

THE CHRISTIAN NURSERY SCHOOL
CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH, WANTAGH, NY
PARENT HANDBOOK
2025-2026



MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." ~ Matthew 19:14 (NRSVue)

Since 1953, the Christian Nursery School (CNS), a program of Christ Lutheran Church, Wantagh, has helped families to raise young children who are created in the image of God. CNS cultivates each child's intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and spiritual growth in an atmosphere grounded in Christian love. The CNS community is an inclusive one in which every child has equal rights to enjoy all of the school's programs and activities.

WELCOME!

August, 2025

Dear Parents & Guardians,

A warm welcome to all whose children will be enrolling in the Christian Nursery School (CNS) this fall. We anticipate a wonderful year rich in learning, growth, and fun.

At the outset of a new program year, the first few weeks may be stressful for your children as they adjust to new environments, routines, and faces. The staff strives to help your children to consider their classrooms places of safety, understanding, nurturing, and love. We seek to provide all children with a sense of security so that they are free to develop at their own pace. Every member of the staff is available to answer your questions or to hear any concerns you may have during the year. Please be in touch with them through the office at 516.679.8425.

We hope you'll find this little handbook to be helpful in understanding CNS policies and procedures. Please see Appendix A for enrollment and tuition information and Appendix B for information regarding management of common illnesses.

Thank you for entrusting us with the care and education of your children. We cherish them as you do.

Sincerely,

Dana Antonette, *Director*

A Great Start!

It is our fondest hope that your children will be well-informed and enthusiastic about starting school. Sometimes, however, children become upset when they realize their parents/guardians will be leaving.

On those first few days, we encourage you to offer a kiss, a hug, the assurance that you'll be back to pick them up (when) and then to leave. Be sincere, loving, excited, and brief.

Please refrain from dragging out good-byes or sneaking out. Don't worry; your children will have a great time. Many children will have stopped crying by the time the door closes behind you. If there are any problems, we will call you - we promise!

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

The health and wellbeing of every child is of utmost importance to the CNS.

An up-to-date physical exam and immunization record provided by every child's physician must be submitted to the school by December 1st.

Ideally, children in the 3- and 4-year-old classes will be potty trained. However, the CNS recognizes that this is yet one means of gauging each child's development. If it is necessary for your child to wear pull-ups, you will need to provide the contact information for a responsible adult who can be available at a moment's notice to come to the school to change your child's pull-ups. Staff are prohibited from doing so.

Illness

CNS strives to keep all children happy, healthy, and safe. Children who are not feeling well will not be happy at school. Those who are sick put others at risk of becoming ill. Please see Appendix B for information about common childhood illnesses.

Please notify the school office as soon as possible if your child will be absent due to illness or any other reason. If your child has a contagious illness, CNS is required to notify the parents/guardians of all students who may have been exposed to the illness. A note from your child's doctor is required in order for your child to return to school following a contagious illness.

CNS CALENDAR: PLANNED & UNPLANNED EVENTS

The CNS calendar reflects that of Wantagh, NY public schools, though CNS classes begin one week after the public schools in September in order to allow families with older children to settle into their routines. Similarly, the CNS year ends before the public schools in June in order to limit conflicts with public school graduations.

In the event of an unplanned school closing, please call the office to check the outgoing message. The school's Facebook and Instagram pages as well as the DOJO app are additional sources of information.

The CNS provides a mid-year conference based on the mid-year progress report that will be sent home with your child. Likewise, at the end of the year, a progress report will be sent home. Please be assured that children are neither graded nor labeled. Children grow at their own pace and will not be compared to others. Should you wish at any time during the year, your child's teacher and the Director are always willing to confer with you about your child growth and needs.

Please keep an eye on the calendar for special days (e.g., Lutheran Schools Association Day) as they may arise.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

The CNS learning environment includes a wide range of experiences using arts and crafts, manipulatives, dramatic play, music, stories, library, cooking, hands-on activities, blocks, puzzles, science, creative movement and more. Activities change daily depending on the season but regularly include circle time in which the calendar and weather are discussed as well as singing and story time. There are opportunities for free play with many toys available. Children will learn to play together indoors and out, to clean up after themselves, and to enjoy snacks.

