



**EARLY LEARNING CENTER**  
at Wilmington Christian School

Influencing young children to love and follow Christ.

# FAMILY HANDBOOK

Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them.

Matthew 19:14

## **Welcome to the Early Learning Center at Wilmington Christian School!**

The Wilmington Christian School Early Learning Center (ELC) uses play and children's curiosity as the foundation from which to support their cognitive, language, social, physical, emotional, and spiritual development. Our desire is for children to become healthy, whole persons by building strong spiritual foundations to help prepare them for life. Parents and other family members are essential partners in this process.

Age requirements for each classroom are birthdates before October 1.

The ELC Classrooms:

Explorers (Toddler 2)

Adventurers (Pre-K 3)

Mountaineers (Pre-K 4)

### **CONTACT NUMBERS**

WCS main number: (302) 239-2121

For immediate assistance, please call Ext. 3001 for the lower school office.

Explorers: Ext. 3009

Adventurers: Ext. 3014

Mountaineers: Ext. 3024

### **ELC Operating Hours and Days**

School day tuition hours are 8:00 am – 2:45 pm.

Half-day tuition option hours are 8:00 am – 11:45 am.

ELC extended day tuition includes early care, 7:15 am – 8:00 am, after school care, 3:00 pm – 5:30 pm.

Late fees of \$5 for the first minute and \$1 for each subsequent minute will be assessed per child and due the following business day.

## Staff-Child Ratios

ELC Staff ratios are based on those recommended by The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

Age Group	ELC/NAEYC Ratios	State of DE Ratios
<b>Explorers</b> 24-36 Months	1:6 Group size of 12	1:8 Group size of 16
<b>Adventurers</b> 3-4 years	1:9 Group size of 18	1:10 Group size of 20
<b>Mountaineers</b> 4-5 years	1:10 Group size of 20	1-12 Group size of 24

The ELC employs staff members who have a mature faith in Jesus Christ and education and/or experience in early childhood instruction and care.

## Non-Discriminatory Policy

Wilmington Christian School admits students of any race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at WCS. The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its education policies, admission policies, tuition assistance programs, athletics, the arts, and other school-administered programs.

## Drop Off and Release of Children

All parents and students will enter through the main lower school doors located by the ELC playground. ELC students are to be dropped off in the classroom each morning. Sign your child in and place his/her belongings in his cubby. ELC students are to be picked up at the classroom, 11:45 am for half-day students. We recommend picking up your full-day student at 2:30 pm to avoid the busy afternoon carline, but you must pick up your child by 3:00 pm unless you are contracted for After Care.

## Absences

If your child is absent or will be absent, please contact your child's teacher by email or by using the MY WCS tab on our school website.

## Allergies

Parents are required to notify and meet with the Wilmington Christian School nurse if the child has any allergies to medications, food, or the environment. Parents must provide an individualized care plan from the child's health provider if the child has special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutritional needs.

## **Birthdays**

If you wish to provide a special snack to celebrate a birthday, please notify the child's teacher at least 3 days in advance. The teacher will inform you of any food allergies or procedures.

## **Chapel**

Weekly ELC chapel is held in the playroom. Children gather for worship, Bible instruction, and prayer. The weekday curriculum provides the Bible emphasis and classroom activities to reinforce the teaching throughout the week.

## **Closings Due to Inclement Weather or Emergencies**

The WCS administration will determine appropriate actions during inclement weather. If a late opening, early dismissal, or closing is necessary, families will be informed through FACTS, our student information system.

If there is a two-hour delay, the ELC will open at 9:00 am for extended day and 10:00 am for school day children.

## **Clothing**

Toddler children are not required to wear WCS uniform clothing. Please dress them appropriately for active, messy play. Preschool Adventurers and Mountaineers are required to wear WCS uniform clothing except for special dress-down days.

To ensure their safety, all children should wear shoes that will protect them and stay on their feet while running and engaging in play activities. Except in extreme conditions, children will go outside daily and should be dressed appropriately. Layers and warm outer clothing, including hats, gloves, and boots should be provided during cold, wet, or snowy weather conditions. Hats for sun protection and sunscreen should be provided by the parent during sunny weather conditions. Sunscreen should be labeled with your child's name and a sunscreen form must be on file.

