



## **Preschool Handbook 2026-2027**

### **PHILOSOPHY**

It is the philosophy and firm belief of La Casa de Cristo Christian Preschool that each child is a unique person with special needs and abilities. It is our overall goal to encourage the growth of the “whole child” through physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual development. Specifically to:

- **Physically** - Help each child to grow in perceptual motor skills and development
- **Socially** - provide an environment where each child is given the opportunity to develop peer relationships, learning to cooperate, respect, share and care for their new friends.
- **Emotionally** - encourage, accept and support each child as they grow in developing a positive self-image.
- **Cognitively** - provide hands on, appropriate experiences that enhance discovery, conceptualization, creativity and communication. To have age appropriate experiences in language, math, science, cooking, art, and social studies.
- **Spiritually** - emphasize a rich heritage of Christianity and show each child that he/she is secure in God's abiding love and care.

A daily schedule of both teacher-directed and child-directed activities serve to reinforce, enrich, motivate, and challenge in an environment where each child is respected as an individual.

### **GOALS**

Mini 3's, 2-Day 3's, 3-Day 3's Classes: In an age appropriate setting, emphasis in the 3-year-old classes is placed upon social and emotional development. A positive beginning school experience is provided through familiarizing each child with expectations, school routine, and responsibility. Mutual respect for peers and adults and appreciation of materials encourages social growth. Large muscle activities are practiced and small muscle activities are introduced. Beginning math skills in counting, language skills, and name recognition are encouraged.

Mini 4's classes: The process of learning continues with more confidence in abilities and awareness of self and surroundings. Greater emphasis is placed upon independence and self-sufficiency as well as developmentally appropriate skill sets in all areas. Introduction of letters and sounds with writing opportunities are provided and encouraged.

Pre-Kindergarten 4 year-old Classes: Basic goals, which are introduced in the 3 year-old classes, are reinforced and extended in the 4 year-old classes. In addition, cognitive development is encouraged through activities in the areas of math, science and discovery, reading readiness and early literacy skills, pre-writing skills, letter sounds and recognition, phonemic awareness, and basic Spanish words. Both gross and fine motor skills are practiced and reinforced through both classroom activities and specialized classes. Readiness skills become stronger as the year progresses through exposure to many topics and experiences. Emotional and social readiness remains the goal and key component for the Pre-Kindergarten student to demonstrate the potential for Kindergarten success.

Kindergarten Prep Classes: This class is specifically designed to meet the needs of the older student who has had the time to develop preparedness skills but either does not meet the minimum age requirement for Kindergarten or could benefit from the gift of another year in preschool to further their development. Greater emphasis is placed upon academic skill development in preparation for Kindergarten, in conjunction with solidifying critical social and emotional readiness. Kindergarten attributes and in depth conceptual ideas are reinforced throughout the daily curriculum and routine, including extended math, science, pre-reading with application of phonemic awareness and writing. As in all classes, gross and fine motor skills are practiced through both classroom activities as well as specialized classes. Basic Spanish words are introduced.

Half Day Kindergarten: This class will provide the core kindergarten curriculum in a morning half-day format, while incorporating our play-based philosophy. The core curriculum will include: English Language, Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies, as well as Bible. They will participate in Music and PE as well as Preschool Chapel. Your child will be prepared to meet and exceed state and local education requirements for first grade.

All Classes: With greater emphasis placed upon the fields encompassed in S.T.E.M and S.T.E.A.M., our curriculum materials and overall content have evolved. We now incorporate more learning opportunities in the areas of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and the arts but continue to introduce these through a hands-on approach. This teaching methodology is conducive to our play-based philosophy that children learn best through “doing” and experiencing. In essence, we use play to open up the world of early math, science, and language skills for young children.

## **STAFF**

Each staff person has been carefully selected for educational qualifications and experience in the field of early childhood and education. Equally as important is a loving and genuine interest in young children and the ability to relate this concern to the children. Continual staff growth is required through evaluation, classes, workshops, and in-service training.

## **PROGRAM**

Curriculum consists of monthly learning units, which are appropriate to the development level of the various age groups as well as individual children. These units provide a well-rounded and progressive learning experience for each child. Learning centers, which

correspond with these areas are available to each child as an important part of the daily schedule. Each child will be encouraged to begin a project and to complete it.

Spiritual development is encouraged in ways that are meaningful to the child. Daily Christian Education activities (prayer, songs, stories, projects, etc.) are incorporated within the daily schedule. In addition, all classes will visit the Sanctuary weekly for Preschool Chapel with a Pastor or member of the pastoral staff.

Also included within the daily schedule are enrichment programs, which coordinate with classroom activities and learning topics. The P. E. Program emphasizes gross and fine motor skills, coordination, and spatial/body awareness. The Music Enrichment Program provides the basics in rhythm and beat, and music appreciation for the classics through modern children's music.

