



# NELC

# Parent Handbook

# 2021-2022

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to Nativity Early Learning Center (NELC)! We're so excited you're here! Thank you for choosing us to take care of and teach your children!

This handbook has been prepared to help you understand our policies and procedures. Please note that throughout this document the term "parent(s)" is used to refer to parent(s)/guardian(s) and the term "COVID-19" is used to refer to any Covid-related illnesses.

Your child will need the following items each school day:

- Snack (nut-free and cut into bite-size pieces)- we ask that you not put this in with your child's lunch; otherwise they will end up eating it all before lunch comes around.
- Lunch (nut-free and cut into bite-size pieces)
- Spill-proof bottle/cup (no twist off bottles, juice boxes, pouches or canned drinks)
- Extra change of clothes (socks, underwear, shirt, pants/shorts) in a **labeled** Ziploc bag
- Nap mat (needs to fit in a space 8"x 20") – no sleeping bags please
- Something to cover the nap mat (sheet, pillowcase, etc.)
- FULL-SIZE backpack
- If not potty trained: 5 diapers (no cloth diapers), wipes & diaper cream (if needed)
- **Please LABEL all items**

Please see the information below for more details about the items listed above.

Our prayers will be with your children and your families throughout the year; please feel free to come to us with any specific needs you may have. God has already provided so much for us at NELC, and we know He will continue to do so!

We look forward to a wonderful year!

Andrea McGrath & Laurie Barclay  
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## **STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY**

Nativity Early Learning Center (NELC) is inspired by God's great love and aspires to serve Him by serving others. NELC is an invaluable addition to the total ministry of the Catholic Church of the Nativity and works to meet the needs of its families as well as the needs of the community.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

NELC offers an early childhood program for children ages 2-5 (preschool age only). Each of our classrooms has two teachers and can accommodate 8-12 children. At NELC we strive to provide a play-based, creative learning atmosphere where children can investigate and explore their world in a hands-on environment. In each classroom students find learning centers containing creative art, writing, literature, science, math, sensory activities and dramatic play.

As a Catholic early childhood program, NELC operates in partnership with the Catholic Church of the Nativity, its parish community and the families of its students. We are blessed to offer a Catholic education curriculum in which gospel values are not only encouraged but modeled and lived by our staff.

## **CURRICULUM**

NELC uses play-based learning to create a curriculum that is aligned with the Tennessee Early Learning Standards and the Diocese of Nashville PreK Religion Curriculum. Our developmentally appropriate day-to-day activities develop each child's gross motor, fine motor, cognitive, social, communication, adaptive skills and Catholic faith. We use a variety of resources to create lessons that fit the needs of the children.

NELC also helps children begin to learn self-awareness and responsibility. We encourage the children to be responsible for their own backpacks, to help in cleaning up, to throw away trash, and to take care of their own personal hygiene. The teachers help in supporting these skills, and we ask parents to do the same at home.

Additional lessons which are incorporated throughout the year include "Keeping Kids Safe," a personal safety curriculum required for children ages 3 and older by the Department of Human Services. We also use age-appropriate resources from the local fire and police departments and the American Red Cross to teach children about safety practices.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

NELC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, national origin or disability.

- NELC will try to accommodate children with special needs (physical, behavioral, cognitive, medical, etc.) To determine if NELC is a good fit for the child, parental involvement and communication with the Directors is critical. We will evaluate many factors in deciding if we can meet the child's needs.



Arrival Times	8:55-9:05 am
School Day Hours	9:00 am – 2:00 pm
Dismissal Times	1:55 – 2:05 pm

