with a parent if there is any concern regarding a child's behaviour.



BLESS Preschool is located at:

Bethel Lutheran Church

298 Bethel Drive

Sherwood Park, AB

T8H 2C5

Phone: 780-417-7775

www.blesspreschool.com



"Sharing the love of Jesus with children and their families."

Should you and your family be looking for a church home, we would be pleased to have you join us at Bethel.

www.bethelchurch.com