Lunch Bunch is part of our extended day designed to provide a social atmosphere for the children enrolled in the program. Lunch is parent provided. Lunch Bunch is offered Monday through Friday. Discovery Time Hour is also a part of our extended day and is a theme-based, curricular additional hour immediately following Lunch Bunch. Discovery Time is offered Monday through Thursday.

## **TUITION**

Payment for Tuition and additional fees (Lunch Bunch, Discovery time) are paid by having a credit card or Bank account on file with La Casa de Cristo Preschool and Church. Payments are automatically charged on the first of each month. For those families who have two or more children registered, there is a 5% discount on the total tuition amount. Student enrollment will be complete when a payment method is on file and first month of tuition paid. Any unpaid balance from the previous school year needs to be paid in full prior to registering for the next school year. If you fall two months behind on tuition, your tuition must be brought current prior to your child returning to school

## PRESCHOOL CLASS ADMISSION SCHEDULE

### **School Hours/Classroom times:**

Preschool hours only - 9:15a – 12p

Preschool hours with Lunch Bunch hours included - 9:15a - 1:00p

(this is the only Enrichment option for our Mini 3's & 3-year-olds)

Preschool hours with Discovery Time hours included - 9:15a - 2:00p

### **Tuesday/Thursday**

| <u>Class</u> | <u>Birthday Cut-off</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| Mini 3's     | 3 between 9/1 & 12/31   |
| 3 year-olds  | 3 years-old by 9/1      |

### **Monday/Wednesday/Friday**

| <u>Class</u>      | <u>Birthday Cut-off</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 3 Day 3's         | 3 years-old by 9/1      |
| Mini 4's          | 4 between 9/1 & 12/31   |
| Pre-K 4 year-olds | 4 years-old by 9/1      |

### **Monday thru Thursday \***

| <u>Class</u>      | <u>Birthday Cut-off</u> |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Pre-K 4 year-olds | 4 years-old by 9/1      |
| Flex 4 4's*       | 4 years-old by 9/1      |
| Kindergarten Prep | 5 years-old by 12/31    |

### **Monday thru Friday**

| <u>Class</u>            | <u>Birthday Cut-off</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Kindergarten (half day) | 5 years-old by 9/1      |

\*Flex 4 4's - You may pick any 3 days out of the Mon-Thu scheduling. The 3 days you pick MUST remain the same 3 days throughout the year.

Children will not advance into another preschool class during the school year.

**Children must be reliably potty trained and completely self-sufficient in the bathroom.**

La Casa de Cristo Christian Preschool admits students of every race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarships, program and athletic and other school administered programs.

PUBLIC RIGHT TO KNOW : A.R.S.Title 36 – Chapter 7.1

The case records regarding this facility are available for inspection at the Office of Child Care Licensure and this facility.  
Licensing address and telephone number: ADHS/Assurance and Licensure Services, Office of Child Care Licensure  
150 North 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 400 Phoenix, AZ 85007 1-602-364-2539

## **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

1. Registration for continuing students and church members is conducted approximately the first week in February. This is a closed, priority registration period exclusively for students in these two categories, and they will receive priority placement over siblings, past siblings, and community members. Completed registration forms are filled out online. Registration forms must be submitted by the established deadline to be given priority. All church members and continuing students registering during this period are guaranteed placement at La Casa de Cristo Preschool for the next school year.
2. The registration “guarantee” refers only to the assurance that continuing students and church members’ children enrolling are confirmed a placement within the school. **The “guarantee” does NOT refer to teacher assignment.**
3. The \$300.00 registration fee **MUST** accompany the online registration form. **This fee is non-refundable & not tax deductible.**
4. The demand for certain class options is great. In the event that a particular class fills with continuing students and church members, all others will be put on a waitlist. You will not be charged the Registration fee until removed off the waitlist and confirmed in a classroom.
5. Class confirmation notification letters will be emailed with instructions to complete online the rest of your required enrollment paperwork.
6. Parent’s next contact after confirmation and enrollment paperwork is completed will be in early August. Parents will receive information regarding classroom/teacher assignments, classroom visits, Parent Orientation, and the beginning of the new school year.
7. Tuition fees are paid on a monthly basis. Only August tuition is prorated, all other months (September through May) are full tuition without adjustment due to holiday or student absences.
8. Daily class time hours are 9:15a-12:00p on day(s) student is enrolled. 9:15a – 1:00p with Lunch Bunch included. 9:15a – 2:00p with Lunch Bunch and Discovery Time included.

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

**Arrival and Dismissal:** School is in session from 9:15a to 12:00p, Lunch Bunch from 12:00p-1:00p, and Discovery Time from 1:00p-2:00p. Children should be dropped off and picked up at the classroom door promptly at arrival and dismissal time.

