

Northwood Academy Preschool Handbook

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Northwood Academy Preschool

a division of
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Welcome to Northwood Academy Preschool, the early education and nursery division of Northwood Academy. Since its founding in 1983, we have provided Christ-centered education and care to Lowcounty families like yours. We hope you will find this Preschool handbook helpful in reminding you of the policies and procedures used in our operation.

Thank you for trusting us and allowing us to partner with your family through the many ages and stages of early childhood and school readiness. We trust the information provided eases your mind about the placement of your precious child in our program.

We understand how important this decision is to you, and we endeavor to honor your trust by meeting or exceeding your high expectations for your child and this Preschool.

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About Northwood Academy

Northwood Academy is an education ministry of Northwood Church (Northwood Assembly, Inc.). The mission of Northwood Church is “*to engage, empower, and equip you to be the Church.*” Northwood Academy Preschool is the early education department of Northwood Academy. The Preschool is registered with the South Carolina Department of Social Services.

Northwood Academy serves over 1000 students from 12 weeks through 12th grade. The school was founded in 1978, under the banner of Northwood Christian School; the Preschool was added in 1983.

Affiliations

- Cogna Accreditation
- South Carolina Independent School Association (SCISA) Accreditation
- Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI)

Northwood Academy Mission Statement

The mission of Northwood Academy is to engage, empower, and equip students with an emphasis on college preparation, through academic and character development supplemented by the arts, athletics, and the humanities, with Christian values forming the underlying foundation.

Preschool Hours of Operation

7:00 AM - 6:00 PM Monday through Friday

Business Office Hours

8:00 AM - 4:00 PM Monday through Friday

The Business Office is located in front (left) of the Lower School gymnasium.

The Business Office is CLOSED on June and July Fridays.

Northwood Academy Statement of Faith

These tenets of the Church define the Biblical perspective which informs a Northwood Academy education:

We believe the Bible is the inspired and only infallible and authoritative Word of God.

We believe there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in the miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, in His personal, future return to this earth in power and glory.

We believe in the blessed hope – the rapture of the church at Christ's coming.

We believe the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Christ.

We believe regeneration by the Holy Spirit is essential for personal salvation.

We believe the redemptive work of Christ on the cross provides healing of the human body in answer to believing prayer.

We believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4, is given to believers who ask for it.

We believe in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life.

We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, the one to everlasting life and the other everlasting death.

Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture.

The Northwood Academy Statement of Faith and the Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality do not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. For purposes of Northwood Academy's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our School Board of Directors is the schools' final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

Northwood Academy Preschool Mission

Northwood Academy Preschool partners with families, influencing children to be aware of God's love and amazed by His creation, secure in their relationships, and eager for new challenges.

We accomplish our mission:

Spiritually - by providing the comfort and security of loving relationships, warm environments, and simple truths, which will develop a child's foundational moral character and nurture his/her love of God.

Physically - by offering a wide variety of experiences that will develop a child's gross and fine muscle coordination and motor skills.

Socially & Emotionally - by encouraging participation and cooperation in group activities and getting along with others which will develop a child's sense of security, confidence in his/her abilities, and belonging.

Intellectually - by exploring and using first-hand experiences which will nurture a child's capacity and love of learning.

A child completing Northwood Academy Preschool will have developing competencies:

Spiritually - aware of God's love and ready to come under authority

Physically - aware of God's strength and ready to explore and overcome challenges

Socially & Emotionally - aware of God's friendship and ready to esteem others and to be a friend

Intellectually - aware of God's creation and ready to inquire and to learn

Holidays

The Preschool publishes a calendar each year listing holidays and school closures.

Preschool Summer Program

Summer programming begins on Tuesday after Memorial Day and ends on Friday before school starts. This program is available for enrolled Preschool (Early Ed & Pre-K) children Monday-Friday and requires a separate registration and tuition plan, which is for all school summer-break weeks. Discounts for holidays/daily absences are not offered.

Fees/Billing

Current rate schedules and business office policies are available from the Business Office or our website:www.northwoodacademy.com.

Admissions

Northwood Academy welcomes families who share our spiritual values, support our philosophy and educational objectives, and whose children meet our enrollment requirements. Admission begins with the submission of an online application. Families are encouraged to request a tour of the Preschool to learn more about our program and environment.

As part of the admissions process, the Preschool may request records or conduct a phone interview with a child's previous preschool. When appropriate, a visit day may also be scheduled to ensure proper placement and readiness.

Northwood Academy retains full authority regarding grade or class placement for all enrolled students. The school also reserves the right to dismiss any student whose application contains false or misleading information or whose conduct does not align with school standards.