## 2021-2022 School Year Calendar

Date	Event	Time
September 1	Parent Information Night	7:00 pm
September 2	NELC Mass & Open House (parents and students)	9:00-10:30 am
September 7	First Day of School	
September 30	Fall Pictures	
October 11-15	NO SCHOOL: Fall Break	
October 28	All Saints Day Celebration (students only)	
Oct. 29-31	Fall Fundraiser	
November 18	Thanksgiving Feast (w/families)	11:00–12:00
November 22 - 26	NO SCHOOL: Thanksgiving Break	
December 14	Christmas Program (w/families) - tentative	11:00–12:00
December 16	Christmas Party (students only)	
Dec. 20-Jan 5	NO SCHOOL: Winter Break	
January 6	School Resumes	
January 10	Registration for Fall 2022 open to NELC families (Open to Parish Jan. 17 & Community Jan. 31)	
January 13	Father's Day Celebration (w/families)	8:30 – 9:00 am
February 9	Parent-Teacher Conferences	Scheduled time btw 9-12
February 10	Valentine's Day Party (students only)	
March 5-6	Spring Fundraiser	
March 14-18	NO SCHOOL: Spring Break	
April 14	Easter Celebration (students only)	
April 28	Spring Pictures	
May 5	Mother's Day Celebration	TBD
May 17	Last day of School	
May 19	End of Year Celebration w/families (Mass, Ceremony, Field Day)	8:45 am

\*\*NELC follows the WCS calendar except in certain situations which will be addressed at the discretion of the Directors.  
Calendar subject to change. Updated 6/29/21

## **ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

The Nativity Early Learning Center entrance is located at the doors on the bottom level of the church facing Buckner Lane.

- Arrival time is from 8:55-9:05
- Parents will drive up the driveway to the back parking lot and turn around to come back down the driveway creating a car line in front of the church
- A NELC staff member will come to the cars during pick up and drop off. If for some reason a family arrives late, the parent will text Andrea and a staff member will come out of the building to get the child.
- All children must be signed in and out, recording the arrival/departure times and a phone number where a parent or responsible adult (18 years of age or older) can be reached during the day.
- Dismissal time is from 1:55-2:05 pm.
- At dismissal, **children will only be dismissed to an authorized person on file.** If your child will be picked up by someone other than a parent or other authorized adult, please write that on the sign in sheet. Children will not be released to another adult without this written permission. Any adult picking up your child may be required to show a photo ID.
- At dismissal, NELC staff is not able to buckle the child into their car seat; therefore, the adult picking up will be responsible for buckling the child into their car seat.

## **LATE PICKUP POLICY**

- NELC closes **at 2:05 p.m.** All children must be picked up by 2:05 p.m. **After 2:05 p.m. a late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged ("TRUE" time will be based on Directors' phones).**
- Anyone who is late to pick up a child must sign the child out, and time of pickup will be recorded on a Late Pickup sheet. This sheet along with payment, payable to COTN, will be given to one of the Directors or placed in the blue lockbox the next school day.

We recognize that situations may periodically occur which prevent you from picking up your child in a timely manner. Please text Andrea and make her aware that your child will be picked up after hours. The child will wait with a NELC staff member until authorize person arrives. Late fees will apply.



## **CLOTHING**

Children should wear washable, comfortable play clothes, and closed toe shoes. We do engage in many messy activities, but even with art smocks clothes can get dirty and/or wet.

- Please send in an extra change of clothes (socks, underwear, shirt, pants/shorts) in a **labeled** Ziploc bag to leave at school. We will send the extra clothes home each season, so they can be changed out.

## **BACKPACKS**

Please have your child bring a FULL- SIZE backpack (approximately 16 inches) to school. While small backpacks are cute and easy for children to carry, they do not provide sufficient space for your child to carry all the items needed for a day at school.

## **SNACK/LUNCH**

- Please send a healthy NUT-FREE **snack and lunch** with your child each day.
- Make sure the food is cut into bite-size pieces to prevent choking hazards.
- Please place your child's food in containers/packaging that can be opened by the child with little assistance from the staff.
- Staff does not have access to a microwave or refrigerator; therefore, please make sure that all food is ready-to-eat when sent to school.
- For their snack, send in something that can be eaten within 10 minutes.
- Spill-proof bottle/cup (no twist off bottles, juice boxes, pouches or canned drinks)



**\*NELC is a NUT-FREE center.**

## **REST TIME**

- Please provide a nap mat for your child
  - The mat will come to school with your child on Tuesday and we will send it home on Thursday to be cleaned.
- Your child may have a small blanket or "lovey" when napping
- Your child may have a pacifier **only** while napping

