St. Matthew Lutheran
Early Childhood Center
Parent Handbook 2026-2027

St. Matthew Lutheran Early Childhood Center (SML-ECC) welcomes you, your children, and family to our Christian education program. SML-ECC provides an alternative to parents who want their children educated in a loving Christian atmosphere by caring, committed Christian educators. SML-ECC is part of the largest Protestant Christian school system in the United States with over two thousand, five hundred schools at the preschool, elementary, secondary, and collegiate levels. SML-ECC is a member of the Northern Illinois District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The unique purpose of SML-ECC is to provide a Christ-centered, educational program in which children can grow spiritually, developing their God-given talents while developing academically, emotionally, socially, and physically.

Mission Statement

Because of the love Jesus has shown us, the St. Matthew Early Childhood Center will meet the ***boundless need*** of the children spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively through a faith and play-based learning environment.

Because of the ***boundless love*** Jesus has shown us, children and families will learn about Him and His Word.

Because of the ***boundless hope*** Jesus' love provides us, we grow in faith, love, and service to others.

To fulfill our mission...

We will provide daily stories, lessons, Chapel and Jesus Time, to put Jesus in the hearts of children and families.

We will offer a Christ-centered education that encompasses a wide variety of academic play centers.

We will meet the needs of each child through our student-centered project approach. We will share the word of God with the children, so they can share with others.

Vision Statement

"Boundless Need, Boundless Love, Boundless Hope"

Core Values – FAITH

• Fostering a personal relationship with Jesus Christ

• Academic excellence

• Inspiring individuality

• Transforming our community

• Honoring all our relationships

Philosophy

St. Matthew Lutheran Congregation recognizes that the prime responsibility for bringing up children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" rests with the parents. However, it also understands that the Church has been commanded by its Founder to "teach all nations...whatsoever I have commanded you". Consequently, St. Matthew Lutheran Church maintains an Early Childhood Center to help parents carry out their God-given duty and to fulfill its own responsibility.

Each child is a unique creation of God, created to grow daily in the knowledge of God the Father as Creator, God the Son as Redeemer, and God the Holy Spirit as Sanctifier. To that end, St. Matthew Lutheran School Early Childhood Center is a mission of the church through which Christ's Great Commission is carried out ("Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations..." Matthew 28:19-20).

St. Matthew Lutheran Early Childhood Center can help parents give their children a sound Christian education in an environment conducive to learning. Lessons based upon the Bible, the Lutheran Confessions, devotions, and worship experiences make up the formal part of the Christian education program. Every subject in every class is focused on Christ. As Christ becomes the center of the child's thinking, God's love becomes the motivating power for the child's present and future activity.

Accreditation

St. Matthew Lutheran Church has operated an educational program since 1863. Although many changes have taken place throughout the years, St. Matthew Lutheran Church has always placed a high priority that St. Matthew Lutheran Early Childhood Center be spiritually supportive to both church and family and strive for continual academic excellence. SML-ECC continues to stay current with educational philosophies and thought while maintaining its diligence to the Word of God.

Therefore, SML-ECC is accredited by the National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA), the Northern Illinois District of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. These accreditations are the result of successful and ongoing growth through school improvement plans and are monitored through annual reports and accrediting visitations.

Enrollment Policy

The purpose of this policy is to outline the rules, requirements, and procedures for registering a student in St. Matthew Lutheran Church & Early Childhood Center (ECC) program. The required forms are available on the St. Matthew ECC website and are described below.

To enroll in the ECC, parents must complete the registration form for the appropriate school year as presented on the St. Matthew ECC website and pay the non-refundable registration fee to hold your placement with ECC. The payment contract contains the registration amount as well as the payment methods accepted and is located on the ECC website (www.stmatts.net/ecc).

A valid birth certificate must be presented for proof of identity and age as described below. The student must be 3 years old and potty trained to be eligible for the 3-year-old program. Students enrolling in the 4-year-old program must be 4 years old prior to the start of school year, or they will be enrolled in the 3-year-old program.