Reenrollment

Admission to Northwood Academy is a privilege rather than a guarantee. Enrollment for one school year does not ensure automatic admission for future years.

Enrolled Preschool students receive priority consideration for promotion into the Lower School. During the annual priority reenrollment period, available spaces and each student's academic progress, behavior, and financial standing—are reviewed before an offer is extended.

Priority reenrollment for the following school year opens each February for currently enrolled Northwood Academy students. A student's place is officially reserved once:

The online reenrollment package is completed and submitted

A FACTS payment plan is selected

The enrollment fee is paid

Promotion

We reserve the right to place a child in the group determined to be the most developmentally appropriate for the child. Typically, promotion occurs at the end of each school year, around the first week of June, for all children. Admission to the school is a privilege, not a right, and admission for one school year does not guarantee automatic admission for future school years. Enrolled Pre-K students are given priority consideration for promotion into our Lower School's Kindergarten program, based on available spaces, Preschool success, and school readiness before a reenrollment offer is extended.

Programming and Curriculum

During a child's first years, there are many "*windows of opportunity*" - critical and prime times for acquiring new skills. Our Preschool programming - quality early education publishers, stimulating environments, staff screening and professional development, quality children's literature, scheduling, and even toy choices - is designed to meet the whole child's optimum development.

Specialty Areas

As (age) appropriate, specialty area instruction is offered and includes:

- Spanish
- Creative Movement
- Chapel
- STEM
- Music
- Art

Behavior Expectations

Children are expected to be able and willing to obey instructions and be kind to others. We believe children learn these behavior expectations with age-appropriate instruction and practice. Consistent, positive instruction guides the children's choices. Dismissal for behavior is rare but may occur for failure to meet specific behavior expectations or correct specific behavior deficiencies.

Aggression

Aggression in young children often occurs when emotions build up and need a physical outlet. During a child's preschool years, emotional development is at a critical stage. When parents and the Preschool work together and early intervention takes place, children who exhibit aggressive behaviors can learn to develop appropriate spiritual, emotional, and social behavior. This creates a healthy preschool environment.

When one child's safety is endangered during class because of an aggressive act of another child, decisive action must be taken. Aggressive behavior includes pushing, impulse hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, throwing hard objects, spitting, etc. It also can include exhibiting meltdowns and fits of rage, including screaming, stomping, and showing a lack of bodily control, especially when paired with anger or using verbally aggressive language. All these behaviors may or may not be provoked.

To provide a safe preschool environment, the following procedures will be followed:

- Each aggressive incident will be documented on a “**Preschool Behavior Concern Report**,” with a description of the event/behavior.
- After three *unprovoked* aggressive incidents, the parent will be called to the Preschool to perform disciplinary action. The parent is expected to have a discipline plan before arrival.
- After a parent has come to discipline the child three times in a three-month period, the child will be suspended for the remainder of the day.
- After three (overnight) suspensions, the child will be suspended for one week. A parent/teacher conference with the director is required before the child returns to the Preschool.
- After a week’s suspension, uncorrected aggressive behavior will subject the child to dismissal for the remainder of the school year.

Communication

We encourage parents to maintain an ongoing, friendly flow of information with the teaching team at drop-off and pick-up times. Communication with teaching staff is to be through the Preschool’s “official channels” (e.g., email or school phone). Texting or private messaging is not permitted. Conferences may be arranged by contacting the teacher. Daily reports are provided for non-verbal and diapered children.

Conferences or other conversations with teachers or administrators may not be recorded without permission of the administration and all parties involved.

Exclusion For Illness

Northwood is a well-child facility. Children are expected to fully recover at home after illness, including the following:

- fever of 100F or higher (without fever-reducing medications)
- chills and/or headache and/or sore throat
- diarrhea or vomiting
- conjunctivitis (pinkeye)
- undiagnosed rash
- new or worsening runny nose / congestion / cough / fatigue / irritability / gastrointestinal symptoms / muscle/body aches
- other excludable issues (impetigo, head lice, etc.).

Parents called to pick up an ill child are expected to make necessary arrangements within the hour. We require that any student who is sent home or kept home due to illness remains out of school for a full school day following the day of illness. The student may return no sooner than the day after this 24-hour period has passed, he or she is symptom-free and able to participate in normal school activities. This policy helps ensure adequate recovery time and prevents the spread of illness within our school community. NOTE: A child may be excluded from the Preschool if he or she appears unable to participate in the group activities.