## **STUDENT INFORMATION**

- **Current medical & emergency information, authorized pick-up list, court order, etc. MUST be completed and on file with the school at all times.**
- If your contact information changes, please contact NELC immediately to update phone numbers, addresses, emergency contacts, place of employment, etc.
- If any changes occur in your family that you feel we should know about in order to best meet the needs of your child, please contact one of the Directors with the appropriate information.
- Remember that children must be signed in and out each day by a responsible adult. Children will only be released to persons noted on emergency forms, authorized pickup lists or by written/confirmed verbal notice. NELC will not release a child to any person the staff deems to be a threat in any way. **Your child's safety is our first priority!**

## **2021-2022 TUITION/FEE SCHEDULE**

### **Tuition: \$1440 (September, 2021-May, 2022)**

- A deposit of \$160 is due to secure placement for the 2021-2022 school year. If tuition is paid on time for the school year, then no tuition payment will be due May, 2022.
- Tuition may be paid annually, semi-annually or in 9 monthly installments (\$160 per month).
- Tuition is a set, yearly fee and does not fluctuate due to absences, months with 5 weeks, holidays, vacations, snow days, etc.
- Tuition is due on the **first of each month; no billing statements will be sent out.**
- A \$10.00 late fee will be added if tuition is paid after the 5th of the month without prior approval by the Directors.
- A \$30.00 fee will be charged for any returned checks.
- If tuition is not received within 30 days beyond the due date, your child will no longer be able to attend NELC.

### **Annual Registration Fee: \$75**

- This fee is a non-refundable fee paid per child and is due with a completed registration packet.
- This fee is required in order to place your child on our waiting list for the current school year.

### **Supply Fee: \$60**

- This fee is per child and is payable by August 1, 2021.
- This fee is non-refundable.

### **Late Pick-Up: \$1.00 per minute**

- After 2:05 p.m. a late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged.
- Adult will sign a Late Pick-Up form stating that he/she is aware of today's late pick-up and agrees to pay the late fee.
- The late fee is due by the next school day.

### **Forms of Payment:**

- Online (Preferred method):  
<https://nativitycatholic.weshareonline.org/ws/opportunities/NativityEarlyLearningCenter>
  - Please allow several days for payment to process and NELC to verify your payment. It is helpful if you share your receipt with NELC after you submit your payment.
- Make checks payable to COTN and write NELC in memo.
  - Please give payments to a director or place in the blue NELC lock box located outside classroom 110.
  - Please do not put them in your child's backpack or give to a teacher.

**Registration and supply fees will not be refunded or pro-rated.**



## **CLOSURES**

- In most situations, NELC follows Williamson County Schools (WCS) regarding closings. However, in some situations NELC will determine closing based on information gathered from Williamson County, State of Tennessee, Diocesan recommendations, and/or CDC guidelines.
- A special announcement concerning our school closures will NOT be made in the media; however, NELC Directors will send an email to families as soon as a decision is made.
- Should we need to dismiss before our normal closing time parents will be contacted by the Directors with further instructions.
- Days missed will not be prorated nor will they be made up; however, decisions regarding extended closings (i.e., Covid-19) will be taken into consideration should they occur.

Overall, the rule of thumb for weather-related closures is:



- If Williamson County Schools are **closed** for inclement weather, then NELC will be **closed**.
- If Williamson County Schools have a **2-hour delayed opening**, then NELC will be **closed**.
- If Williamson County Schools have a **1-hour delayed opening**, then NELC will be **open on time**.

## **WITHDRAWAL**

NELC requires a one-month notification in writing should you choose to withdraw your child from the program. Please note that if your child attends school for only a portion of any month the full month's tuition **must** be paid.

## **ATTENDANCE**

We miss your child when they're absent! Please notify NELC as soon as possible if your child will not be in attendance. For extended absences (vacations, etc.), please make us aware of the dates your child will be gone. Just a reminder that there is no reduction of fees for absences.

## **KEEPING NELC CLASSROOMS CLEAN & SAFE**

- Teachers will clean furniture, high-touch surfaces and items throughout and at the end of each school day.
- COTN will have the classroom cleaned professionally once a week.
- Teachers will encourage hand washing and hand sanitizing while the children are at NELC.
- Teachers will have hand sanitizer, tissues, etc. throughout the classroom and will assist where needed.
- Parents will choose if they want their child to wear a mask while in the classroom.
- Should a child become sick while at NELC, they will be isolated from the other children by a staff member, and a parent will immediately be called. The staff member will stay with the child until the parent arrives.