Additional forms will be supplied to parents and must be completed prior to the first day of school. These include the Photo Release form as well as the payment contract. Parents enrolling their child in ECC must also read the Parent Handbook and sign and return the last page of the document. Again, all forms are located on the ECC website (www.stmatts.net/ecc).

Birth Certificate requirements

Within 30 days of enrollment for the first time, the parent must provide a certified copy of the child's birth certificate or other reliable proof of identity and age of the child. The ECC will make a duplicate copy and return the original certified copy to the parent no later than the next business day. If a certified copy is not available the parent must submit a passport, visa or other government documentation as proof of the child's identity and age and an affidavit or notarized letter explaining the inability to produce a certified copy of the birth certificate. The ECC is required by law to notify the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency if the parent fails to submit proof of the child's identity within the 30-day time frame. The ECC will notify the parent in writing that the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement has been notified as required by law, and the parent will have 10 additional days to comply by submitting the

required documentation. Any documentation received that appears inaccurate or suspicious in form or content will be reported to the Illinois State Police or local law enforcement agency.

Administration

St. Matthew Lutheran Early Childhood Center operates as a ministry of St. Matthew Lutheran Church and is governed by the policies of the elected Board of Christian Education of St. Matthew Lutheran Church.

SML-ECC welcomes students of any race, sex, and/or ethnic/national origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities at school. Furthermore, SML-ECC does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, and/or ethnic/national origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, athletic or other school-administered programs. However, preference is given to children of St. Matthew Lutheran Church in order of admissions.

Immediate supervision of the school rests with the Director. With the consultation of the faculty, the Director suggests changes and policies for the improvement and welfare of the students and the educational program. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the Director to ensure that all policies are followed and that the directives of the Board of Christian Education, as well as the congregation, are carried out to completion.

Class Sizes

St. Matthew follows the appropriate staff-to-student ratio for each age level to ensure optimal student growth.

GROUP	MAXIMUM	GROUP SIZE
3-Year-Olds	1:10	20
4-Year-Olds	1:10	20

Worship Opportunities

St. Matthew Lutheran Church invites everyone to join us for worship. We gather together to praise our God in word and song, offer prayers of thanks and help for ourselves, each other, and all those in need, confess our failings, receive the Good News of forgiveness through Christ Jesus and be fed by His Word and Sacrament. The Sacrament of the Altar is celebrated at every worship service.

St. Matthew Lutheran Church offers two worship services on Sunday mornings at 8:00 AM (Classic Liturgy Traditional Service) and 10:45 AM (Contemporary Service). St. Matthew also offers a service on Saturday evening at 4:00 PM (Casual Dress Traditional Service). From Memorial Day through Labor Day, weekday services are offered on Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM. The Saturday services resume in September.

You are encouraged to participate in worship service regardless of your faith. Should you have any questions about St. Matthew Lutheran Church, including how to join as a member, you are invited to call the church office at 847-438-7709 or stop by in person. Our pastors and our church secretary would be happy to speak with you.

Each week, St. Matthew Lutheran Church offers a wide range of opportunities for people to learn more about God, grow in their faith in Christ, develop relationships with other Christians, and serve others. Some opportunities include:

* Sunday School
* Youth/Adult Choir
* Pre-Confirmation Class
* Bible Studies
* Confirmation Class
* New Member Class
* Youth Group
* Adult Fellowship

Please visit our website at www.stmatts.net for additional information on church organizations and activities, or call the church office at 847-438-7709

Preschool Arrival and Dismissal Times

Full Day: 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Half Day AM: 8:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Lunch Bunch: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Daily Enrichment Classes: 12:00 PM- 2:30 PM

Drop-off Procedures

Morning Session 8:30 AM: Please enter the school through door #1. Please ring the doorbell on the left side of the door to be buzzed in. Please sign your child in on the binder that is sitting on the counter outside the office and check any appropriate boxes that pertain to pick up. The earliest you may enter the school doors is at 8:20 AM. After signing your child in, please proceed to their classroom and put their belongings away in their designated cubby. The teacher will greet your child at the classroom door.

