



Growing With Grace Preschool

2023-2024

Parent Handbook



Grace Lutheran Church
501 Valley Park Drive
Libertyville, IL 60048

Growing With Grace Preschool Board

Janelle Petersen - President
Suzanne Bensch - Vice President
Ken Pinter - Treasurer
Alison Sullivan - Secretary
Caroline Grodzki - Parent Liaison
Callie Johnson - Council Liaison
Sarah McAuliffe- GWG Director

Growing With Grace Preschool
Contact Information

847/254-5820 – Preschool Phone Website- www.growingwithgracepreschool.org

growingwgracepreschool@gmail.com – Preschool

growingwithgraceinvoice@gmail.com – Tuition/Invoices

gwgpsboardparent@gmail.com – Preschool Board Parent Liaison

CLASS EMAILS

Terrific Twos	gwgterrifictwos@gmail.com
Tremendous Threes MWF	gwgthreesmwf@gmail.com
Tremendous Threes TTH	gwgthreestth@gmail.com
Fabulous Fours Blue	gwgfoursblue@gmail.com
Fabulous Fours Green	gwgfoursgreen@gmail.com
Fabulous Fours Yellow	gwgfoursyellow@gmail.com
Adventures Classes	gwgadventures@gmail.com

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Growing With Grace Preschool Philosophy

Since 2006, Growing With Grace Preschool, a ministry of Grace Lutheran Church, has served the families of Libertyville and the surrounding communities with programs for two, three, and four-year-olds. Our programs provide a nurturing, stimulating, and safe learning environment.

Our teaching approach includes a combination of child-centered and teacher-directed activities. We focus on developing the whole child through a variety of hands-on individual and group activities. We believe play is the center of a preschool experience and through it we teach a developmentally appropriate curriculum based on monthly/or seasonal themes.

Children in our program have the chance to grow intellectually, socially, physically, spiritually and creatively all the while ensuring that when they leave our program and head to elementary school, they are well prepared to handle kindergarten and beyond.

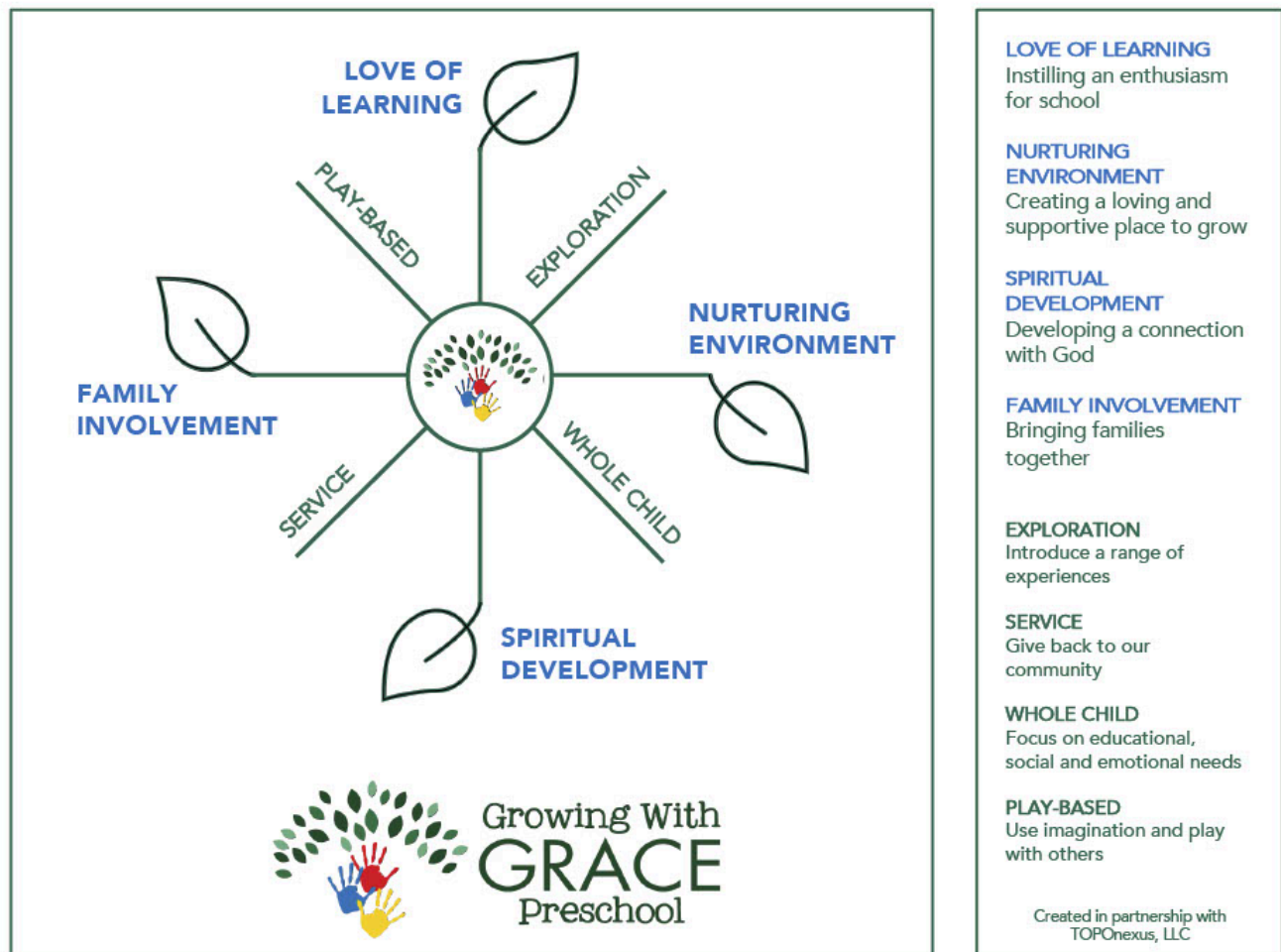
Our goal is to embed the love for learning from the very first experience in our classrooms.

