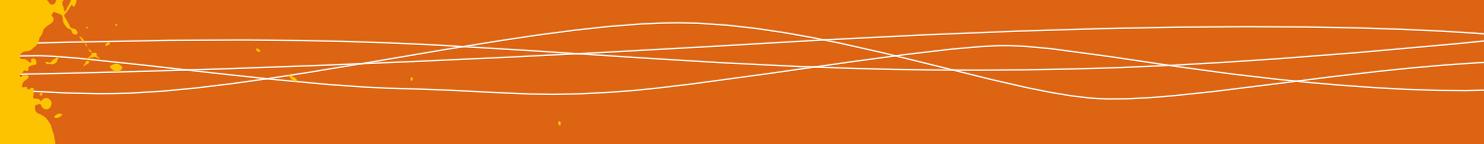




Education policy

for Lutheran preschools
in the parish of Melle/Georgsmarienhütte

Focusing on the child





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Foreword

Dear reader,
Education is one of the great challenges of our times, and early childhood education has grown ever more important over recent years. Our Protestant preschools in the parish of Melle/Georgsmarienhütte are taking on the challenges this involves: we want to make our preschools places of early childhood education and religious teaching which communicate the Christian way of life and values in a child-friendly manner.

Just as Jesus Christ called the children unto him, placed them at the focus of attention and made them examples of faith (Mark 10:13–16), our 17 Protestant preschool facilities focus on the child. Children's dignity and value do not depend on their origins, their ability or their achievements, but on the unconditional love of God. In the spirit of Jesus Christ, every single child has a right to feel recognised, valued and safe. The educators at the Protestant preschools accompany and support children's individual development

and help parents fulfil their duties in raising their children. Their educational work promotes equal opportunities and participation for all children, giving true meaning to the term "inclusion".

Our preschools are a key part of life in our local church parishes. Their theological teaching supports children's religious development and gives them access to both the form and the content of the Christian faith. Children from non-Christian families can get to know the Christian way of life and aspects of the faith, with respect being given to their own religious affiliation or world view.

I would like to thank the directors of our preschools, who have developed this Protestant education policy with a great deal of expertise and skill. It invites discussion on parenting in early childhood and how to convey Christian values; a dialogue you are warmly welcomed to join.

Hans-Georg Meyer-ten Thoren
Superintendent of the Lutheran parish of Melle/Georgsmarienhütte



„By this you know
the Spirit of God “





The child at a Protestant kindergarten

According to the Protestant understanding, education is a comprehensive act of character-building. In the history of the Protestant church it has always been important to make education accessible to all people, according to their individual capabilities.

From a Christian point of view, every single person is created in God's image. Every one of us is unique and loved by God. We show regard for children's personalities, treat them with respect and involve them in decisions which are important to them. Our Protestant faith supports children and adults alike, offering them guidance in their lives.

We build reliable relationships with the children, creating an atmosphere in which children feel safe, are aware of God's love and experience a trusting community.

On a daily basis, we take time to answer children's questions about

God and the world, where we come from and where we are going, joining them in the search for answers. Along with the children, we discover the everyday minor miracles of God's creation, which we treat with care and responsibility.

Individual freedom is important to us. Children learn to make decisions and see that their choices are accepted. They are encouraged to take on responsibility for themselves and others.

We experience brotherly love by showing understanding for one another, being forgiving, sharing, being tolerant and expressing solidarity with those who are weaker than us. At our preschools there are families of different nationalities and religions. We treat them with openness and enjoy entering into dialogue with them. These are our steps on the path to peace.





Our educational duties

In order to learn, children need a familiar environment with relationships they can rely on. From this safe base, children can discover and try new things. As adults, we give them different ideas and plenty of opportunities, giving priority to creating a balance between freedom and boundaries.

We work in partnership with parents, taking on joint responsibility for the children's education and upbringing.

Children have a right to reliable relationships!

The children living, learning and playing together in our preschools come from different family backgrounds, religious and cultural origins; they are at different ages and levels of development. We take the children's needs and gifts into account.

Children have a right to diversity!

As God promises every one of us inalienable dignity from the very start, children have the right to participation, co-determination and a say in decisions.

This gives them the chance to take on personal responsibility, to experience being an important part of the community and to practise taking democratic action.

Children have a right to participation!

Our preschools are learning workshops. The children are supported to develop an understanding, and to make sense of what they learn. Thus, they are able to apply their knowledge, and employ it in various different situations.

It is our belief that education is only lasting if it takes place in an atmosphere without fear. The children learn to use mistakes and failure as an opportunity.

Children have a right to space to learn!



From the first day of our lives we naturally try to understand the world, to take action and to find out new things. Children learn quickly and pursue their own interests and favourite topics with what seems to us to be incredible determination.

The Ten Commandments of learning

- 1.** Pay attention, take notice of me.
- 2.** Give me security; act reliably so that I feel safe.
- 3.** Have confidence in me; don't make me bored.
- 4.** Trust in me; let me do things myself.
- 5.** Give me time.
- 6.** Let me be the way I am; don't judge me.
- 7.** Let me make mistakes which I can learn from.
- 8.** Let me fill you with enthusiasm.
- 9.** Help me discover the world.
- 10.** Support me without telling me what to do.