Reminder: We ask that you say a quick goodbye in the hallway before heading on your way. Long, drawn out goodbyes can be difficult for your child and for the other children. After the first few days of school, our regular routine will be to wave goodbye to all parents in the school lobby and head to our classroom by ourselves.

Daily Enrichment Classes **12:00 PM:** Please enter through door # 1. Please ring the doorbell on the left side of the door to be buzzed in. Please sign your child in on the binder that is sitting on the counter outside the office. At 12:00 PM the teacher will walk the afternoon students down to the classroom.

Pick-up Procedure

To pick up your child from preschool, please enter the school, using Door #1, outside the school office. Please ring the doorbell on the left side of the door to be buzzed in. Once in the school, please wait in the lobby for the gray school doors to open. At that time, you may proceed to the classroom. The teacher will dismiss your child from the classroom. This procedure will be followed for pick-up at 11 AM and 2:30 PM.

For the 12:00 PM pick-up please enter the school, using Door #1, outside the school office. Please ring the doorbell on the left side of the door to be buzzed in. Once in the school, please wait in the lobby. The teacher will bring your child to the gray school doors and dismiss your child to you.

If you will be picking up your child at the end of the morning session at 11:00 AM, you may opt for drive up pick-up. Please pull up along the sidewalk outside of Door #1 (in front of the main school entrance and beyond the YELLOW FIRE LANE). Please make sure you pull all the way to the end of the sidewalk if you are the first car in line, so that all cars can line up. It is our hope that

this makes it easier for parents at pick-up, especially those with younger children in the car. Drive up pick-up is only an option at our morning session.

We understand that situations arise and you might be late picking up your child at the end of a preschool session. If you are going to be late in picking up your child, please call the school office. If this becomes a regular occurrence and you are more than 5 minutes late, you will be charged a fee of $5 for each additional 5 minutes you are late.

What to Wear to Preschool

Your child's comfort, as well as bathroom considerations, should be kept in mind when dressing your child for preschool. Simple, washable clothing that is free of complicated fasteners and is suitable for outdoor play would be most appropriate. Please do not send your child in clothing that hampers his/her being self-sufficient at bathroom time. Please provide an extra set of clothes to be left in your child's cubby (shirt, pants/shorts, underwear & socks). Closed toe shoes that stay on your child's feet should also be worn. Tennis shoes are the best, but other shoes with non-slip soles are also good choices. Tennis shoes are required for the gymnasium, if your child is not arriving in tennis shoes, please bring tennis shoes or leave an extra pair in your child's cubby.

Snack

Snacks will be provided daily for each Morning Session and Enrichment Class. At present, we are requiring the classroom to be '*Peanut Free.'* More allergens may be excluded as necessary. All students are to bring a water bottle each day to use during snack time. On special occasions, such as birthdays, parents may wish to provide snacks for the entire classroom. This will need to be approved by your child's teacher, in advance. When providing snacks for the entire classroom, the treats need to be store-purchased items and not homemade. Because some students have extreme allergies, please do not send items that are listed on the prohibited list. You do not need to send juice, cups, plates, or napkins. Please be mindful that the food should be something the students can eat with their hands.

Additional Sessions Beyond Scheduled Sessions

Children who attend the Morning Session can always add Lunch Bunch or Lunch Bunch and Enrichment Class sessions by letting the office know 24 hours ahead of time, unless there is an emergency. Children who want to add a day, beyond their scheduled days, will be accommodated if staffing and ratios allow. Advance notice of 24 hours is required to add an additional day. Additional days beyond the normal schedule will be added to the following month's tuition bill.

Absences

Please notify the school if your child will be absent or tardy from school by sending a message to ecc@stmattsonline.com or call the office at 847-438-6103. If your child is absent due to illness, please describe symptoms or diagnosis. Children are not able to make up missed days due to illness or vacation. Your child's schedule is a set schedule, days are not to be adjusted, unless it is a permanent change and is discussed prior to the end of the month with the office. We can accommodate if the class is not full. Tuition adjustments are not made due to absences, vacation plans, or illness, but it is helpful to know if your child will be absent from school.