## **ILLNESS POLICY**

We want to keep all staff and children healthy! Please do NOT send your child to school if he/she is sick! **Please check your child's symptoms before bringing them to school each day. If it is the opinion of the staff that your child is sick, you will be called to pick him/her up immediately. NELC or COTN will not be liable in the event your child gets sick.**

Children who are exhibiting any of the following should NOT attend school:

- A temperature of 100.4 degrees F or above
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- A frequent, uncontrollable and disruptive cough
- Diarrhea/vomiting within the last 24 hours
- A rash or signs of skin infection that have not been seen by a doctor
- Sore throat with swollen lymph nodes, headache, nausea and/or positive culture for strep throat
- A symptom of a childhood disease (chickenpox, mumps, scarlet fever, whooping cough or German measles)
- A positive COVID-19 test or two or more symptoms: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea.
- Known exposure and close contact to someone who tested positive for COVID-19
- Excessive nasal discharge
- Earache
- Head lice or nits
- Any unexplained rash or spots
- Ulcers or sores inside or around the mouth



Children may return to school:

- When temperature is below 100.4 degrees F **without the use of medicine** that reduces fever for **at least 48 hours**.
- With a doctor's note stating child may return to school.
- After 24 hours of starting an antibiotic.
- If diagnosed with COVID-19: 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and** 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **and** other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving
- If exposed to someone with COVID-19: 14 days of last known exposure to COVID-19 and no symptoms have developed.

How families can help:

- Keep your child at home if he/she isn't acting like him/herself.
- Keep your child's nails clipped short to help prevent germs from accumulating underneath the nails.
- Help your child practice blowing their nose, washing their hands and coughing into their sleeve independently.
- Help your child practice independently getting tissue or hand sanitizer when needed.
- Please inform us if someone in your household is exposed to, or diagnosed with, COVID-19, chickenpox, hand-foot-mouth disease, lice, scabies, fifth disease, flu or any other communicable disease. If a potentially contagious illness occurs in a classroom, those families will be notified.

## **MEDICATION**

**Absolutely NO medication (prescription or non-prescription) will be administered to a child by any staff member.** In your child needs any medicine, you may come in and administer it to your child.

- The only exceptions are diaper cream and emergency treatments.
  - Emergency treatments require written parent and/or physician authorization. Parents **MUST** complete necessary documentation with a Director **BEFORE** bringing medicine to school. Medication must be in the original container with the child's name on it.
  - Diaper cream requires the parent to provide written instructions, signed and dated for each day administered. Please label the bottle.
- **\*No child may carry any kind of medication (i.e., cough drops) on his/her person.**
- Please let us know about any ongoing medical situation with your child; all information is kept confidential

## **ALLERGIES**

If your child has any allergies, they should be clearly indicated on his/her registration form. All children with a diagnosed allergy are required to have an Allergy Action Plan, a standard form that a physician will complete and sign, turned in to the Directors.

- If your child's Allergy Plan requires an EpiPen, we would prefer that these stay at school at all times instead of going back and forth to home.



**\*NELC is a NUT-FREE center.**

## **COMMUNICATION**

- There are several ways to communicate with NELC (i.e., phone, email, FB). Each family will receive this information during Open House.
- All communication goes through the Directors. If a teacher needs to be informed, the Directors will relay the information.
- Parents do have an opportunity for daily communication with NELC staff during drop-off/pickup, but these day-to-day conversations should be casual and brief. If you need to confer with a staff member at length and/or about a private matter, we ask that you schedule a conference.

## **CONFERENCES**

- Parent/teacher conferences are held in the spring and as needed when requested by parents and/or teachers. Conferences are invaluable opportunities to discuss your child's development over the course of the school year.
- Directors are also available for conferences throughout the school year at the parent's and/or teacher's request. Please contact NELC to schedule an appointment if necessary.

