



GENERAL INFORMATION & POLICIES

Thank you for your interest in our Preschool. We are a private Christian preschool overseen by Glenridge Church. Our strengths include a strong sense of family and a nurturing, homely atmosphere; skilled, caring, qualified teachers and competent staff who are skilled and enthusiastic; a varied and stimulating curriculum; outings and visiting entertainment throughout the year; special days and events; a Bible curriculum; the development of language and pre-reading skills through creative mediums and a healthy balance between indoor learning time and busy outside play time. And we love Jesus!

We provide an environment that caters for the development of the whole child – spiritually, physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Our programme is child-centred and strives to guide the child in his/her early interaction with the world around him/her.

General School Policy

- The language medium is English. We welcome other languages, e.g., isiZulu and Afrikaans.
- The admission of pupils depends on the availability of classroom space.
- We undertake to accept pupils no matter what their race, gender, social background, religion/faith or home language considerations.
- Preference for admission will be given to children in the local area and those with an enrolled sibling.

The aims of the Preschool programme include:

- helping the child enjoy success
- developing open-mindedness and flexibility
- building confidence and a positive self-image
- enabling the child to give and accept criticism
- developing creativity and aesthetic awareness
- promoting initiative and encouraging co-operation
- providing the child with the necessary language skills to express their ideas
- developing pre-skills and concepts that will equip the child for formal schooling.

We also believe the early years are a wonderful time to introduce children to Jesus and biblical values such as love, joy, peace, and hope.

To achieve our aims effectively we have loving and trained staff, small classes and a well-equipped and well-prepared environment. It is our desire that each child reach their full potential. Thus, we believe that encouragement is the most effective method for reinforcing positive behaviour and that consistent, loving discipline is important for the development of each child's character.

Classes

We Friends Preschool caters for children from two to six years old. There are four groups:

Playgroup: children who turn two during the year are welcome to join this group

Grade 000

Grade 00

Grade R: the school readiness programme is CAPS aligned

Daily Routine

- 7:30am–8:00am – School doors open
- 8:00am–8:20am – One-on-one skills development, free play in the classroom
- 8:20am–8:30am – Morning Ring Time
- 8:30am–9:30am – Free Choice Play Time
- 9:30am–10:00am – Snack Time
- 10:00am–10:30am – Ring Time (on Fridays and Wednesdays the whole school has Big Ring together)
- 10:30am–11:30am – Free Choice Play Time
- 11:30am–12:00pm – Tidy up, Story Time, pack bags, staggered home times.
 - Playgroup to be collected at 12:00pm
 - Grade 000 to be collected at 12:05pm
 - Grade 00 to be collected at 12:10pm
 - Grade R to be collected at 12:15pm
- 12:00pm–5:00pm – Aftercare

Home time collection and associated messages

Should your child be collected by another parent/family member/lift club on a regular basis, but with varying days, please communicate the details (which days, what time and the name of the adult collecting) to the school admin office.

Drop off and pick-up

Parents are to **park in the road** and walk their children up to the door of the school, with obvious exceptions for those with small babies or health concerns. Please ensure that your

children walk (no running) in the parking lot while holding an adult's hand. Children are not allowed to cross the road independently.

What is Ring Time?

The school morning is based on an open plan system, whereby children enjoy adult-guided Ring Times and child-led Free Play Time. Themes are planned for each term, and these provide the focus for rings, activities, stories and creative displays.

The rings include a wide variety of activities such as:

- Dramatisation rings
- Developmental Play rings
- Movement and Music rings
- Design and Technology, Science and Maths rings
- Language Development rings

What is Free Choice Play Time?

During this period of the morning children are free to decide where they would like to spend their time. They may choose between art, construction (building with recyclable materials), puzzles, projects (pouring, measuring, threading, etc.), dressing up and imagining in the Fantasy Room, cutting and sticking crafts, digging, swinging, climbing, exploring in the water and sensopathic trays, riding trikes and bikes and large muscle developmental games outside on the Astro turf and jungle gym. This is a lovely, noisy time of learning through play. A teacher or teaching assistant is on duty in each of the various areas to facilitate developmentally-appropriate activities and supervise the children.

Weekly Programme

As well as daily routines we also have a weekly rhythm to our time at We Friends and we would like you to encourage your child to participate in the different activities.

- Monday Flowers
- Tuesday Little Chef
- Wednesday Show & Tell
- Thursday Anti-waste & recycling
- Friday Hotdogs

Flowers

You can help your child to find a flower, leaf, seed pod or other interesting piece of greenery from the garden or a pot plant to decorate their classroom.

Little Chef

Twice a month the teachers plan a food/cooking activity related to the curriculum theme in that period. The children have the opportunity to bake, make, cut, spread, stir and knead; all of which are excellent activities for fine motor skills development, while also offering an opportunity to learn about taste, texture and colour.

Anti-waste & recycling day

Most of our activities and crafts at school utilise recycled materials. We can use almost anything so please collect bottle tops and other items that we can upcycle into learning creations. Clean items can be brought to school on a Thursday morning. If you have contacts for wood cut-offs, paper or cardboard, please let us know and send them to school with your child.

Hotdog Friday

Hotdogs (chicken) are provided by We Friends each Friday and the cost is included in the Annual Levy paid at the beginning of the year. Vegetarian hotdogs are available. Parents are invited to join the roster of Hotdog Helpers, which gives you and your child a fun opportunity to prepare the hotdogs for the whole school – usually just a few times during the year.

