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[www.thelighthousepreschool.com](http://www.thelighthousepreschool.com/)

facebook.com/preschoolatthelighthouse

**Parent Handbook**

Thank you for choosing **Lighthouse Preschool & Daycare** as the place where your child will learn and grow! We look forward to partnering with you in your child’s early childhood educational experience. This handbook was created to be a guide for you on the policies at our child development center. Should you have any questions, our number is **757-238-2400**.

**Philosophy**

Our program is built around the concept that children are born ready to learn. As caregivers, we strive to create a learning environment that is safe, stimulating and encouraging. The following principles are excerpted from the Virginia Standards of Learning and serve as the foundation for our curriculum.

• Children develop knowledge of their world through active interactions with caregivers, peers, materials, and events.

 • Learning is sequential, building on prior understandings and experiences.

 • Learning proceeds at different rates in each area and each child; children will show a range of skills and understandings in any one area of development.

• Learning in each area is interconnected. Young children learn best through experiences, which incorporate several areas of development.

• Learning is embedded in a culture. Children learn best when their learning activities are rooted in a familiar cultural context.

• Learning begins in the family, continues in early care and education settings, and depends on parent involvement and caregiver guidance.

• All children have the potential to achieve the Virginia Standards of Learning with appropriate supports and instruction.

**Days and Hours of Operation**

We are open year-round Monday-Friday from 6:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. for your convenience.

**Holidays/Inclement Weather/Closings**

There will be no reduction in tuition for any closures/early closings/holidays/inclement weather.

We will be closed in observance of the following holidays:

January New Year’s Day Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day

February President’s Day

March/April Good Friday (Staff Development & Training)

May Memorial Day

July Independence Day

September Labor Day

October Columbus Day (Staff Development & Training)

November Veteran’s Day Thanksgiving Day/Day After

December Christmas Day/Day after (we will be closed the day after when Christmas falls on a weekday)

In addition, we will close at 12:00 p.m. on Thanksgiving Eve and Christmas Eve.

For the safety of our children and staff, Lighthouse Preschool & Daycare will follow Isle of Wight Public Schools regarding closures due to weather. If area public schools are closed, we will also be closed. If area schools close early, we will also close early. If area public schools have a delayed opening (ie 1 hr or 2 hr) we will open accordingly. Final decisions as to whether the center will close are up to the director/owner. Please check our Facebook page for updates on closings at facebook.com/preschoolatthelighthouse

If we need to close due to lack of utilities due to weather, you will be notified and must make arrangements to pick up your child/ren. Should the daycare be closed for an extended period (more than 2 consecutive days), tuition credit will be determined by the Owner/Director.

**Transportation:**

* During field trips, child safety belts and restraints will be used while traveling in any vehicle.
* Doors will be closed and locked properly to ensure passengers safety.
* All children will remain seated; child’s arms, legs, and head will remain inside the vehicle at all times.
* While entering and leaving vehicles, children will enter and leave the vehicle from the curbside of the vehicle or in a protected parking area or driveway.
* The staff to children ratio will always be followed in accordance