Each child should have a minimum of one change of clothing at the ELC. Please label all items.

## **Communication**

Parent-teacher conferences occur twice per school year. During conferences, teachers will share child assessments, concerns, and developmental progress. Additional conferences may be scheduled by the teacher or parent as necessary.

## **Curriculum and Assessment of Children**

The curriculum at the ELC for all age groups is designed to support the growth and development of the whole child. Activities are planned for children that stimulate and promote

their growth in all developmental areas; Delaware Department of Education's Early Learning Foundations for toddlers and preschool are used as a guide. The ELC staff will assess children's current level of development and plan activities to support their growth. Our approach is to allow children to explore materials and engage in play, so they construct and discover knowledge and develop skills through high-quality purposeful activities provided and supported by the teachers.

Assessment of children is an integral part of all the ELC programs. Teachers use a variety of assessment methods and tools throughout the year to assess the children across all areas of development. Assessments serve as a foundation for teacher's planning. Teachers value effective communication with families and share assessment information with families during family conferences.

### **Diapers/Bathroom**

**Diapers** – Parents with toddlers must provide diapers and wipes for their children. Please send a full box of diapers and wipes labeled with your child's name. If your child uses pull-ups, please purchase ones with Velcro on each side to assist us in changing your child. Staff will inform you when you need to replenish your supply.

For the comfort of the child, children who are wet or soiled will be changed upon discovery. Staff will check diapers no less than every two hours. Soiled clothing will be placed in a bag and returned to the parent at the end of the day.

**Bathroom Policy** – We require children entering the Adventurer classroom (PreK 3) and older to be potty trained, and we expect them to be able to wipe themselves. Our staff will assist in the bathroom if needed. If you or your child have a concern with the bathroom, please let us know so that we may attend to your child's needs in the best way possible.

### **Discipline/Positive Guidance**

The ELC educators disciple (teach) children with nurturing love while using preventative approaches, engaging environments, and clear expectations to help children be successful. Children are given age-appropriate boundaries and guidance that allows them to feel safe, loved, and accepted. Educators understand the importance of teaching and nurturing self-regulation skills and the ability to negotiate relationships and care for others. This includes intervention strategies that model for children (and families) skills that enable them to be successful in learning and life.

ELC teachers recognize their role as models of Christ and that their purpose is to guide the children in His ways. Children are taught that they are made in God's image, and this truth is reinforced in how they are treated and how they are taught to treat others. Teachers nurture children's social competence and take intentional steps to ensure that every child feels accepted, loved, and a sense of belonging. We promote pro-social behavior by interacting in a

respectful manner with all staff and children and by modeling behaviors, including: turn-taking, listening, negotiating, serving others, and comforting. Further, teachers actively teach social communication and emotional regulations skills, and they assist children in resolving conflicts. ELC staff guide children who tease/target, isolate, or hurt other children to help them learn to interact more appropriately.

When challenging behavior occurs, teachers observe the child and the entire learning environment to identify events, activities, interactions, and other contextual factors that may elicit challenging behavior. Throughout this process, teachers identify skills that need to be taught and incorporate these into the children's activities and routines. Teachers use environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support, and other strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior. Communications and reports to the child's parents will be ongoing.

ELC teaching staff responds to a child's challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the safety of the child and others. All such responses are respectful and provide the child with information and encouragement concerning acceptable behavior. If challenging behavior persists then teachers meet with the lower school principal to examine collected data and to create a specific plan on how to proceed. After meeting with the principal, the teaching staff will meet with the family to share observations, discuss concerns, and determine if there are any related issues that could contribute to the behavior. Families are also asked to assist in developing a behavior support plan to support the child.