**Parking:** Parents should use the side (east) preschool parking lot and children should be closely supervised while traveling to and from classrooms due to the heavy traffic at these times. The fire lane should at no time be used for parking.

**Sign-in and Sign-out:** State licensing requires that all children be signed in and signed out each day by the parent, guardian, or a designated responsible adult. A signature of the person responsible for the child and exact time of drop off and pick up is required on the sign in/out sheets, which are located outside the classroom doors. Children will be released only to persons listed on the Blue Form/Yellow Card as having permission to pick-up a child, unless a parent has notified the teacher or Director otherwise. Identification will be required at the classroom door or in the preschool office prior to release of the child. Students shall be accessible to parents at any time.

**Late Charge:** A late charge of \$10.00 for the first 15 minutes or any portion thereof, and \$1.00 for each additional minute thereafter will be assessed to parents picking-up children later than applicable dismissal times. Children may be picked up in the Preschool Office after these times.

**Absence:** Please contact the Preschool Office if your child will be absent from school due to a contagious illness or communicable disease so that other parents may be notified of possible exposure.

**Self-Sufficient in the Bathroom:** Children must be reliably toilet trained to attend preschool classes. Children may not attend preschool wearing a pull-up diaper. Occasional “accidents” will be handled in a positive and non-threatening manner.

**Appropriate Clothing:** Children should arrive at school dressed in comfortable clothing that permits normal play. A child cannot truly explore and enjoy our program if he/she is concerned about getting their clothes messy. Fancy dresses and skirts are not conducive to active play. Sandals can be hazardous on the playground and in PE class. Tennis shoes or sneakers are recommended to protect busy feet.

**Snack:** Snacks are provided on a daily basis through a volunteer sign up program by parents. Nutritious snacks that comply with the Department of Health Services’ guidelines are listed on monthly snack calendars posted on classroom parent bulletin boards. As much as possible, La Casa is a “peanut free” campus; however, parents of children with peanut allergies should exercise caution regarding certain snack items and the production of those items, which may be brought into the classroom. For their safety, children with specific food allergies are required to provide their own snack on a daily basis.

**Medication and Illness:** Generally, medication will not be administered at school. Exceptions may be made for specific cases, such as allergies and chronic conditions, with written consent on file. Only Director, Assistant Director or child’s classroom teacher(s) will administer these medications. If a child should become ill at school, or an accident should occur, he/she would be made comfortable while isolated in the Preschool Office.

Parents or emergency contacts would be notified immediately. In case of injury or sudden illness, which would warrant professional attention, 911 will be called. A staff person with current First-aid training and CPR certification will always be available.

School Calendar: A school calendar will be issued at Parent Orientation prior to the first day of school. The Preschool generally follows the Paradise Valley School District calendar with necessary exceptions.

Discipline: R9-5-510. Positive Discipline and Guidance

A staff member shall provide guidance to help children respond to difficult situations. To develop self-regulation, children should receive adult support that is individual to the child and adapts as the child develops internal controls. This process should include:

1. Forming a positive relationship with the child, which occurs when the adult spends time talking to the child, listening to the child, following the child's lead, playing with the child, and responding to the child's needs;
2. Base expectations on the child's developmental level;
3. Establishing and being proactive in teaching and supporting children in learning simple rules;
4. Modifying the learning/play environment to support the child's appropriate behavior;
5. Creating a predictable daily routine and schedule;
6. Modeling desired behavior;
7. Showing children positive alternatives;
8. Using deliberate redirections, the staff member should encourage the child to use appropriate behavior, and provide positive feedback when the child exhibits the behavior;
9. Individualized positive discipline strategies based on the individual needs of children, such as using a buddy system, individualized schedule, special break, or another applicable positive discipline strategy; and
10. If applicable, a licensee shall develop a written plan with the enrolled child's parent to provide individualized social and emotional intervention supports for the enrolled child that includes methods for understanding the enrolled child's behavior, and developing, adopting, and implementing a team-based positive behavior support plan.

Withdrawal and Termination Policy: If a student is withdrawing during the school year, we require thirty days ADVANCE notice given in WRITING/Email by the tenth of the month or tuition will be due for the following month. The school may terminate the enrollment of any student for continual late pickup, non-payment or when it is considered that the school cannot adequately meet the needs of the student

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

**Preschool PTO:** Help plan events, determine fundraising and to assist in special activities. Contact the Preschool Office if you are interested in receiving more information.

**Parent Orientation:** Parent Orientation will be held prior to the first week of school. This event affords parents the opportunity to become familiar with teachers, classrooms and program goals and objectives for the year. The teachers will contact parents during the month of August to notify them of dates for Parent Orientation and to schedule classroom visits.

**Communication:** School to Parent communication is primarily achieved through an all-school bulletin board, classroom bulletin boards, weekly update emails, including weekly lesson plans. Teachers or the office may send special announcements home from time to time. As much as feasibly possible, all communications are sent electronically through a school wide email system.