Guiding Principles

At Growing With Grace Preschool, we uphold a specific way of learning represented on our GWG Compass. We use our GWG compass to guide us in meeting the needs of every child.

Our four guiding principles are shown as the cardinal directions: Love of Learning, Nurturing Environment, Spiritual Development, and Family Involvement.

Our four practices we use in programming are shown as the ordinal directions: Exploration, Whole Child, Service, and Play-Based.



Operating Hours/School Calendar/School Closings

Monday/Wednesday: 8:45-12:30 p.m.

Tuesday/Thursday: 8:45-2:30 p.m.

Friday: 8:45-11:30 a.m.

Parents receive a complete calendar, listing all holidays and breaks at the beginning of each school year. GWG follows the vacation schedule of Libertyville District 70 schools. School closings will be communicated via Seesaw. All families will be notified, as GWG may be closed when deemed necessary by the Director and the Board President. GWG does not reimburse tuition for days canceled due to weather or any other unforeseen situation.

Core Class Offerings

TINY TWOS

Available for children who turn two years old by December 31, 2023.

For those students who miss the age cutoff for the formal Tremendous Twos class, we offer a two-hour program that is focused on building independence and helping our youngest kids get ready for the preschool process. Our class size is limited to eight students, who will be taught by two teachers. This program runs during the second semester of the school year.

Class Objectives:

- 1. Build independence**
- 2. Improve social skills through integration of play with other children**
- 3. Begin to use words to express feelings and resolve conflict**
- 4. Begin to learn to follow directions and transitions**

TERRIFIC TWOS

Available for children who are 2 years old as of September 1, 2023

We offer a two-hour program that is focused on monthly themes, free play, circle time activities and art projects. Our class size is limited to 10 students with two teachers. Parental involvement is not required.

Class Objectives:

1. **Build independence**
2. **Improve social skills through integration of play with other children**
3. **Use words to express feelings and resolve conflict**
4. **Learn to follow directions and transitions**
5. **Shapes, colors, counting, and name recognition**

TREMENDOUS THREES

The class sizes are limited to 15 students with two teachers. Parent helping is not required, but there are numerous opportunities to join us in the classroom.

Class Objectives:

1. **Social developmental skills**
2. **Colors**
3. **Math skills- shapes, number recognition, counting, one to one correspondence, graphing, patterning, sorting**
4. **Literacy skills- letter recognition, name recognition**
5. **Science exploration**
6. **Fine motor skills**
7. **Large motor skills**
8. **Self help & independence skills**

FABULOUS FOURS

The ultimate goal of our programs is to ensure that your child is ready – academically, socially and emotionally – for their start of Kindergarten. Our curriculum revolves around monthly themes where each circle time and class activity incorporates an academic lesson related to the theme. Kindergarten readiness skills are taught in all aspects of our program.

The class sizes are limited to 15 students with two teachers. Parent helping is not required, but there are numerous opportunities to join us in the classroom.