At times, the Wilmington Christian School learning support specialist will be asked to observe a child for any possible developmental deficits. If there are behaviors indicating deficits or possible disabilities, the lower school principal will meet with the child's parents to discuss the option of a formal evaluation. If the behavior indicates the need for therapy, the principal and learning support specialist will ask the parents to meet with their child's doctor for recommendations.

If a child is referred for therapy, the parents should give permission for the lower school principal or learning support specialist to confer with the therapist so recommended strategies can be implemented at school. Likewise, therapists assigned to a child under 36 months should consult with the child's ELC teaching staff to support their Individual Family Service Plan, or school district therapists should consult with the child's teachers to support the Individual Education Plan in the case of a child over three years in age. When it is determined that WCS cannot meet the needs of a child, the staff and family will meet to discuss options that may include the child being withdrawn from WCS.

The ELC strives to meet the individual needs of every child. However, if a child persists in putting himself or others at risk for injury after reasonable interventions, including removal from the classroom and parent notification, the child may be dismissed from the program.

## **Emergency Contact Information**

It is important for the ELC to have accurate contact numbers for the parent/guardian and pick-up people. These should be entered into FACTS and updated as needed.

## **Field Trips**

The ELC may provide on-site field trips during the school year. These trips may be postponed or canceled due to COVID-19.

## **Folders**

The ELC provides take-home folders for each child. Important communications and your child's daily work are placed in the folders. It is important to check your child's folder daily. If you need to return anything to the school, please place it in the folder for the teacher.

## **Health Requirements**

See Appendix 1. Upon arrival, each child will be observed for common signs of communicable disease, physical injury, or other evidences of ill health.

Children shall be excluded from care if they have symptoms of illness specified below, unless written documentation from a licensed physician, or verbal notice with written follow-up states the child has been diagnosed and poses no serious health risk to the child or to other children. The symptoms of illness for possible exclusion shall include, but not be limited to, any of the following:

- Temperature: children older than 4 months, equivalent to 100.4 degrees or greater, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. School inclusion when the child is fever-free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness (such as unusual lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs) – until medical evaluation allows inclusion.
- Uncontrolled diarrhea, that is increased stool water, and/or decreased form – until diarrhea stops.
- Vomiting illness two or more times in the previous 24 hours until vomiting free for 24 hours.
- Mouth sores with drooling, unless a health care provider determines that condition is non-infectious.
- Rash with fever or behavior change, until a health provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease.
- Purulent conjunctivitis (defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge), until after 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- Scabies, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.

- Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
- Strep throat or other streptococcal infection, until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever.
- Herpetic gingivostomatitis (cold sores), if the child is too young to have control of oral secretions; or
- Unspecified illness if it limits the child's comfortable participation in activities or if it results in a need for greater care than can be provided without compromising the health and safety of the other children.

The child may return to the ELC when the symptoms are no longer present, or a licensed physician indicates that there is no serious health risk to the child or other children.

If a child that has already been admitted to the ELC manifests any of the illnesses or symptoms specified here, the ELC will remove the child from the group of well children to a separate area until the child can be picked up by a parent/guardian or authorized pick up person, or licensed physician indicates verbally or in writing that the illness/symptom pose no serious health risk to the child or to other children. While a child is cared for in the separate room/area, the ELC will ensure that the child is supervised and the child's individual needs for rest, comfort, food, drink, and appropriate activity are met.

### **Meals and Snacks**

All meals and snacks are provided by the parents. There are scheduled morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. All foods and beverages brought from home must be in unbreakable, single-serve containers (labeled with the child's name) that maintain the food or beverage at the proper temperature. Food will not be heated by ELC staff. Please provide the proper eating utensils each day. Toddler food should be cut into pieces so children can use self-help skills when eating. All food should be contained in an insulated lunchbox that is stored in your child's cubby.

### **Medication, Ointments, Sunscreen, and Insect Repellent**

All medications will be administered by the WCS nurse during the school year.

Sunscreens, lotions, creams, and insect repellent must have a signed parent permission form for them to be administered by ELC staff. See Appendix 2. All sunscreens, lotions, creams, and insect repellants must be labeled with the child's name and placed in your child's cubby. Spray sunscreen cannot be used on toddlers.