**Arrival and Departure/I.D. Verification:**

* **Effective 9/1/18, children must be dropped off no later than 9 am with the exception of those with a scheduled dr's appointment.** Lateness can be disruptive to classes already in session and should be avoided. If your child will be arriving after 9 am, let the teacher know in advance. Children arrving after classes have begun are to be brought to the director's office and then they will be escorted to class.
* Parents must completely sign their child/ren in and out of the facility using the tablet in the lobby. You will be assigned a 4-digit code to access the building for greater security. This will serve as I.D for parents/guardians only.
* If child arrives late for field trip, they will join in the next available class closest to their age. If there is no space available in any class, parents must plan for the child to go home or to join the class on the field trip.
* If a person picking up child is not the parent/guardian, they must have written authorization from the parent or be recorded in the child’s enrollment packet as well as identification. They must ring the doorbell and be buzzed in.
* If a child does not arrive from another facility the designated staff will contact the facility, if facility doesn’t respond then the child’s parent will be notified. If designated staff does not get a response from parents, then the emergency person (s) will be called. Further actions will be taken into consideration with local authorities (911) as a final result.
* If child is not picked up during emergencies **(inclement weather, natural disasters, tornado, intruder or shelter in-place)** by parent/guardian, or other emergency contacts then the designated staff will remain on premises until the child has been transported to an official evacuation facility and/or contact CPS at (757) 664-6000 for further information.
* In the event of emergency situations or extreme weather conditions parents will be notified through the email/phone/Facebook page. We will generally follow the Isle of Wight Schools for emergency closures.
* Any pick up after your daily allotted time, may result in a late fee of $1 per minute which is due the same day of the late pick up. Your scheduled times are in your childcare agreement forms. If you need additional hours or need to change your hours, please speak with Ms. Young for approval.
* Lighthouse Preschool & Daycare closes promptly at 6 p.m. daily. **Any pickup after 6 pm will incur a late fee of $1 per minute per child. NO EXCEPTIONS. Late pick up fees are due the same day the lateness occurs.** Parents will have a courtesy wait of 15 minutes before we contact emergency pick up persons. If no one can be reached, then we will report the child to Child Protective Services branched under the Department of Social Services.

**Medication Policy**

* We will not administer any medications. Ointments (sunscreen, Diaper ointment or cream, and insect repellent) will be given with the written consent of a parent/guardian.

**Lines of Authority for Staff**

* Your child’s class is staffed with a lead teacher and when required a teacher’s assistant.
* Should you have any questions or concerns, please speak with them first. They spend the most time with your child which makes them uniquely qualified to help resolve most issues. In the event your child’s primary teachers are unable to assist, they will then speak to the Director in an effort to find solutions. A meeting between staff, parents and the director may be required in special circumstances. Should you have questions about a financial matter, please speak with the Director.

**Biting Policy**

Biting is unfortunately not unexpected behavior for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff.

This biting policy has been developed with both of these ideas in mind. As a day care, we understand that biting, unfortunately, is a part of a day care setting. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

**When Biting Does Occur:**

Our staff strongly disapproves of biting. The staff’s job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or washing a child’s mouth out with soap.

**For the child that was bitten:**

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is

broken, the bite is covered with a bandage.

2. Parents are notified.

3. An injury form is filled out documenting the incident.

**For the child that bit:**

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child “NO! DO NOT BITE!”

2. The child will be placed in time out for no longer than the child’s age (one year

old, one minute).

3. The parents are notified.

4. The “Parent Contact Form” is filled out documenting the incident.

**When Biting Continues:**

1. The child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents.

2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the

child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The administrative staff

may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause.

3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

When biting becomes excessive:

1. If a child inflicts 2 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another

child or staff member is broken or bruised, or the bite leaves a significant mark, a

conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child’s behavior and how the

behavior may be modified.

2. If the child again inflicts 2 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of

another child or staff member is broken or bruised, or the bite leaves a significant mark,

the child will be suspended for 2 business days.

3. If a child once again inflicts 2 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the parents will be asked to make other day care arrangements**.**

If a child, who has been through steps 1 and/or 2, goes 3 weeks (15 business days) without biting, we will go back to step one if the child bites again.

If a child bites twice in a 4-hour period, the child will be required to be picked up from day care for the remainder of the day. This will not count towards the 2-day suspension.

\*\*\*This policy is effective April 13,2017. All past experiences of biting are not included in this policy, as this policy was not in effect at the time of biting. All biting occurrences from today forward will be counted towards a child’s total biting incidents.

**Clothing Code:**

Children should come dressed in comfortable, season appropriate clothing that can get dirty, since some daily activities are messy. A spare change of clothes is required for all children in case of soiling of clothes. Children under the age of 3, and those who are potty-training require at least two changes of clothing (including socks). We want to keep your children happy and comfortable.