Authorization to Pick-up Child

Parents/guardians are authorized to pick up children. Each family can provide names of additional people authorized to pick up. This information must be recorded on the registration form, provided at the beginning of the school year. If the alternate person is unknown by the staff, he/she will be asked to show an ID for verification.

Bathroom Policy

Potty training is required before the child is accepted into school. We do not accept pull-ups; your child must be wearing underwear and be completely potty trained. Bathroom facilities are located next to the classroom. The child may go whenever they need to during class. A staff member will accompany your child. It is helpful to dress your child in easily manageable clothes. The teachers encourage independence in the bathroom. If your child has a BM accident, the office will call you to pick up your child and change him/her before returning to the classroom.

Communication

Please be sure to check your child's take-home folder every day for notes and work. Items that should be removed from the folder and remain at home will be on the left side of the folder and items that need to be filled out and returned to school will be on the right side of the folder. In addition, we will be using Bloomz in our classroom as a communication tool between teachers and parents. Information on how to sign up for Bloomz was sent home with your child the first week of school as well. Our school and preschool classes share a Facebook page, www.facebook.com/stmattslutheranpreschool/. We encourage you to check often for a glimpse inside our classroom. While the teachers are happy to discuss concerns at any time, please be mindful of the limited amount of time and other obligations of the teachers at pick-up and drop-off times. A conference may need to be scheduled to devote the proper amount of time to an issue. In addition, SML-ECC sends home e-mails containing upcoming events and important information.

Health/Sickness/Medications

St. Matthew Lutheran Early Childhood Center does not have a registered nurse or a dedicated health professional on staff. It is the responsibility of the school office staff to administer first aid,

emergency care, immunizations review, and screening. It is also the responsibility of the school office staff to administer medication to children. Parents will be asked to provide details about their child(ren) at the beginning of the school year. This will help the school office establish a plan on how to treat each child in case of an emergency. It is vital that parents update the school office on any changes in their child's health development.

Care of Illness and Injuries:

The school office has adequate first aid supplies. Sick or injured students will be given necessary care until a parent/guardian or emergency contact can be notified and assume that responsibility. Students will be sent home from St. Matthew Lutheran Early Childhood Center if the following sickness occurs while the child is at school:

Sickness: Students with fevers (100.4 degrees or above), sore throats, sore irritated eyes, heavy nasal discharge that requires frequent wiping every 3-5 minutes, diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal cramps. A student MUST be fever-free and non-symptomatic without the administration of medication for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school.

* St. Matthew Early Childhood Center will be updating guidelines to align with the CDC, IDPH and Lake County Health Department for recommendations regarding communicable diseases.

School Exclusions:

It is recommended that students with the following symptoms be excluded from school:
Remember that students that have been home ill or that have been excluded from school for any health reason are not allowed back into the building until cleared by the school office. Please do not bring your child to any after-school activities.

- Pink eye (Proof of treatment for 24 hours or physician's note is required before student can return to school).
- Tonsillitis (acute) with fever and discharge.
- Impetigo – unless under treatment and with a physician's note.
- Head lice – may only return if treated and live lice are removed. The school office, before re-admittance, must inspect the child and parent(s)/guardian(s) must show proof of treatment.
- Ringworm of the scalp and of face, arms, and legs; unless under treatment with a physician's note.
- Severe toothache
- Chills
- Fever (flushed face, lassitude, malaise) 100.4 degrees and above
- Sore throat/Strep throat

- Red, itchy, watery eyes with purulent discharge
- Watery or purulent nasal discharge
- Tight, dry, or productive cough
- Headache, earache, backache or neck aches
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Development of rash – undetermined origin – physician's note required for re-entry.
- Light-headed or dizziness, fainting
- Scabies – physician's note required for re-entry to school.
- Pin worms – physician's note required for re-entry to school.
- Body lice – physician's note required for re-entry to school.

Children who are excluded for any unknown rashes may only return with a physician's note.

Children excluded for a communicable disease must follow guidelines for re-entry to school.