Immunization

South Carolina law requires a current **SOUTH CAROLINA CERTIFICATE OF IMMUNIZATION (DHEC 4024)** or lawful exemption certificate to be on file at the Preschool. South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) requires each child to have a **Form 2900 (GENERAL STATEMENT OF CHILD'S HEALTH FOR ADMISSION TO CHILD CARE FACILITY)** on file. These are provided before the child starts preschool and updated with each new immunization and as necessary.

Medication

Medication will be administered consistent with its labeling. Only medication prescribed for the child will be administered at the Preschool. Over-the-counter medicine requires a prescription or note for administration from a prescriber, and must include the child's name, dosage, and frequency. Labeled (child's full name) medication is to be secured at drop-off time at the front desk; it may not be stored in or with the child's belongings. A refrigerator is available for storage of medication. The "Preschool Medication Log" is to be completed by the parent for each medication to be administered, indicating the medication name, amount, time(s), and duration for administration. Special instructions and symptoms for administration are to be included on this form. Nebulized medications are not administered in the Preschool.

Food Service Policy

Generally, all food is to be provided from the home. Food already successfully tried and enjoyed by the child is best.

- Food is to be sent from home in the way it will be served (i.e., slicing, peeling, or assembling is to be done at home).
- A classroom microwave is available for quick heat-ups in the infant room.
- There is no provision for heating lunch for the Preschool classrooms.
- Disposable utensils and bowls are provided, as needed.
- Sugar-laden breakfast items (donuts, etc.) are discouraged; dessert items are not served with meals but may be offered at afternoon snack time.
- Drinks may be sent from home, or water will be offered at food service times. Sodas (including iced tea) are not served in the Preschool.
- All food containers, including baggies, are to be labeled with the child's name. Unlabeled items will be labeled by childcare staff.
- Glass containers are not permitted in the Preschool.

Infant Food Policy

All food and drinks for infants are to be provided from the home. Only food (Including brand) successfully tried and enjoyed by the child is to be sent to the Preschool. Bottles are to be prepared and ready for use; unused bottles will be sent home at the end of the day. A box of infant cereal and a container of juice (to fill "sippy" cups) may be stored in the infant room refrigerator. All food kept in the refrigerator must have the "brought to school date" written on it. Baby food may be sent in its original, unopened container; it will be served from disposable bowls. Food is to be sent daily; leftovers will be returned home each day. Infants must be willing and able to take a bottle in the nursery. Mothers desiring to nurse during the day may sign the infant out to nurse and back in upon return to the infant room.

Developmental Screening, Intervention & Therapy

Northwood Academy partners with HCA Healthcare Trident Hospital to provide on-site speech therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy services. A DSS form 2930 is required to be submitted should they, or another entity, be authorized by the parent(s) to provide services to a child at the Preschool.

A child with diagnosed developmental delay or disability may be eligible for admission provided 1) no fundamental alteration of the program or behavior expectations is required, and 2) an intervention/therapy assistant may be required by the director throughout the child's day at the Preschool.

Clothing/Dress Code

Children are to be comfortably dressed according to weather conditions; a complete change of clothing is to be on hand for emergencies.

- Closed-toe, gym-type shoes with socks are required; shoes are to be appropriate for running and/or playing and must stay securely on the child's foot. Boots and Crocs are not appropriate/safe for Preschool footwear.
- Modesty in clothing is expected; if worn, printed (slogans or pictures) t-shirts are to be age-appropriate.
- Hats are worn for cold weather and sun protection (hard-bill, baseball-style caps are not permitted).
- Bloomers or shorts are to be worn under girl's dresses and skirts.
- No extremes in hairstyle are allowed; hair must be a natural color.
- Hair adornments are discouraged and, if a choke hazard, will be removed. Earrings on boys are not permitted. Jewelry (necklaces, rings, bracelets) are not safe at preschool and may be removed.

Diapering Supplies Needed

Parents are to provide adequate supplies of the following:

- Disposable diapers
- Baby wipes
- Petroleum jelly
- Changes of clothing

A two-week supply of pull-ups (Velcro easy-open sides) will be requested at the time we initiate potty training. Bibs, burp cloths, washcloths, and crib sheets are provided, as age-appropriate.

Potty Training

The Preschool staff will assist the parents with potty training. Potty training in the group-care setting is effectively undertaken around a child's 2nd birthday. Children will not be left on the toilet or potty seat for a protracted period. Potty skills will be taught in a confident, affirmative manner. Child-sized toilets are in the classroom. Modesty and personal hygiene are encouraged as children are trained to finish dressing while still in the bathroom and wash their hands when done. Children must be able to manage their own clothing during the training process; items like belts, onesies, and tights make this difficult and may be removed. Several changes of clothes are to be provided in case of accidents.