Children should wear close toe and heel shoes for their safety. Please also remember whenever weather permits the children are taken outside for 1-2 hours per day. Please ensure that you have proper outerwear provided for your child so that they are comfortable and don’t miss out on outdoor play. This happens all too often in the winter time because of a lack of snow pants and hats and mitts, please be sure to bring them every day. Please do not ask that your child be kept inside as we are required by the DSS to take children outdoors daily. If you feel that your child is not well enough to be outside, then they are not well enough to be in school and should be kept at home.

**Policy for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse**

Lighthouse Preschool & Daycare is mandated by the Commonwealth of Virginia to report suspicions of child abuse and/or neglect to the Child Abuse hotline (800) 552-7096 of the Department of Social Services.

We may also contact:

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| **Isle of Wight Department of Social Services****17100 Monument Circle****Isle of Wight, VA, 23397****757-365-0880****Custodial Parents Right**Custodial parents have the right to be admitted into Lighthouse Preschool & Daycare. Appropriate custodial paperwork (custody order or other court order) shall be on file if a parent is not allowed to pick up the child.**Policy for Communication**At Lighthouse Preschool & Daycare, we will post a Parent Bulletin Board for informational viewing. The bulletin board will contain information on emergency evacuation and preparedness plans, all emergency contacts, scheduled field trips, schedules, curriculum, menus, CACFP data, center state license and city license. Parents will be informed of any updates and closures by phone, email, text and/or in person. We will provide semi-annual opportunities for parent feedback and updates on your child's behavior, adjustments and needs. Monthly calendar, brief notes and telephone calls when necessary. Parents/guardians will be notified by phone and/or letter home in the event the child becomes ill, injured, or is involved in any emergency. Check your child’s classroom/parent board for daily schedule and current menu.**Food Policy*** Each day we serve breakfast (830 to 9), lunch (1130 to 12) and afternoon snack (3 to 330 pm) at no additional cost to you. Be sure to inform staff of any food allergies so that we may plan accordingly. Substitutions are the responsibility of the parent and may require a doctor’s note. School age children will receive an am snack consisting of cereal with milk at 715 and an afternoon snack(see posted menu) around 430 pm.
* A USDA form must be filled out for every enrolled child.
* Children must arrive on time for scheduled meals. If child arrives after meals, parent must ensure that the child has been fed upon arrival.
* No outside food is to be brought into the daycare without prior approval. Children are not allowed to arrive with food in their mouths or with sippy cups.

**Discipline*** Giving positive rewards encourages acceptable behavior. This reinforces a child's good feeling about his/her behavior and serves as an example to the children to act in such a way as to receive this praise. Asking a child to stop and think about his/her behavior enables him/her to work on self-control.
* Redirection/distraction is also used depending on the situation. If needed, one warning is usually given to remind the child of acceptable behavior. The next step would be for the child to be excused from the activity and redirected. The last step would be a timeout or a logical consequence.
* The timeout provides the child space and time to calm down, so the child can remember acceptable behavior, and self-control to decide when he/she is ready to rejoin the group with appropriate behavior.
* Corporal punishment will not be used. If you have found something that helps with your child, perhaps we can try the same method here.
* Please, however, do not ask us to continue a punishment from home, for instance, not letting your child play outside because he/she is grounded from it at home for some reason.
* Lighthouse Preschool & Daycare shall not use any physical or mental punishment to include striking, shaking, withholding or forcing food or activities, forcing child to assume uncomfortable positions or exercise, or restricting child from movement through any form.