Exclusion for the school setting is at the discretion of the school office personnel when there is a suspicion of a communicable disease. There may be occasions where the school office may require the parent(s)/guardian(s) to present medical verification (i.e., signed physician's note with clearance for remission) of any physical condition or suspected communicable disease. St. Matthew Lutheran Early Childhood Center has the authority to require medical documentation for children absent more than three (3) consecutive days. Children who have undergone surgery or sustained a major injury must present a physician's note for re-entry to school to the school office.

Medications

SML-ECC will assist parents in administering both prescribed and non-prescribed medication to students. However, no medication will be administered without a complete and current medication form. To obtain a form, please contact the school office. After a medication is administered, it will be recorded on the medication form in the school office. Parents may see the form anytime during office hours.

Curriculum

SML-ECC believes that God has created each child as a unique person. In addition to teaching, our curriculum also strives to nurture Christian relationships both with God and with each other. SML-ECC uses many of the secular resources which are used in public education from nationally known publishers. However, our faith in Christ is integrated into every aspect of instruction. As we teach, we reveal God's handiwork in the order of creation, the complexities of mathematics, science and technology, the gift of language, and the beauty of the arts.

The faculty, using the Illinois State Early Learning Standards and Northern Illinois District Standards, regularly reviews and updates subject areas in our curriculum. The Board of Christian Education, in cooperation with the Director and faculty, approves curriculum policies. A copy of the SML-ECC Curriculum is available upon request.

Chapel

SML-ECC hosts a pastor, director, administrator, teacher, guest, or classroom-led chapel service, usually on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 AM. Chapel is held in the main sanctuary and consists of Scripture, songs, and a Bible lesson. A chapel offering is collected for a designated area of mission work, either within our church or outside of it. CHAPEL DRESS: All days in which chapel takes place are designated as "school dress code days". Students are encouraged to wear blue or "St. Matthew" spirit wear.

Parents, children and friends of SML-ECC are always welcome to attend and participate in our chapel service. If your child does not normally attend school on Chapel Day, they are invited to participate in chapel with a parent or caregiver.

Library

Library time is scheduled on a weekly basis for preschool.

In School Field Trips

Permission slips signed by parents/guardians are required for all field trips. Please make sure permission slips are returned to school on time. If a student does not have a permission slip, the school cannot allow your child to leave campus.

Emergency School Closings

SML-ECC follows closely, but not exclusively, School District 95's emergency school closing for snow. In addition, SML-ECC may close due to extreme cold (wind chill) and heat (heat index). Listen to local media stations for updated information or check online at www.emergency closing center.com. Email notification sign-up is available on the Emergency Closing Center website. If only SML-ECC decides to close, every effort will be made to notify you using an alert sent via Bloomz, through our website, http://www.stmatts.net, or on a recorded message when calling the school.

Parent and Teacher League (PTL)

All parents of enrolled students are automatically members of SML-ECC Parent Teacher League. The PTL is responsible for assisting our school with classroom parties, ECC fundraisers, and events.

The PTL sponsors school assemblies and field trips. Furthermore, they provide extra-curricular and off-campus activities during the school term. You are encouraged to take an active part in this most valuable organization.

SML-ECC hosts several classroom parties throughout the school term. A room parent/PTL member will contact you with information regarding scheduled parties. These parties are planned with the consultation of the school office and room parents/PTL.

Students may distribute invitations for a private or non-school hosted party only if ALL students in your child's class are invited. Invitations need to be brought to the school office for distribution.

Visitors, Guests, and Volunteers

During the day, all outside doors are locked and visitors and guests must ring the doorbell to enter the building.

1. Classrooms are not to be disturbed during the school day. All visitors to the school must report to the school office to sign the "Visitors Log".

2. Each visitor must show a valid state ID to the office. The ID will be held during the time spent at St. Matthew and returned upon departure. Each visitor will be given a visitor badge to wear during their visit.

3. If a child has an appointment and must leave the school, the parent must enter the front door of the building, come to the office, and sign a release. The child will then be called to the office.

4. All visitors, guests, and parents who will interact with children during the school day may be subject to a criminal background check.