Daily Guidelines

Birthdays

You may communicate with the class teacher directly to arrange a Birthday Ring. We welcome a maximum of two adults (e.g., Mom and gran, or both parents) to attend the Birthday Ring. In which case, please arrive at **8:10am promptly**. You are welcome to send a small treat for each classmate (e.g., a small bag of popcorn, a small cupcake or biscuit) but this is not essential nor expected. Please **do not** send a cream cake, ice-cream or large cupcakes. We invite you to donate a book to our library, which will have a dedication with your child's name and the year inserted, and which the teacher may read at the Birthday Ring. This is a beautiful legacy which will be enjoyed for many years to come.

Toys

Toys are not to be brought to school. We find they become a distraction and create disruption, and the school cannot be held responsible for their loss or damage.

Teachers are unable to respond to direct messages or calls during the morning as they are focused on teaching but you are welcome communicate with the school office via

WhatsApp or use the landline at any time in the working day.

Settling in Process

Parents are asked not to linger during drop-off times as this can make the transition between saying goodbye and entering the classroom much harder for an anxious child. We find it is more helpful to remind your child that you will return, give them a loving goodbye and leave promptly. If you are at all concerned you are welcome to contact us later in the morning to check in, and if your child is unable to settle, we will contact you.

Lunch box ideas:

Please provide a healthy snack and water for snack time. Here are some guidelines:

- whole meal/brown bread with a healthy spread
- extras: fresh fruit and vegetables, cheese in small cubes, dried fruit, biltong
- if you pack yoghurt please also pack a disposable spoon and an ice-block

Please do not send sweets, cakes, sweet biscuits, chips or fizzy drinks from Monday to Thursday as we would like to encourage healthier snacks. Friday can be 'treat' day, and a small packet of chips/sweets may be included in your child's snack

Please pack a separate, labelled lunch with water for Aftercare (1:30pm lunch and 3pm snack).

Clothing

- Please put a change of clothing in a plastic packet inside your child's bag.
- Please ensure all clothing, including socks and shoes, are clearly marked with your child's name.
- The clothes must be simple, washable and suitable for all sorts of play activities. To help achieve independence, try to provide clothes with easily accessible fastenings and buttons.
- No wearing of jewelry will be permitted, as we cannot be held responsible for loss or breakage.
- Children may come to school barefoot.

Discipline Procedures

The intent of discipline is never to shame a child, but to bring about positive behavioural change in line with the school's biblical ethos. We Friends uses a positive reinforcement approach and encourages children to behave in a way that does not interfere with their or their peers' learning, safety or well-being. Each teacher has their own plan and procedure

for managing behaviour, which falls within the general principles for discipline within the school.

This plan will:

- suit the teacher's teaching style
- minimise misbehaviour and encourage co-operation
- motivate the child to stop disruptive behaviour
- motivate the child to engage with learning
- be quick and easy to use
- create a positive atmosphere in the classroom which is conducive to teaching and learning
- build self-confidence in each child
- communicate that the behaviour does not define them and it is possible to make a better choice at the next opportunity
- include discussion around the behaviour and actions that are preferable
- include a facilitated conversation about apologising and forgiving.

Most children respond well to positive reinforcement and praise. However, children whose behaviour interferes with their or their peers learning, safety or well-being will be disciplined using the following procedure:

1. Verbal reprimand and warning from the principal.
2. Removal of privileges and/or 'reflection time' set by the principal.
3. Parent interview with the teacher.
4. Parent interview with the teacher and principal.
5. Recommendations for play and behaviour therapy.
6. Letter of concern or warning.
7. Suspension from school, accompanied by covering letter.
8. Final warning letter.
9. Expulsion. All cases of suspension and expulsion will be forwarded to the school Board.

Health & Safety Guidelines

- Children suffering from coughs, colds or any infectious diseases must stay at home.
- Please notify the school office should your child have been in contact with any infectious diseases any other time including during school holidays.
- Please notify the school office if your child is absent, giving the reason for their absence.
- Please ensure that the office has the name and telephone number of your doctor, in case of emergency, and please keep these particulars updated.

- No medications are to be put into your child's school bag as it is dangerous for your child and others.
- Please inform the school regarding any allergies and advise regarding the appropriate measures to be taken in the event of exposure to the allergen.
- The Principal has sole and complete discretion to decide whether a child should attend school on the grounds of health. Any request made by the Principal to remove and keep a child at home due to health concerns must be adhered to.
- Permission is deemed to have been given for every child to be examined at the school by the school Honorary Medical Officer whenever examinations take place.
- Head Lice: following treatment for lice a clearance certificate must be obtained by the Health Department or a doctor before your child can return to school.
- To combat the spread of head lice and nits, all children with shoulder length hair need to have it tied up. Please also ensure that long hair is clipped back with hair slides or a hair band to keep it from falling into the face.

In the unlikely event of a medical emergency or an accident the school will contact the parent/guardian and if necessary, the specified family doctor of the child. If parents cannot be reached and emergency treatment is required, the child will be taken by a staff member or escorted by ambulance to the nearest hospital. Your authorisation for the school to contact your family doctor and to take whatever emergency measures are deemed necessary is vital to your child's well-being.

Protection of Personal Information Act

We Friends Preschool undertakes to collect, use, store, delete and otherwise handle personal information in such a way as to protect against, to the best of our ability, unauthorised access or loss. Information supplied will be entered into the We Friends Preschool electronic database for internal use only.