Arrival and Pick-Up: Descriptions and Authorizations

Arrival and pick-up practices are as follows:

- Children in classes that meet on the lower level will be welcomed to and dismissed from the *side* of the building.
- Children in classes that meet on the upper level will be welcomed to and dismissed from the *front* of the building.
- At pick-up, parents/guardians will wait outdoors until the children are dismissed by their teachers individually at the *side* and *front* doors as indicated above.

Please plan to supervise your children upon arrival and at dismissal in order to limit interruptions/distractions. Please keep children away from the streets and prevent them from climbing trees, running through flower beds, or playing on exterior stairs.

Remember: Your children's safety is our utmost concern.

Authorization to pick-up a child

The CNS must be notified in writing if anyone other than a parent/guardian (e.g., relatives, friends, babysitters, etc.) is authorized to pick-up your child. The parents/guardians of another student may be included should your families be carpooling or arranging play dates.

Any changes to these authorized individuals must be shared in writing with your child's teacher or the CNS Director.

Please note: Staff have the right to ask for photo ID from anyone they do not recognize.

Clothing

Do: Dress your children in comfortable, non-restrictive play clothes and sneakers. During the colder months, dressing in layers is a good practice. Please ensure that all sweaters, coats, and boots are labeled with your child's name.

Please Avoid: Allowing your child to wear jewelry or similar items that can be easily lost. In order to foster your child's growing independence, please do not dress children in onesies, body suits, or belts that the child cannot undo him/herself.

School Bags

Each student of the CNS will receive a personalized school tote bag for use every day your child attends school. This provides the teachers with a means of sending home your child's work and notices you may need to read. The tote bags are small enough for the children to carry and ample enough to hold all of their belongings.

Please Do: Review the contents of the bag each day, taking note of any important information. Please return the *empty* bags the following school day.

Please Avoid: Packing your child's bag with toys and/or snacks. Using any other type of school bag.

Program Activities

Music and Movement: A licensed dance instructor helps children learn to love music and dance by teaching children a variety of songs, how to identify notes, how to play different instruments, and learn dance moves. The frequency and duration of these sessions varies by age group.

Science: At CNS, science involves fun, hands-on learning throughout the campus. Each month, the children will perform a science experiment from start to finish. Students will learn the scientific method and how to make educated guesses based on available information. They will learn to establish hypotheses and carry out the experiment based upon a monthly theme. Children will learn new vocabulary and interact with friends from different classes. Once the experiment is completed, we will determine whether the outcome is in line with the original hypothesis.

Playground and Gymnasium: CNS has a beautiful playground that the children enjoy during the warmer months. The playground, secreted behind the school away from the street, features a variety of outdoor equipment. The indoor gym, used during inclement weather and the winter months, provides organized and free play utilizing parachutes, mazes, balls, hula hoops and the ever-popular floor scooters.

Library: Library time is so much more than an opportunity to read books. Classes have their own libraries that contain wonderful books. In addition, CNS has a dedicated library that the four-year-old classes visit weekly. Children can check out and return a variety of books.

This library is designed to help children learn responsibility: how to care for books, including their timely return so that another book can be borrowed.

Show and Tell: Three-year-olds enjoy show and tell every week. Of course, they enjoy bringing in a favorite item to share but show and tell is more than that. It allows even the shyest child an opportunity to speak in front of a group about something that they enjoy.

Show and tell aids in socialization, learning to wait patiently, listening, and learning to ask thoughtful questions about the item being shared and the child speaking.

Snacks: General

Parents/Guardians will be asked to provide snacks on a rotating basis according to a monthly calendar provided by each teacher. Please follow the following guidelines when it is your family's turn to provide snacks:

- Bring a drink and a snack for every child in the class.
- Please provide snacks that are manufactured in nut-free facilities (this includes almond and other nut flours)
- Be creative! The kids love to have fun during snack time!

Snacks: Food Allergies

Please Note: Children with food allergies must provide their own snacks. They will have their own special snack boxes labeled with their names and allergies.

Students with allergies that require the availability of an Epinephrine injector, EpiPen Jr., antihistamine, and/or Benadryl must have a Medical Authorization form and Food Allergy Action Plan on file at the school; these must be completed by the child's parents/guardians and physician. Copies of these forms will be kept with the child's special snack box. All forms, medication, and snacks must be present on the first day of school. Keeping your children safe and healthy is paramount. No changes in rules for children with identified allergies will be allowed without a written statement from their physicians.