Independent Toileting

We are committed to providing a developmentally appropriate, nurturing, and safe learning environment for all children. To best support classroom routines and maintain a healthy and hygienic space, students placed in the Preschool classrooms (Early Ed and Pre-K) are required to be fully independent in toileting.

Independent Toileting Requirements

To be considered fully toilet-trained and eligible for placement in the Preschool classrooms, children must consistently:

- Recognize the need to use the restroom
- Communicate that need to a teacher
- Independently manage clothing and toileting hygiene (wiping, flushing, hand-washing)
- Remain accident-free during the school day without reminders or prompting from teachers

Excessive Toileting Accidents

While occasional accidents can happen, repeated inappropriate toileting events indicate a child may not yet be developmentally ready for the expectations of our Preschool Hall. If a child experiences three (3) or more toileting accidents within a five-day period, the administration will schedule a meeting with the family to discuss concerns.

Should it be determined that the child is not yet showing readiness for independent toileting, parents/guardians will be asked to keep their child home until they are able to go five (5) consecutive days without any toileting accidents at home. This allows for focused, supportive retraining in a more comfortable environment.

Return to School

Once the child has successfully met the five-day accident-free requirement, they may return to the classroom. Continued partnership between parents and school staff is essential to ensure a smooth transition back into the learning environment.

Our Commitment

We understand that potty training is a developmental process, and we are here to support families with encouragement and resources as needed. Our goal is to foster success for each child in a classroom environment designed for their stage of independence and growth.

Rest Time

All children in the Preschool are required to have an assigned rest time. Children under 12-months old in the infant room will be assigned a crib. Older children will rest on an assigned KinderMat. Should a child's mat require replacement more than once per school year, the parent's account will be charged.

Children are encouraged to bring a king-size pillowcase to slip over their mat as well as a small blanket for rest time. A baby-size pillow is also permitted.

Sleeping toys are not permitted. Personal items are to be stored in a school-size *zipper-type* book bag/backpack (no wheels and no draw strings). Personal linens are to be taken home each Friday for laundering and are to be returned each Monday. All linens are to be clearly labeled with the child's name.

Personal Items at Preschool

All personal items are to be clearly labeled with the child's full name and, except for the child's diaper/book bag, are to be picked up at the end of the day. Children may not bring toys from home except on their assigned "show & tell" day or on special, announced occasions. Northwood Academy Preschool is not responsible for damage or loss of personal property. Unclaimed, non-labeled clothing and other items left in the Preschool will be donated to a local charity.

Special Event Celebrations

Special event celebrations, such as holidays, birthdays, etc., are recognized and celebrated throughout the year. Parents are encouraged to coordinate their participation with their child's teacher.

Treats brought to Preschool for the class are to be commercially prepared. Suggested favorites include Little Debbie-type treats, Rice-Krispy treats, cookie snack packs, and other individually wrapped items.

Invitations *distributed at school* must be given to the whole class, all boys, or all girls by the classroom teacher.

As a Christian Preschool, our emphasis (in both discussions and decorations) for holidays such as Christmas and Easter is on the birth and resurrection of Jesus.

Inclement Weather Closings

Generally, Northwood Academy will follow the Berkeley County schools in school closing decisions. *All announcements made for Northwood Academy apply to Northwood Academy Preschool.*

Soliciting/Fundraising

Solicitation is not allowed at Northwood. This includes selling items such as tickets and candy, as well as circulating product catalogues or placing posters. Distributing political materials at Northwood is not permitted.

Driving And Parking at Northwood

Safety for the children and consideration of other drivers are the basis for our policies related to driving and parking on the Northwood campus. Parking spaces are clearly marked and the speed limit is “one foot on the brake.” Be vigilant for children to do the unexpected. By law and for campus safety, cars are never to be left parked and running, and children are never to be left unattended in a parked car.

Arrival/Departure Procedure

Parents or other responsible adults are to accompany their child into and from the Preschool. Special instructions or alternative pick-up instructions are to be communicated at drop-off or during the day via email or by phone. Children may arrive and depart at any time during the day with the following exceptions:

- Children may not be signed into preschool during rest times.
- Children needing food service (i.e., breakfast) are to be in class at the scheduled mealtime.
- Our instruction time with the Preschool children is carefully planned. Children may be dropped off from 7AM - 11:30 AM. Late arrivals and early departures, while sometimes necessary, can be disruptive if on a regular basis.