Sample Daily Schedule for GWG Core Classes

1. **Greetings**
2. **Outdoor & large motor play**
3. **Arrival Activity**
4. **First Circle time**
 - **jobs, learning lesson**
5. **Snack time**
6. **Activity time**
 - **free choice, projects, small group/teacher time**
7. **Clean Up time**
8. **Second Circle time**
 - **story time and music/movement**
9. **Goodbyes**

Health & Nutrition

Immunizations

New students registering at Growing with Grace after Sept 1, 2023 must be up to date on their immunizations against childhood diseases, per CDC guidelines. Each new child must have on file, a current Illinois physical form including a copy of his/her immunization record verified from his/her doctor's office. The DTP, Polio, Rubella (German Measles), Measles, Mumps, Hib, PCV and Hepatitis B vaccine shots are required immunizations for preschools. If your child requires a medical exemption, documentation must be signed by an appropriate medical professional. Growing with Grace does *not allow* religious exemptions for immunizations. For children not meeting immunization requirements, you will be notified by the preschool immediately. Should you fail to provide the preschool with an updated copy of your child's immunization record or proof of an immunization schedule, your child will not be permitted to return to preschool until the necessary documentation is provided. (Please see the director if you have any questions/concerns regarding your child's immunizations.) All up to date immunization records are to be turned in to the director August 1st for the upcoming school year.

Hand Washing

Thorough and frequent hand washing is extremely important to prevent the spread of germs in the classroom. Parents of Twos will be asked to assist their children in washing their hands before entering the classroom. The Threes will wash their hands after outside play before entering the classroom and use hand sanitizer before snack. The Fours use hand sanitizer upon arrival and wash their hands before snack.

Illness

Please do not bring your child to school if he/she shows any of the following symptoms:

- *Fever
- *Nausea/Vomiting
- *Diarrhea
- *Headache
- *Rash
- *Excessive nasal discharge
- *Sore throat

Illnesses spread quickly, so we ask that you cooperate fully with this regulation as it is designated to protect the well being of the children and teachers. Your child must be free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school. Please notify the Director or church office immediately if your child has a contagious disease (influenza, mumps, measles, chicken pox, scarlet fever, strep throat, pink eye or head lice).

If a child falls ill at school, they will be removed from the classroom and the parents will be called to pick them up. Conditions requiring special medical treatment will be handled on an individual basis. Please be sure to continually update your emergency information so that you can be reached promptly if this situation occurs.

Emergency Medical Care

Parents or the emergency contact will be called in an event of injury or illness. In an event of a serious emergency we will call 911 and your child will be transported to Condell Medical Center, accompanied by a teacher or Grace staff member. Any expenses incurred during emergency medical care will be the responsibility of the parents.

Food Allergies

We work individually with parents of children with food allergies or diet restrictions to make accommodations/modifications for snack, cooking activities, and sensory table items. We require a copy of the *Illinois Allergy Action Plan* to be completed by the parents. We meet to discuss the child's allergy and details. If an epi pen or Benadryl are included in the plan, the parent provides it and we keep it in a sealed/labeled bag. Your child's class may be asked to modify the list of appropriate snacks. The parents of a child with allergies, may be asked to bring in separate safe snacks for their child to keep at school. Specified foods may not be permitted in the classroom. If there is a question if a certain item is safe for the child, the GWG Director or classroom teachers will reach out to the parents. All individual allergies are posted in each classroom.

Snacks

Snacks are provided by each child on a rotating basis. We ask that you provide a nutritious snack that is commercially prepared and must arrive unopened as packaged. We will offer water for the beverage. Please do not bring snacks that are packaged as individual servings. **We are a PEANUT and NUT FREE school.** Several children have food allergies. Please make sure you are aware of any allergies in your classroom. The snack bag we provide has an attached tag listing allergies and safe snacks. **Please bring in a snack ONLY from the list we provide (besides birthday treats). The list is brand specific and snacks not on the list will be sent home.** The approved snack list is on the GWG website and a copy is given in the folders at Parent Night. Please make sure you have spoken with the Director/Teachers if your child has a food allergy.

Birthdays/Holidays

Your child will be assigned as snack person as close to their birthday as possible & may bring a special snack (see the Birthday treat section of the GWG Snack List). If your child's birthday is during the summer, we can celebrate early or do a half birthday celebration. We celebrate Halloween/pumpkins in the classroom, but we DO NOT wear Halloween costumes to school. We celebrate Christmas as Jesus's birthday. We celebrate Valentine's. We celebrate St. Patrick's Day and Easter if the dates coincide with the GWG calendar dates.