**Conferences:** Parent conferences are offered for all classes. The purpose of any conference is to provide parents with an opportunity to establish dialogue with the teachers regarding their child's progress. Conferences are conducted in late January to discuss areas of growth/progress in all developmental areas. A developmental checklist is provided outlining appropriate milestones in the areas of social, emotional, cognitive and physical growth. A completed developmental profile will be given to parents in May. Should concerns arise, a conference may be scheduled with teachers/parents and director/parents anytime throughout the year, or to consult with teachers regarding recommendations for placement the following year.

**Parent Participation:** La Casa de Cristo Christian Preschool has an "open door" policy whereby parents are welcome and encouraged to participate in a variety of activities such as snack sign-up, classroom visits, health screenings, and holiday celebrations. Positions for Room Parents as well as Preschool Office Volunteers are all needed to help periodically throughout the school year. All visitors/helpers must sign in and out at the Preschool Office upon entering/leaving the school campus.

**Special Events:** Special events will be held during the year, which will involve parents and families. Notices of these events will be sent home and/or announced through school communication methods. Due to a lack of space and the large number of families involved in our preschool we regret that we are unable to provide childcare and must sometimes limit invitations to parents only, or welcome parents with younger children as spectators only.

## **SERVICES**

**Clinics:** Several health clinics such as vision, hearing and speech screening may be provided throughout the year to assure the well-being of the children.

**School Pictures:** Individual and class pictures will be taken in the fall and spring.

**Insurance:** An adequate insurance policy is carried on all students and staff. It includes liability coverage for classroom, playground and campus areas. A copy of the policy is available for review upon request.

**Licensing:** Licensing for purposes of operation is secured through the Arizona Department of Health Services. A yearly inspection assures compliance with state regulations. All staff members are background checked through DPS and possess a clearance card.

**Fire Drills:** Fire drills are conducted monthly.

**Special Needs:** Special needs children will be accepted on a needs' basis with the following provisions, (1) it is determined by the Director that the Preschool is able to meet the individual needs of the child and (2) there is no adverse effect upon other children, either through direct behavior of the child or through requiring staff time needed for the children.

**Standing Field Trip Form:** This form will need to be signed for your child to attend Preschool Chapel on Wednesday or Thursday in the Sanctuary.

**Campus Safety:** Supervision is not provided before or after school hours. It is the responsibility of the parent to monitor their child's safety in all areas of campus during those periods. During school hours, it is the responsibility of the staff to provide supervision.

**Pesticide Control:** Regularly scheduled pesticide spraying is conducted on this campus. In the event of application, notification prior to 48 hours shall be given by posting of date and chemicals used on main parent board in the school entrance.

## **GUIDELINES FOR EXCLUDING FROM PRESCHOOL\*\***

Certain symptoms in children may suggest the presence of a communicable disease. Children who have the following symptoms will be excluded from the preschool setting until 1) a physician has certified the symptoms are not associated with an infectious agent or they are no longer a threat to the health of other children at the preschool or 2) the symptoms have subsided.

A child is required to be free of symptoms or episode of fever, diarrhea and vomiting for a full 24 hours before returning to school. If a child is sent home with any of these symptoms present, the 24 hour period shall begin at that time.

**Fever** - Axillary or oral temperature: 100F or higher or Rectal temperature of 101F or higher, especially if accompanied by other symptoms

**Respiratory** - Difficult or rapid breathing or severe persistent cough, makes

**Symptoms** - High-pitched croupy or whooping sound, unable to lie comfortably

**Diarrhea** - An increased number of abnormally loose stools in the previous 24-hours. Observe the child for other symptoms such as fever, abdominal pains, or vomiting.

**Vomiting** - One episode of vomiting within the previous 24 hours.

**Eye/Nose Drainage** - Thick, mucus or pus draining from the eyes or nose or green color discharge

**Sore Throat** - Sore throat, especially when fever or swollen glands in the neck are present.

**Skin Problems** - Rash and Skin rashes, undiagnosed or contagious infected sores. Sores with crusty, yellow or green drainage, which cannot be covered by clothing or bandages.

**Itching** - Persistent itching (or scratching) of body or scalp.

**Appearance/Behavior** - Child looks or acts differently: unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable or difficult to awaken.

**Unusual Color** - Eyes or skin - yellow (jaundice) These symptoms can be found in Hepatitis and should be evaluated by a physician. Stool is gray or white. Urine is dark, tea colored

In the event of an outbreak of disease at this school, children whose immunizations against the disease are exempted due to religious beliefs or medical reasons will be removed from the preschool setting for the duration of the incubation period or as specified by the health department. During the current Covid-19 pandemic parents will be requested to acknowledge, by separate agreement, understanding of additional health protocols and guidelines.