Fees and Forms

In coordination with the Director, the Board of Christian Education will establish the tuition and fees for the school year. Tuition is determined and billed monthly based on a child's enrollment on a semester basis. For staffing and budgeting purposes, Sessions and tuition are locked in by semester (unless going up in attendance days/Sessions). The two semesters are September to December and January to May. Tuition and fees are reviewed annually.

Registration Fees

A non-refundable annual registration fee of $200 is payable by all students in Preschool. These fees are used to pay for day-to-day items needed in the classroom as well as the school. Some of these items may include: Technology, Accreditation Fees, Association Dues, Classroom Supplies, Office Supplies and Enrichment Materials.

Parent Teacher League Activity Fee

Each student will be charged a non-refundable $25 Activity Fee to cover PTL activities and parties. With the help from parents, teachers and volunteers, St. Matthew Lutheran Preschool and PTL hosts a Halloween party, Happy Birthday Jesus celebration, Valentine's Party and Promotion Ceremony. The Activity Fee must be paid by October 1st, 2024, or your credit card will be automatically charged (in addition to the credit card processing fee).

Tuition

- Tuition and fees are payable by any of the following methods: cash, personal checks, certified check, money order, automatic bank debit, major credit cards, debit card or online payment portal. Note: A 4% processing fee (or current rate) will apply for debit and credit card transactions. *NSF checks: There is a $25.00 charge for checks returned as Non-Sufficient Funds.
- Tuition is paid in nine monthly payments from September through May. Tuition statements will be provided monthly.
- Tuition and extra charges will generally be invoiced by the first of the month and are due on the 15th of each month. A $25.00 late fee will be assessed to payments made after the 15th day of the month in which it was due.
- Refunds or credits are not given for student absences, vacations or holidays.

Past due tuition and other billed amounts will be handled in the following manner:

- After one delinquent payment, a letter will be sent at the end of the month itemizing the past due amount including the $25.00 late fee. This payment must be made by the end of the following month, or another late fee will be applied to the account.
- After the second consecutive non-payment, the family will receive a phone call and will be sent a follow-up letter stating that their child/children will not be permitted to attend school after a third consecutive non-payment. An additional late fee of $25.00 is charged for each month tuition is past due.

It is the family's responsibility to contact the school office to discuss these matters. The Board of Christian Education, Administrator, and Pastors will discuss hardship situations, and these cases will be held in the strictest of confidence.

All school tuition, fees and charges are to be paid in full by the end of the school year or your credit card will be assessed.

We understand that circumstances may arise, and you may need to disenroll your child (moving, loss of job, etc.). Written notice must be received by the school office at least 30 days prior to disenrollment. Failure to do so may result in additional charges.

The school must maintain an active method of payment on file. This is required even if recurring charges are being paid with cash or check. If not on the Autopay Plan, the method of payment

will only be charged if payment is not received within 30 days of the due date. Each family is required to sign a payment authorization form.

Forms

St. Matthew Lutheran Early Childhood Center utilizes several forms that are both board required and state mandated, such as: emergency cards, insurance, health, dental, and medication forms. All forms must be provided to the office before the child starts school.

Failure to comply with St. Matthew Lutheran Early Childhood Center's requirement of the full completion of these forms may result in your student being denied entrance to his/her classroom.

Property Care

Students are expected to respect all school property. Parents/guardians will be charged for the repair or replacement of any lost or damaged school property caused by their child.

Discipline Policy

The St. Matthew Lutheran Church and Early Childhood Center Discipline Policy is based on the Love and Logic process and reflects our Core Values of FAITH.

- **Fostering a personal relationship with Jesus Christ**
  John 3:16: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
  **Conflict resolution will be driven from the love of Jesus Christ and positive redirection.*

- **Academic excellence**
  James 1:5: If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.
  *******Behavioral conflict will be handled in the best interest of each individual child, while upholding and encouraging his/her academic, social, and emotional well-being.*

- **Inspiring individuality**
  James 1:17: Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.
  **Disciplinary measures may look different from one student to the next, to meet the individual needs of each child, even when the behavioral issue is similar.*

- **Transforming our community**
  Romans 12:2: Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
  **Conflict resolution will focus on identifying personal responsibility and developing decision making skills that each child will need in his/her everyday life.*