Outdoor Play

We follow <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/wind-heat-chart.pdf> to determine the temperature, factoring in the wind chill to make our decision regarding outdoor play. We play outside unless the thermometer reads 15 degrees or less, or there is a bitter wind chill or threat of severe rain/weather. Please send your child to school with appropriate clothing for all weather conditions. GWG tries to send outdoor play updates via SeeSaw in the morning if the conditions are questionable.

Safety and Security

Absences

Please contact your teacher or the Director via a SeeSaw message or email or call the school cell phone at 847-254-5820 if your child will be absent from school. Messages may be left on the preschool voicemail. Please contact GWG before class begins if possible and leave the reason for the absence. Facilities and staff are provided whether or not the child attends. Therefore, tuition and fee remain the same each week regardless of illness, personal days, and emergency closings.

Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

Terrific Twos:

Arrival: Please park in the middle spaces in the parking lot and enter through the Cafe Grace door (East Entrance). You will receive a key fob to use to enter this door (\$20 cash deposit required and will be returned in May). Please wash your child's hands in the bathroom and proceed to the classroom. Doors open at 9:10 a.m.

Dismissal: Please park in the middle spaces in the parking lot and proceed to the playground gate to pick up your child. In inclement weather, come inside to the multipurpose room to pick up your child.

Tremendous Threes:

Arrival: Arrival will be a carpool line at 8:45 a.m.. We start the day playing outside so please drive your car to the sidewalk by the playground following the cones set up in the parking lot. We will take your child out of your car and walk them to the playground area. If we play inside due to inclement weather we will still use the carpool line and drop off is the sidewalk between the two white sheds.

Dismissal: Dismissal is at 11:15 a.m. for the Threes class. Please park in the middle rows of the parking lot. Access the church using the door near the playground on the East side of the church. Each family will receive a key fob for door entry on the first day of school. There is a \$20 deposit that is required for the fob and will be returned at the end of the school year when you return the fob. If needed, additional fobs can be obtained in the church office after the first day of school. Once inside please go downstairs and wait outside of the Threes classroom for the teachers to dismiss your child to you. Please check their mailbox outside of the classroom for any items to bring home and take your child to their coat hook to get their coat and backpack etc. then exit the building using the SAME door you entered. Lunch Bunch and Adventures class dismissal will be communicated to you separately.

Fabulous Fours:

Arrival and Dismissal will take place via a carpool line in the Grace Lutheran Church parking lot. Please pull forward to one of the 4 designated unloading spaces. Have your child ready for a quick exit at arrival and please buckle them quickly at dismissal or pull into a middle parking space if more time is needed.

You will receive two name signs with your child's name on the first day of school; please attach to your visor and display at both arrival and dismissal. If possible, please place your child's car seat on the driver side.

Arrival unloading begins at 8:55 a.m. and a staff member will help your child out of the car and will take them in the building.

Dismissal begins at 11:30 a.m. from the playground or sidewalk adjacent to the field or in inclement weather dismissal is from the door between the white sheds.

Additional Security

Entrance doors to Growing with Grace programs are locked at all times.

Fire Drills will be conducted throughout the school year, as well as a lockdown drill.

Classroom Information

Dress/Items From Home

Dress your child appropriately for the weather and class activities. Remember we will have outdoor play and do numerous arts and crafts. Please always keep a complete change of clothes in your child's bag (including diapers and wipes if needed). **Be sure to label all items.**

Please leave toys, blankets, etc. at home unless we have requested that something special be brought to school.

Discipline

Appropriate rules, which guide the behavior of children, will be emphasized & carried out in a non-threatening manner. Teachers will call attention to the children who are exhibiting positive behaviors as a way to encourage other children to emulate the behavior. Clear, consistent, and complete directions will be given during transition periods. Teachers will set limits and advise children of the consequences. Redirection to another activity and practice using words rather than physical aggression will be encouraged to solve difficulties. If a child is acting in a way that is harmful to himself/herself or others, a brief “time-out” will be used. It will be clear that it is the misbehavior that is disliked, and not the child. We use the green/red choices behavior plan.

Disruptive behavior will be reported to the parents. If a child has difficulty managing his/her behavior on a recurring basis, parents will be asked to meet with the child’s teacher and Preschool Director. Together they will create a “Behavior Action Plan” to help the child display more appropriate behavior in the classroom. We will work together to hopefully resolve the situation. If the child’s behavior continues to be inappropriate and consistently disruptive, it may be necessary for the child to not attend school for a time to be determined, or removed from the program altogether. The Preschool Director and Preschool Board will determine the course of action. Tuition refunds will be voted on by the Preschool Board.