„Tell me why...?“





Educational goals

1. Emotional development and social learning

Through contact with one another and with adults, children learn to experience themselves as people, to be aware of their feelings and to express themselves.

We enable children to:

- make and maintain friendships
- practise being considerate and helpful
- say what they think and learn to resolve an argument
- act responsibly
- choose freely between content for boys and girls

In this way, the children's social behaviour and collaboration within the group is filled not only with self-confidence but also with empathy.

2. Cognitive skills and the pleasure of learning

Children need a wide range of opportunities to take in their environment with all their senses. This helps them explore their everyday world and promotes learning.

We enable children to:

- discover the world with all their senses
- have fun and pleasure learning

- find their own solutions through curiosity and exploration
- pursue their interests with concentration and determination

When they are encouraged and their errors are met with understanding, children can learn from their mistakes and draw their own conclusions when they succeed. Activities and situations are specifically designed to help children find problem-solving strategies, their own ways of learning and possible actions to take.

3. The body – exercise – health

Health and physical well-being are closely connected to regular exercise and help your child to develop.

We enable children to:

- move about indoors and outside
- take breaks
- test their strength and find their limits
- appreciate their physical identity and recognise differences
- discover a balanced diet

Exercise is the key to learning and encourages children's physical and mental development.

4. Speech and language

Children use different ways of communicating and getting across their needs. Language acquisition plays a major role in this. Their home language is respected and seen as part of their own personality.

We motivate children to:

- take pleasure in communication
- take part in discussions
- sing songs, make up rhymes and play singing games
- discover new words on an every day basis
- get to grips with written words, numbers and symbols
- learn German

Children learn to communicate through ongoing contact with one another and adults with whom they have a good relationship.

Educational goals

5. Practical life skills

We offer children all kinds of learning opportunities in everyday life, giving them plenty of time to acquire practical life skills.

We help children to:

- dress and undress themselves
- use tools, equipment and household items
- eat and drink on their own
- take part in everyday tasks

The feeling of being able to structure their everyday life themselves raises the children's self-esteem. It helps motivate them to acquire other practical life skills.

6. Basic Maths

Children enjoy finding out about mathematical concepts. Their observations and experiences of time and space provoke children to explore.

We encourage children to:

- experiment with shapes, lengths, sizes, weights and structure
- observe, investigate and ask questions
- measure quantity; sort and count objects, weigh materials and think about the passing of time

There is no need to have an explanation for everything. The children are invited to think and explore for themselves.

7. Sensory learning

Sensory learning involves all the senses and sensations. From the day they are born, children come into contact with their environment through sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.

We enable children to:

- be artistic by drawing, painting, modelling, cutting and sticking
- express their feelings and perceptions through dance, theatre, mime and music
- experience music together
- come across works by important artists from around the world

Different forms of artistic expression help children explore, structure and depict their world, allowing them to express their own feelings and share their experiences with others.

8. Nature and the world we live in

Children experience nature and explore their direct surroundings. This stimulates their inquiring minds and teaches them practical life skills.

We enable children to:

- experience the workings of nature on excursions, days in the woods and walks
- sow, tender and harvest plants
- discover the cycle of nature through observation
- experience the elements of earth, fire, wind and water
- explore their immediate environment by going on tours or shopping

Environmental education is based on a love of nature. The children come to understand the world as God's creation and learn to protect and maintain it.

9. Ethical and religious issues, the basic experiences of human existence

Children ask questions about the meaning of life, looking for guidance: "Why am I here? Where do I come from? Where am I go-

ing?" Children need activities, ideas and encouragement to make them think and come up with their own answers.

Children at our preschools experience:

- their questions being taken seriously
- being treated respectfully
- people who are there to talk to them based on their Christian attitudes
- church festivals throughout the year
- worship and storytelling from the Bible
- prayers and songs in everyday life
- the diversity of cultural and religious traditions

At preschool, children have positive experiences of fundamental principles, the most important being safety, trust and acceptance. This helps children grow stronger and more assured, and to enjoy life.





„Look what I
can do... “





„The first steps
are the biggest! “



An attentive approach to transitions

Transitions are particularly sensitive stages in a child's life. The first significant transitions are from their family to preschool and from preschool to school.

But that is not all; children experience all kinds of transitions in everyday life, such as arriving and saying goodbye, going from play to a meal, from their lunchtime nap to the afternoon...

The children are encouraged to shape these transitions according to their own needs. We give them the confidence to rise to new challenges, ensuring that the children feel secure. In these situations, we take account of the fact that every child goes at their own speed, and make sure that they are accompanied by familiar faces.



Child protection

Children have the right to protection – based on the German Child Protection Act and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which applies worldwide.

Our work includes protecting children against risks, helping them in an emergency and standing up for all their rights. We use set methods to achieve those goals.

Children who consciously claim their rights and needs, who feel valued and able to assert themselves, are better protected against risk. We use the development of means for children to make complaints as an important way of preventing violence and protect each and every child.