Contacting Parents

Parents will be contacted in the event of an emergency, accident, sickness, behavioral difficulty, etc., using the phone numbers and/or email address(es) listed on the student application. It is imperative that the parent/emergency contact information is current; it must be updated with moves, job changes, etc. Failure to provide accurate/current information needed for the appropriate care of the child will be grounds for termination of services.

Family Separation

Employees of Northwood Academy do not “take sides” and offer affidavits or testimony for or against any parent.

We will respond to court orders or subpoenas, but we will inform issuing attorneys that we will talk only about school-day activities.

We will participate in court-ordered safety plans, and work with parents who have reason to believe their child is at risk *if a court hearing/action is pending*.

We monitor, assess, and address any effects that family stress has on the children in our care, but we will not assign blame or cause.

We will send emails to all family members marked for “correspondence,” but other, routine matters (take-home papers, etc.) will be sent home by each school’s “normal” method.

Parents are welcome to sign out their child for visitation, but we do not permit on-campus, or in-classroom visitation.

If a person is on a child’s pick-up list, it is to be without restrictions or conditions.

If visitation is court ordered, we do not know or have the ability to track “every other,” or whatever language is agreed upon. Parents are to provide the school with a copy of the relevant portion(s) of the court’s order, and we ask that the parent assigned primary care, custody, and control, inform the school when the non-custodial parent will be picking up. The most common option is to have both parents on the pick-up list without restrictions.

Security Video Monitoring

All public areas are subject to security video monitoring. Security video monitoring is not monitored in real time on a 24 hour / 7 day basis. The primary use will be to make recordings that can later be reviewed to follow-up on reported incidents or for use by administrators. The secondary use will be to enhance security and oversight, allowing administrators to periodically check on or remotely view a specific area.

Authority To Release Child

Only the custodian (parent/guardian) may determine who may pick up the child from Preschool. A list of parties authorized to pick up a child from the Preschool is provided by the custodial parent/guardian during the admissions/enrollment process. If a person is on a child's pick-up list, it is to be without restrictions or conditions. If a special circumstance arises, the parent may make verbal or written arrangements with the attending staff in person or by phone. Children will not be released to anyone without specific consent of the custodian and validation of I.D. (driver's license, etc.). Children will be released to non-custodial parents with a court order or with the custodial parent's permission. If the care, custody, and control of the child is defined by court order, the pertinent portion(s) of the order is to be kept in the child's file at the Preschool.

Accountability For Children

A separate tracking sheet is utilized throughout the day for periodic and transitional rollcalls. The teaching team will always have the roster and the tracking sheet with them.

Parent Cooperation Agreement

All parents of enrolled students agree to the following: *I affirm my commitment to partner with Northwood Academy in accordance with the Parent Cooperation Agreement. I understand that significant violations of this agreement may lead to limitations on my participation in school events or, when necessary, dismissal of my child from the school.*

Purpose

This **Parent Cooperation Agreement** outlines expectations for parent behavior, communication, and social media use in support of the mission, values, and community standards of Northwood Academy. By enrolling your child, you agree to partner with the school in fostering a Christ-centered, respectful, and uplifting environment.

General Parent Code of Conduct

Parents/guardians agree to:

- Conduct themselves in a Christ-like manner in all interactions with faculty, staff, students, other parents, and the Northwood community.
- Support the school's mission, policies, and discipline procedures.
- Communicate concerns respectfully and directly with the appropriate school personnel.
- Protect the confidentiality and dignity of students, families, and staff members.
- Model respect for authority, unity, integrity, and grace.
- Ensure their child complies with academic, behavioral, and attendance expectations.
- Resolve conflicts in a Biblical manner, seeking positive solutions and reconciliation.

Acceptable Use of Social Media

Parents/guardians agree to use social media in a way that honors Christ, protects the Northwood Academy community, and models maturity for students. Parents will:

- Refrain from posting comments, photos, or content that could harm the reputation, privacy, or safety of students, families, or staff.
- Avoid sharing confidential or sensitive school-related information.
- Not engage in gossip, personal attacks, negative criticism, or inflammatory speech about the school or any member of the school community.
- Use social media to build up, not tear down, the school community.
- Address concerns directly with school administration rather than posting publicly.
- Ensure that posts involving school events, students, or staff are appropriate, respectful, and aligned with school policies.

Prohibited Parent Actions

Parents agree not to:

- Create or participate in online groups that foster division or complaints, or are defamatory or reflect negatively upon Northwood Academy, its staff, students or families.
- Use rude and/or aggressive language, or interfere with the school's mission, activities, policies, or delivery of its programs.
- Threaten the health or safety of Northwood Academy students, staff, or families.