Parent Information

Parent Meetings/Special Events

We have a parent meeting in early September, and various events to welcome families and encourage community throughout the year. Please keep an eye on Seesaw to get dates and times.

School Days Off and Closing

Refer to the Growing With Grace calendar to confirm days off. In the event of an emergency closure, you will be notified by Growing with Grace.

Field Trips/Enrichment

Off Site: We will schedule off site field trips throughout the year. The Threes classes will take walking field trips to local businesses and a METRA train trip in the Spring. The Fours will take driving field trips. We rely on parent support for these trips and will ask for drivers and chaperones. All children must have a car seat and may not sit in the front seat of a vehicle. A sign-up sheet for volunteers will be posted prior to each field trip. The Terrific Twos classes do not take field trips.

On Site: We have partnered with several local instructors in music, yoga, dance, to conduct several on-site classes to enhance our curriculum. There is an additional supplemental fee to cover the cost of these programs. You will receive an invoice in October. Additionally, we are pleased that the Cook Memorial Library Bookmobile will be visiting our school periodically throughout the year. During these visits children will be able to check out a book to bring to the classroom.

School Pictures

Bella Vie Studio in Grayslake will take class/individual pictures in late September/early October. The pictures can be viewed and ordered online. You will receive details from the photographer.

Home/School Communication

Communication

We will post a monthly calendar on the Seesaw app, which will include the themes of the month, special events, and daily snack assignments. All programs will have a weekly class update posted on Seesaw by Sunday for the upcoming week. Please be sure to check the class message boards near the sign out binder, as well as your child's mailbox, on a daily basis for artwork and additional current information. Teachers will often send reminders of upcoming dates and events on Seesaw as well. Each month there will be opportunities to assist in all programs. We use Signup.com to post volunteer opportunities. If these times are not convenient, you can arrange another time with your child's teachers. Each class has a separate gmail address and this is used for parent/teacher communication. The preschool director, bookkeeper, and parent board all have separate gmail addresses for direct contact with them.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Terrific Twos do not hold conferences. Tremendous Threes will have conferences on March 8th, 2024. THE Fabulous Fours will have conferences on March 7th, 2024. There will be no core class or Lunch Bunch on these dates for these students. The Twos and Adventures classes will meet on these dates. The staff is always available to address any concerns you may have about your child, and are available to meet as needed.

Fundraising Opportunities

Book Orders

You will receive bi-monthly book orders from Scholastic Book Clubs. This is a great way for you to expand your home library while helping our classroom library grow as well. For every book purchased, we receive points that we redeem for classroom books.

Fundraisers

Fundraising options will be communicated throughout the year. Participation is encouraged, but is strictly voluntary. More information will follow.



Grace Lutheran Church Staff

Matthew Smith-Laubenstein – Senior Pastor

Rachel Emken – Office Administrator

Francis Villalez - Janitor

Tuition Rates/Payment Procedures 2024-2025

Tuition Rates:

Terrific Twos

*2 days per week: \$220

*1 day per week: \$120

Tremendous Threes

*3 days per week: \$340

Fabulous Fours

*3 days per week: \$340

Adventures

*Morning: \$135

*Afternoon: \$125

Lunch Bunch

*1 day per month: \$45

*2 days per month: \$90

Registration Fee:

*One child- \$100 * Each additional child- \$25

*Tiny Twos- \$50 * Adventures Only- \$50

Due June 1, 2024

*September 2024 Tuition (for core classes)

*Supply Fee of \$150 for the school year

Due August 1, 2024

*May 2024 Tuition (for core classes, Adventures classes, & Lunch Bunch)

*The following forms are due by AUGUST 1st:

-General Permission and Student/Family Forms (on GWG website)

-Immunization record for all new incoming students (children must be current with all immunizations)

- A signed and dated copy of your child's most recent medical examination
- If your child has food allergies- you need to complete the Illinois Food Allergy Emergency Action Plan (on GWG website)

These payments are non-refundable and will secure your child's spot for the upcoming school year.

Monthly Tuition:

Tuition is due on or before the first of each month, beginning October 1- April 1. Also, if you prefer, you can pay for multiple months at a time or for the semester or entire school year. However, we are not able to offer a discount for paying in full. You will not receive a paper tuition invoice, but you will receive a monthly email reminder.