- **Honoring all our relationships**
  Ephesians 6:1-3: Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. [2] "Honor your father and mother" - this is the first commandment with a promise - [3] "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."
  **Each child will be nurtured through the process of his/her decision making in a way that is not detrimental to the child. This process allows the child to experience the results of his/her poor choice, while guiding him/her to make better choices in the future.*

The following disciplinary actions will not be implemented:

- Corporal punishment (spanking or striking a child)
- Isolation/ timeout
- Verbal or emotional abuse
- Bullying or shaming a child
- Humiliating/degrading words or actions

Problem resolution action plan:

- Remove child/children from the group and identify the problem.
- Discuss the conflict.
- Guide those involved to reconcile and provide an opportunity for forgiveness.
- Engage problem solving techniques which will develop better decision-making skills in the future.

Classroom Discipline

Each classroom teacher will discuss/share the rules and expectations for the classroom. Students will not only be taught the rules, the children will also learn why the rules are needed. Students will also learn the consequences of their choices, both for following the rules and for choosing to act otherwise. Each teacher has the right to create and enforce his/her rules within the classroom and with students.

Parent/Teacher Classroom Concerns Due Process

All members/parents are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the party involved. A parent who has a concern should take the following steps:

1. Make an appointment to meet with the teacher involved. Please remember that teachers often have responsibilities after school. In addition, the teachers' school days are devoted to the students; classrooms during school hours should not be disrupted. Please contact him/her to meet at a mutually agreeable time.
2. Upon meeting, if no resolution occurs, please inform the teacher of your intention to meet with the director. Then make an appointment and meet with the director regarding your concern.
3. If no resolution occurs, it will be necessary to have a meeting with the teacher, director and parent together. The director will assist you by making this appointment.
4. If still no resolution has been achieved, you may put your concern into writing and explain what further resolution you feel is necessary. This letter will be forwarded to the Church Administrator, who will communicate with the Board of Christian Education.
5. If the Board of Christian Education Chairperson believes that there are extenuating circumstances, your concern will be placed on the agenda of the next meeting. You will be notified when the topic will be taken under advisement. Normally, the Board of

Christian Education is not involved in matters of parental concerns. It is the director's responsibility to address and resolve such concerns.

The Board of Christian Education asks that concerns be directed to the individuals specifically involved at each step before sharing information with participants at the next step. We hope these steps will help resolve matters by providing a sound, Scriptural way to proceed as found in Matthew 18: 5–17.

Student Due Process for Incident and Behavioral Resolution

First and foremost, the steps of the Problem Resolution Action Plan will be followed. If resolution is not possible or if the severity of the incident warrants further intervention, the steps of Due Process will be followed:

1. Documentation of the problem or conflict
2. Notification to the parents or guardian about the incident
3. Meeting between teacher/administrator and child's parents/guardian
4. Incident will be presented to the Board of Christian Education for final review and implementation of additional action.
5. Dismissal from the program as mandated by the chairperson of the board in accordance with the Board of Christian Education
6. Documentation of this process will be made, including the resolution, and making a final report and placed in the St. Matthew student record.

Student Policies

The information contained in this Student-Parent Handbook is an overview of information the Church and School feel is important for all our students and parents/guardians to know for a successful school term. However, the information presented may not include all the policies which govern St. Matthew Lutheran Early Childhood Center. Due to the changing nature of policies, it is not practical to publish such a copy for all families. Changes in policies or new policies will be communicated to parents through the weekly home newsletter or via special mailing. A copy of all school policies is available for your review online.

THE WILL OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS FOR YOU!

1 Thessalonians 5:16 – "Rejoice Always; Pray Without Ceasing; Give Thanks In All Circumstances"

Preschool Parent Handbook

St. Matthew Lutheran Early Childhood Center

Policy Agreement 2026/2027

I _____ (parent/guardian) have read and completely understand the expectations of my child,

_____ (child's name).

I agree to follow the policies stated in the SML-ECC Policy Handbook for the 2026/2027 school year.

_____ **Parent/Guardian Signature**

_____ **Date**