Parenting partnership

In our preschools, children and their families will find an atmosphere of acceptance, mutual respect and interest. The family world is the basis on which children learn new things. We have regular meetings with families to discuss their child's individual development, and offer help and support where necessary. It is important to us and good for the child if everyone involved works together as partners, focusing on finding solutions.

Cooperation with ...



... the primary school

It is our job to help children make the transition from preschool to primary school through regular exchanges of information amongst staff, and various activities such as mutual visits between the institutions involved, shared projects, and language support. Parents are also involved in this process. Both institutions work on shared structures and processes to enhance the joy of the children's first day at school as a happy experience.

... other institutions

Collaboration with other professionals (e.g. speech therapists, early years support workers, social workers, doctors, therapists and family counsellors) takes into account the interests of the children and their families. These forms of educational and advisory support are part of the everyday routine at our preschools, and we have experienced their benefit.

The preschools are connected in parish and regional networks, taking part in continuing joint professional development, acting on committees, and working in quality development.

Lutheran preschools

in the parish of Melle - Georgsmarienhütte

- **Kindertagesstätte Achelriede · Bissendorf**
Lyrstraße 6 · 49143 Bissendorf · Tel.: 0 54 02 / 23 73
kiga.achelriede@kkmgmh.de · www.bissendorf.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Arche Noah · Bad Laer**
Weststraße 2 · 49196 Bad Laer · Tel.: 0 54 24 / 76 19
ev.arche-noah-kiga@t-online.de · www.arche-noah-badlaer.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Pustelblume & Löwenzahn · Bad Rothenfelde**
Brunnenstraße 14 · 49214 Bad Rothenfelde · Tel.: 0 54 24 / 18 22
Vermolder Straße 20 · 49214 Bad Rothenfelde · Tel.: 0 54 24 / 18 62
post@pustelblume-loewenzahn.de
www.pustelblume-loewenzahn.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Lukas · Bruchmühlen**
Sandhorstweg 38 · 49328 Melle · Tel.: 0 52 26 / 28 57
kts.bruchmuehlen@evlka.de · www.kiga-bruchmuehlen.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Martini · Buer**
Georg-Bruns-Weg 2 · 49328 Melle · Tel.: 0 54 27 / 7 12
kts.martini.buer@evlka.de · www.martinikindergartenbuer.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Regenbogen · Dissen**
Nordring 40 · 49201 Dissen · Tel.: 0 54 21 / 28 22
kiga@st-mauritius.de · www.regenbogenkiga-dissen.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Haus der kleinen Füße · Georgsmarienhütte**
Kirchstraße 3 · 49124 Georgsmarienhütte
Tel.: 0 54 01 / 3 41 35 · Haus-der-kleinen-fuesse@kkmgmh.de
www.luther-georgsmarienhuette.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Melanchthon · Hagen**
Neuer Kamp 26 · 49170 Hagen a.T.W. · Tel.: 0 54 01 / 9 82 56
kindergarten.hagen@osnanet.de · www.kindergarten-hagen.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Birkenlund · Hilter**
Deldener Straße 20 · 49176 Hilter · Tel.: 0 54 24 / 21 37 07
info@kindergarten-birkenlund.de
www.kindergarten-birkenlund.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Christophorus · Neuenkirchen**
Richter Straße 4 · 49326 Melle · Tel.: 0 54 28 / 5 34
kts.neuenkirchen@evlka.de
www.christophorus-kindergarten-melle.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Freunde · Oesede**
Auf der Nathe 10 · 49124 Georgsmarienhütte
Tel.: 0 54 01 / 5 3 31 · freundekita.gmh@osnanet.de
www.freundekita-gmh.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Lummerland · Oesede**
Johannes-Möller-Straße 14 · 49124 Georgsmarienhütte
Tel.: 0 54 01 / 5 99 11 · lummerland@osnanet.de
www.integrativkita-lummerland.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Paulus · Melle**
Saarlandstraße 42 · 49324 Melle · Tel.: 0 54 22 / 29 10
info@paulus-kita-melle.de · www.paulus-kita-melle.de
- **Kindertagesstätte im evangelischen Familienzentrum · Melle**
Stadtgraben 11-13 · 49324 Melle · Tel.: 0 54 22 / 9 23 01 30
kita@familienzentrum-melle.de
www.familienzentrum-melle.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Sonnenblume · Wellingholzhausen**
Uhlandstraße 30 · 49326 Melle · Tel.: 0 54 29 / 92 84 54
ev.kiga.sonnenblume@web.de
www.kita-sonnenblume-melle.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Albert-Schweitzer · Westerhausen**
Anne-Frank-Ring 8 · 49324 Melle · Tel.: 0 54 22 / 82 80
anita.mallon@t-online.de
www.mariengemeinde-oldendorf.de
- **Kindertagesstätte Wissingen · Bissendorf**
Engler Straße 3 · 49143 Bissendorf · Tel.: 0 54 02 / 13 36
kiga-wissingen@osnanet.de · www.ki-wis.de

www.kirchenkreis-melle-georgsmarienhuette.de