### **Parent Concerns**

Should you have a question or concern regarding your child's care, please first contact your child's classroom teacher. If your concern is not addressed or resolved to your satisfaction, please contact the lower school principal.

## **Pictures & Communications**

Throughout the year, teachers will email pictures to families. Please do not “share” any photos that contain other ELC children on social media sites. Toddler children will receive daily reports about rest, food intake, toileting, and the day’s activities. Families of preschool children will receive weekly reports containing classroom activities and announcements.

## **Rest Time**

The ELC provides mats for all ELC children. Linens are also provided. Soiled linens will be sent home upon discovery and at the end of your child’s school week. Please return laundered linens upon your child’s return to school. Families should provide a crib-sized blanket and a pillow if your child uses one. A special stuffed animal or “lovie” can be provided for rest time.

## **Safety and Security**

The main doors to the lower school are open for drop off from 7:15 - 8:10 am and pick up from 2:30-3:00 pm. All other times the doors are locked for security purposes. If you need to enter the building during school hours, please press the intercom button next to our entrance and identify yourself. Families enrolled in extended day will be provided with codes that will give access to the building.

Fire drills and lock down procedures are practiced regularly to prepare children in the event of a school emergency.

## **Toys from Home**

Unless specifically requested/approved by your child’s teacher, toys should not be brought to school. Young children who have a transition object such as a stuffed animal or blanket may bring that item to the center, but the ELC is not responsible if it is lost, damaged, or broken in any way.

## **Volunteers**

Due to COVID-10 restrictions, volunteer opportunities will be limited, but we will share those as they are available..

## **Weather Policy for Playing Outdoors**

There are many benefits for children in outdoor play. Our children participate in outdoor activities daily. ELC children are outside when the wind chill factor is 32 degrees or higher or the heat index is 89 degrees or lower and the weather conditions do not pose a significant health or safety risk. Please dress your child appropriately for the daily weather forecast. If children are not well enough to go outdoors, they should not be brought to school.

## Appendix 1

### Student Health Requirements Early Learning Center

Upon admission to Wilmington Christian School, the following requirements must be met in order to comply with Delaware state regulations and recommendations. Please take this information to your child's physical. This will help prevent later trips back to the physician to get missing immunizations or screenings.

- 1. A physical examination completed by a MD, DO, PA, or CNP presented by the first day of attendance. A student physical form can be provided for this purpose.**
  - The form must be signed and dated by the examiner. The date of the physical should be as recent as possible but no more than two years prior to the first day of school.
  
- 2. A full immunization record is required by the first day of attendance at WCS. The following are acceptable forms of documenting immunizations:**
  - The Student Physical Form which contains a section to record the dates of immunizations.
  - A copy of the physician's medical record
  - A valid immunization record provided by the State of Delaware, or any other state.
  
- 3. The following immunizations or screenings are required by state law for all ELC students enrolling at WCS:**
  - 4 doses of DTaP vaccine (3 doses accepted for children less than 19 months)
  - 3 doses of IPV vaccine (2 doses accepted for children less than 19 months)
  - 1 dose of MMR vaccine administered after the age of 12 months (individual combinations of measles, mumps, and rubella may be used to meet this requirement)
  - 3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine
  - 1 dose Varicella vaccine (or written documentation of Chicken Pox disease from health care provider in lieu of vaccine)
  - Tuberculosis results of Mantoux screening completed within the last 12 months or written documentation of a TB Risk Assessment from a physician or public health clinic stating that the child has a low risk factor
  
- 4. All students (including out of state students) entering ELC must have documentation of blood lead testing with results recorded.**

Appendix 2



**Topical Cream Administration Permission**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

As the parent or guardian of the child named above, I give permission for the WCS Early Learning Center staff to apply lotion or diaper rash cream to my child as needed, when s/he shows signs of redness or rash.

I understand that topical creams provided by me must be available daily and be labeled with the child's full name.

I give my permission for the staff to apply:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

As needed from \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (not to exceed one year)

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_