When staff observes a persistent unacceptable behavior, they will observe and record the behavior in writing. If the positive guidance techniques are not effective, we may involve parents/guardians with the following progressive guidance techniques:We will inform parent/guardians in writing what behaviors have been observed and what the staff has done to try to modify the behavior.If the inappropriate behavior continues, the Center Director, and Lead Teacher will meet with parents/guardians to develop a written action plan to correct the behavior. We will seek their input and agree on steps to attempt to modify the behavior. We may suggest involving outside resources to assist with the situation.If the inappropriate behavior persists, the parent will be notified by phone and the child will need to take the remainder of the day for a behavioral leave of absence. (Standard attendance rates apply during the behavioral leaves).After returning to group care, if the child continues to act inappropriately, we may dis-enroll the child. We reserve the right to use these progressive guidance techniques at our discretion. It is our goal to work together for a positive outcome of behavior change. Circumstances may arise when we may immediately dis-enroll a child if his or her behavior creates a health or safety risk to themselves, other children, or the staff.**Separation from the Group**No child may be separated from the group unless less instructive methods of guiding the child’s behavior have been tried and were ineffective, or the child’s behavior threatens the well-being of the child or other children in the program.A child who requires separation from the group will:Remain within an unenclosed part of the classroom where the child can be continuously seen and heard by a program staff person;The child’s return to the group will be contingent on the child’s stopping or bringing under control the behavior that precipitated the separation; AndThe child will be returned to the group as soon as the behavior that precipitated the separated abates or stops.Children between the ages of 6 weeks and 16 months will NOT be separated from the group as a means of behavior guidance.**Potty Training Policy:**Please ask for this policy when you feel your child is ready to potty train. We generally will not begin potty traning until a child is at least 2 years old and child has been in care for a full two weeks.**Termination:**Lighthouse Preschool & Daycare has the right to terminate any enrollment due to excessive late payments, inability to adjust, behavioral issues or parental inconsistencies. We will give you 2 weeks’ notice whenever possible. Immediate termination may be required if behavior presents a danger to staff or children Should you decide to dis-enroll, you are required to give a **30-day** notice in writing. Emailing a termination is not acceptable. Please note that should you breach your agreement through non-payment, Lighthouse Preschool & Daycare may turn your account over to a collections agency or seek payment through the legal system. You will be responsible for all reasonable costs associated with resolving your debt.**Tuition and Fees:**Tuition must be paid each Friday before service is rendered for the upcoming weeks. Tuition must be paid regardless of closures and/or absences to maintain your child’s spot. If payments are not made by Friday, then late fees ($10/day including weekends) will be required before child may return to school. Each full-time child is to spend no more than 10 hours in care daily (50 hours weekly). Care exceeding these maximums will incur an additional charge of $15/hr or portion thereof and id due by Friday of the week the extra hours were incurred. Any arrival after 6 pm will result in a late fee of $1 per minute regardless of drop off time. Late fees are due the day the lateness occurs.Part time care is from 8 am to 4pm unless a different arrangement has been made with the Director.Payments are accepted in the form of cash, check, or Visa/MasterCard. If tuition is late and paid on Monday morning upon arrival, payments must be made in the form of cash no exceptions. Please use the deposit box in the lobby to make your payments. Put your child’s name, date and the amount enclosed.VDSS provides assistance for childcare, but compensation is below market rates. Therefore, parents receiving VDSS assistance must meet school rates by paying an agreed copayment and over the market fee to meet childcare rates.Annual registration fee is $100 per family. This nonrefundable fee is due upon enrollment and by the 5th of June each year. Parents enrolling and paying registration fees after March 5th will not be required to pay again June 5th. In house field days, field trips and summer activities will be billed separately. Payments will be tracked through the childcaresage system and receipts will be issued monthly.Individual receipts will not be issued. You can request a copy of the total tuition paid if needed.**Rate Increases:**Parents will receive a 30-day notice about any rate increases. This does not apply to discounts/reduced rates. Any reduced rate is subject to change to the regular rate without notice.**Referrals:**Referrals from a client are one of the biggest compliments we can receive. As a thank you, a credit of $100 off tuition will be given once the referred family has been enrolled for 90 days and is in good standing.**Policy Changes/Addendums**Parents will receive a 2-week notice of any Lighthouse Preschool & Daycare policy changes. Changes required by the DSS, Isle of Wight County, USDA, Health Dept (or any governing agency) may be immediately effective. Policy changes will be in writing.  |
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