## **DISCIPLINE**

At NELC, our goal in discipline is to teach the child self-control. We believe children can learn to make good decisions, and the following techniques can help guide them:

- Positive reminders: We tell children what we want them to do rather than using “no” or “don’t.” (For example: “Annie, your feet stay on the floor.”)
- Replacement behavior: Teaching a positive behavior to replace an unwanted one. (For example: “Instead of throwing blocks, Harper, let’s build with blocks.”)
- Positive reinforcement: Reinforcing positive behavior through verbal praise and/or opportunities in the classroom. (For example: “I like how you’re standing in line, Brady; you can be our line leader today!”)
- Redirection: Directing a child to another activity to eliminate difficulty. (For example: “Tyler, why don’t you come to the craft table with me?”)
- Renewal time: Occasionally, a child needs to be removed from the situation for a brief time, allowing time to consider alternate behavior. (For example: “Sadie, let’s go over to the bean bag and take a break while you calm down. You can come back and join us when you’re ready.”)

NO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS ALLOWED. Corporal punishment is defined as the use of negative touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.) No unusual punishment is allowed, such as humiliation, ridicule, threat or coercion.

Please note: a behavioral situation that is ongoing may necessitate a parent conference. Parents are encouraged to discuss any questions or concerns with the Directors. We will make every effort to work with the parents of children having difficulties in the classroom; for example, we will work together to create a strategy that produces the best outcome for both the child and the classroom.

The staff is here to serve and protect all of our children. With that in mind, please note that a parent will be called anytime a child exhibits uncontrollable behavior which cannot be modified by the staff, and the parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. If continued efforts to modify the behavior fail, and Directors determine NELC is not the best place for your child, we’re happy to assist you in transitioning to a program that better suits your child’s needs.

Please communicate with the Directors if your child is going through a situation at home that you feel might affect his/her behavior at school. (Any information shared will be confidential.) We can better care for your child when we know if something difficult or disruptive is happening in his/her life.

Unfortunately, there are times we may have to expel a child from our program either on a short-term or permanent basis. The following are examples of reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center. Please note that these are not meant to be all-encompassing:

- Parent threatens and/or exhibits verbal, physical, and/or emotional abuse to staff and/or child.
- Habitual tardiness by parent when picking up child.
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse by a child to staff or other children.
- Tuition not paid within 30 days of due date.

## **SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE / NEGLECT**

- All NELC staff members are required by law to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect.
- They have been trained to identify indicators of abuse and neglect and know the appropriate process to follow.
- NELC also adheres to the policies set forth by the Diocese of Nashville concerning the safety of all children in our care as well as our staff.

## **ITEMS FROM HOME**

- Please remember to label anything you send in with your child.
- We ask that your child not bring toys from home unless your child's teacher has requested specific items which pertain to a unit of study.
- Play guns, knives or other weapons which encourage aggression and/or violence are NEVER appropriate in the classrooms.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

We would love to celebrate your child's birthday! If you would like to provide refreshments or do something special for your child's birthday:

- Please discuss details with the Directors the week prior to the celebration in order to plan for any allergies in your child's classroom. Please remember we are a nut-free center.
- If your child has a food restriction (i.e., gluten), Directors may ask you to provide a treat for your child to participate in the birthday celebration.
- If a birthday party is to be celebrated away from school and the entire class is invited, invitations may be distributed at school. If the entire class is not invited, please mail invitations so as to be considerate of all the children's feelings.

## **CLASS CELEBRATIONS**

- We plan a variety of fun celebrations for your children throughout the year! Some of our celebrations are incorporated into our typical preschool day and routine; these celebrations will be for students only.
- There are other celebrations where families are invited.
- Please see the School Calendar for when celebrations are students only or with families.



## **SCHOOL'S RIGHT TO AMEND**

The Directors and/or Nativity Early Learning Center retain the right to amend the Parent Handbook for just cause; parent(s) will be promptly notified in writing if changes are made.



**Parent Handbook 2021-2022 Acknowledgement**

\_\_\_\_\_ I acknowledge I have read, understand and abide by the Parent Handbook of 2021-2022.

\_\_\_\_\_ I will check my child's symptoms before bringing them to school each day, and will not hold NELC or COTN liable in the event my child gets sick.

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

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_