Birthday Celebrations

Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays at school! When it comes time to celebrate your child's birthday, you are welcome to bring in cupcakes, cookies, ice cream, or any snack that the birthday child loves. *Please refrain from bringing homemade baked goods. Instead, provide store bought treats that are labeled not free so that all children can participate in the celebration.* Feel free to send in party favors, matching plates, napkins, and cups. We love to celebrate your children's milestones!

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

Lunch Bunch is an extended day program during which children bring lunch to school and eat in a group. Of course, socialization is a key element of the program as three- and four-year-olds eat together to help and learn from each other. The children enjoy seeing friends and getting better acquainted. *Please remember: All food must be nut free.*

Kindergarten Readiness can be added onto children's days if they are enrolled in the four-year-old program.

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Photographs

Throughout the year, photographs of CNS students will be randomly taken during special activities, events, or play time. While some of these photos may be used on the CNS website, in print publications, or on social media sites, no names will be included. If you prefer that your child's picture *not be published*, please so indicate on the permission section of the Additional Information Form. The CNS understands your concerns and will honor your requests.

Discipline

Effective discipline needs to be positive, so the CNS staff will refrain from repeatedly using the word, "no." In addition, CNS strongly supports peer resolution. In these early years, teachers will sit with both children who have been engaged in a disagreement, talk through what happened, and what each child can do to make the other feel better. Students will be encouraged to, "use your words" and "show me how (another child) hurt you or your feelings." Then, the children, with the help of an adult, will come up with a solution that is beneficial for both.

Encouraging children to think through a situation and voice their opinions they gain a sense of ownership and responsibility. This approach affirms peer communication as a means of helping children to respect themselves and others. It also avoids conveying the idea of discipline as a form of punishment.

The safety and welfare of every child is the primary concern of the CNS. Therefore, children whose behavior poses a threat to themselves or others may be removed from the school for a specified period of time or dismissed altogether.

APPENDIX A: ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES AND TUITION

Enrollment: How-to

Every fall, enrollment in the age-appropriate programs of the CNS is open to children according to the following criteria:

- Children who are 2 years old at the beginning of the school year
- Children who will be 3 or 4 years old by December 1st

Tuition

Tuition may be paid monthly or annually. The following terms apply:

- Those who pay the full year's tuition in advance qualify for a 5% discount
- Tuition for those who pay monthly is due on the 1st of each month
 - Families enrolling 2 children qualify for a 10% discount off the total tuition
 - Families enrolling 3+ children qualify for a 15% discount off total tuition
 - A late fee of \$10 will be assessed when monthly tuition is received on or after the 10th of the month

APPENDIX B: COMMON ILLNESSES/CONDITIONS

Allergies: Sometimes, it can be difficult to distinguish between allergies and illnesses. Children experiencing symptoms that are not relieved by over-the-counter allergy medicine, children acting unlike themselves, and children who are unable to participate in classroom activities should be kept home until they are feeling well.

Cold: Children experiencing symptoms that are not allergy-related, that are experiencing more than just a stuffy/runny nose and are acting unlike themselves should be kept home until their symptoms improve.

Cough: Children experiencing a persistent cough or a cough accompanied by other symptoms should be kept home until they are feeling better.

Diarrhea/Vomiting: Children who experience two episodes of diarrhea and/or vomiting within a 24-hour period must be symptom free for 24 before returning to school.

Fever of 100 degrees F or higher: Children cannot attend school until they have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of a fever reducer.

Flu: Students may return to school when they have been free of fever and symptoms and feeling well for a period of at least 24 hours.

Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease (Coxsackie): A doctor's note is required in order for children to return to school after symptoms have been resolved.

Impetigo: Children may return to school 24 hours after treatment has begun. Lesions that continue to ooze must be covered.

Lice: Students can return to school after the initial treatment has been administered.

Molloscum Contagiosum: Bumps should be covered by clothing where possible. Bumps not covered by clothing should be covered by a watertight bandage. If these precautions are taken, children may attend school.

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis): Children may return to school after prescription eye drops have been administered for 24 hours.

Ringworm: Children may return to school once treatment has begun.

Scabies: Children may return to school once treatment has begun.

Scarlet Fever: Children may return to school 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun and they have been fever free for 24 hours.

Strep Throat: Children may return to school 24 hours after antibiotic treatment has begun and they have been fever free for 24 hours.

Whooping Cough (Pertussis): Children can return to school 5 days after treatment has begun.