Payment Procedures/Options

Please choose the method that is most convenient for your family:

1. *Online payments* can be made by electronic check. Visit the GWG website, <https://growingwithgracepreschool.org/>. You will see tabs across the top right. Click on the Parent Resources tab, then select the Tuition Payments tab from the drop down menu, and this will bring you to the Vanco Payment site. Click on the class tiles you are making payments for and add them to your basket. Once your basket is complete, press the continue to payment button. On the Payment Method screen, the credit/debit card option will appear. **You must toggle to the right to the Bank Account tab and proceed from there.** We are unable to offer payments via credit card due to the high fees associated with those transactions.

Returning families can use their log-in from last year. New families can create an account to set up payments. Click on the 'Sign Up' link on the top right corner to set up your account. After you have set up an account, then you will need to login each time. Click on the button for the class(es) for which you will be making a payment and add them to your basket. When you are ready to make your payment- use the bank account tab.

It is also an option to have your tuition payment made automatically through Vanco each month. This will be a separate process than if you wish to pay each month manually by choosing the appropriate tiles for your child's class.

To set up recurring payments, look for the Recurring Tuition Payment tile on the Vanco site. Click on the button to open the tile. Fill in the amount you wish to pay each month. This should be the total monthly tuition rate for your child's class or classes. Choose monthly

under the "Frequency" tab. Choose the first day of the month that you would like the payments to begin. They will then occur on this day of each month automatically. In the Class Names section, please list the class or classes for which this payment is intended. Click "Add to Basket" to continue to the payment screen.

You will only need to follow these steps once. Recurring tuition payments should be set up to run from October 2023 - April 2024 since we collect the September 2023 and May 2024 payments this summer. Make sure that all recurring transactions are stopped prior to May 1, 2024.

2. *Payments by check* can be made at school/church. Place the payment in the drop box that is located on the rear of the white shed adjacent to the parking lot in the rear of the church. Use the walkway between the 2 white sheds to access the drop box on the rear of the shed. **Any payment by check** goes in the drop box. Please do not give payments to staff. Checks should be made payable to **Grace Lutheran Church**. Please put your child's name & class on the memo line of your check. Envelopes are not needed. If you have multiple children in the program, you can write one check for all of them.

3. *Automatic payments* can be scheduled through your bank. If you do this, please have Growing with Grace added to the second line of the address to assist our church secretary in separating tuition payments from regular church offerings. Please make sure you have the recurring payments stopped prior to May 1, 2024.

If you are making payment by automatic debit, your account will be charged or the funds withdrawn on the date you make or schedule the payment. If you are making payment by check, feel free to drop checks off early. We will not deposit them until after the 10th of every month.

Classes are subject to change due to changes in enrollment, staffing, and public health circumstances.

Please contact Sarah McAuliffe at growingwgracepreschool@gmail.com or the GWG bookkeeper at growingwithgraceinvoice@gmail.com if you need to make special payment arrangements or have any questions.

Tuition Policy

Tuition Payments- The September tuition and Supply Fee are due in June. The May tuition is due in August. Monthly tuition is due October-April. Tuition is due on or before the first of the month.

Late Fee- An email notification will be sent to families that have not paid tuition on the 5th of the month. If tuition is not paid by the 10th of the month, another email reminder will be sent and there will be a late fee of \$20 charged to your account. One waiver per family may be issued.

Any family account not paid in full by the 15th of the month will result in the child's immediate withdrawal (unless late payment is approved by the preschool director and preschool board). Re-enrollment is subject to availability after both the outstanding balance and an initial enrollment fee of \$100 are paid.

Any families who are delinquent on tuition are subject to an appeal by the church council and preschool board. This may include a preferred payment structure and/or an evaluation of the student(s) enrollment status.

Returned Checks - A first returned check will be assessed the bank fee for the insufficient funds.

If a second check is returned, a \$25 charge will be assessed in addition to the bank NSF fee. Your child may not return to Growing with Grace if the check is not paid within 48 hours of being notified that the check was returned. After two returned checks, your tuition must be paid by cash or cashiers check.

Absentee Policy- Full payment of tuition is required every month, whether or not the child attends school the full month. There is no absentee credit when school is missed because of holidays, vacations, illness, isolation, quarantine, or for any other reason.

There are no refunds or make up classes due to emergency or weather school closures

A child may be withdrawn from any program by giving written notice to the Director at least thirty days prior to the child's last day of school. Tuition for the current month and the May tuition are non-refundable.