



# ST. PAUL'S PRESCHOOL

# HANDBOOK

## Our Mission

*"We, as a Lutheran School in partnership with our parents and congregation, provide high quality Christian education to nurture our students to become lifelong learners, responsible citizens, and Disciples of Christ."*

## **Welcome to St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool!**

We are pleased that you and your child will be participating in our program. We consider it a privilege to share in your child's growth and development.

This handbook has been prepared to introduce you to our program and to answer some common questions. We encourage you to study the handbook and discuss any questions you may have with the teacher. Please note: This handbook includes additional policies to the St. Paul's Lutheran School Handbook. If you would like a copy, please request one through the School office.

Parents are an integral part of our program and your child's experiences here at St. Paul's. We look forward to getting to know you better and working with you to ensure that your child's early learning experiences are positive and exciting.

### **St. Paul's Purpose:**

- To provide opportunities for Christian learning of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior through formal classes and a living and learning environment.
- To provide opportunities and activities that help the children have a healthy self-concept that includes accepting self, limitations, and the talents that God has given them.
- To provide experiences and activities that will fulfill the children's basic individual needs (spiritual, emotional, psychological, intellectual, and physical).
- To provide interests and experiences that broadens children's aptitude for future schoolwork.

"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6

### **INTRODUCTION**

St. Paul's Preschool is committed to assisting parents of the church and community in providing Christian nurture, as well as, age-appropriate learning, for pre-kindergarten children three years of age and older.

We believe that parents are the first and most important teachers a child will ever have. We want to work to always reinforce the home. Parents are encouraged to support the child's positive feelings about the school experience. Please share questions or concerns so that we may be of support to you and your child.

St. Paul's Preschool recognizes that children need to grow wholly --that is, spiritually, emotionally, cognitively, physically, and socially. Our program offers a variety of experiences with many materials to touch and handle, and a teacher ready to adjust the environment to stimulate new ways of thinking. We will use play to promote the development of skills and competencies, to increase creativity, to do problem solving, and to give opportunity for imagining. Our program is to be a place where children explore God's World around them through experimentation and imitation and use of all their senses. There is much data in early childhood education substantiating that this is the way young children learn best.

### **PROGRAM ACCREDITATION**

The Full Day Preschool program of St. Paul's Lutheran Church is accredited by National Lutheran Schools along with St. Paul's day school.

## PARENT COMMUNICATION

Teachers are available for individual conferences with parents as a need arises. Please speak with the teacher and/or Principal and share any individual concerns you may have.

Your child will benefit when there is close communication between home and school. If you and/or your child are having difficulty at home, chances are your child will have difficulty away from home as well. Please let us know what is happening. We are here to help and support you and your child. Knowing that something significant has happened at home will alert us to extra ways to help your child to have the most positive learning experience at St. Paul's Early Childhood Center.

## ENROLLMENT POLICIES

All children must participate in the Christian education program of St. Paul's Early Childhood Ministry "Jesus Time." Parents are encouraged to participate as a family in regular Christian worship and education.

- St. Paul's Early Childhood Program admits children of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin. It does not discriminate in the administration of any program policies.
- Desires to serve the members of St. Paul's and the community. Since the program is maintained by St. Paul's congregation, members of the congregation will have first opportunity to enroll their children on an annual basis. If applications exceed the number of children we can accommodate, a waiting list will be developed. Members of St. Paul's will have priority enrollment.
- Children enrolled in the Preschool programs must be toilet trained and be able to care for themselves in toileting (see more detailed information below.)
- All children new to our program are accepted on a two-month trial period. The program will have the option to terminate enrollment if the child demonstrates an inability to adjust to an organized program.
- Registration fees are paid at the time of application and each year to insure a place in the program for your child.
- Tuition payments are set up online with FACTS management. Parents will sign up for a payment plan during the online enrollment process.
- When more than one child per family is enrolled on a full-time basis, a discount is applied to the weekly tuition rate.

## LATE PAYMENT FEES

If payment is more than TWO weeks past due, a Late Fee is added to the balance. If payment becomes more than THREE weeks past due, the child may not be permitted to attend classes until payment is brought current.

If withdrawal from the program is required, two weeks written notice must be given to a staff member. Failure to give notice will result in the forfeiture of the one-week deposit fee.

## HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

All children will be required to meet Indiana State Board of Health requirements for a physical examination within three months prior to enrollment or no later than 30 days after enrollment. Children who have not completed the requirement will not be allowed to continue in the program. Required immunizations must be documented on the health history form provided.

## ILLNESS

A child who is ill will not be admitted to the preschool. We ask that you keep your child at home when an illness is developing. A body temperature of 100.4 degrees and higher is considered an illness.

- **Any child who is SICK MUST STAY HOME.** This is key to the control of the spread of any virus.
- Parents/Guardians need to take their child's temperature either before coming to the facility or upon arrival at the facility. Children who have a fever of 100.4 or above or other signs of illness should not be admitted to the facility.
- Students need to be fever free without fever reducing medicines, no vomiting, no diarrhea for 48 hours before returning to school.
- Children must use the sanitation station in the entry way prior to entering the building.
- When children enter the classroom, children must wash their hands with soap and water prior to any participation in the classroom.
- Children will be supervised when using hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
- Staff will make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing, or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue or extreme fussiness.

As a courtesy to the Staff, please call when your ill child will not be present.

## NOTIFICATION OF INJURY

St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool shall immediately notify the parent or legal guardian of a child in the care of St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool concerning bodily injury or serious bodily injury that occurred during the hours that the child is in the care of the preschool. St. Paul's Lutheran preschool shall immediately notify the parent or legal guardian of illness or injury of a preschool staff member.

St Paul's Lutheran Preschool shall notify the Division of Childcare not more than twenty-four (24) hours after the occurrence for bodily injury and serious bodily injury.

## CURRICULUM

The Early Childhood program of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School is designed with the young child's learning style in mind. The young child does not yet compartmentalize his/her world into reading, math, science, social science, religion, physical education, etc. Yet the fundamentals involved in these areas are components in themes presented for a week to several weeks at a time. Many interesting, creative and stimulating hands-on experiences are provided within our developmental preschool program. Our curriculum involves learning through interaction and discovery and play. All of the following curriculum areas are a part of the preschool experience.

Christian experiences emphasize that Jesus is the child's best friend. As a result of these experiences the child will grow in his/her relationship with God and will come to know of God's love and His work of creation and redemption.

Language Arts Experiences emphasize the development of speaking and listening to others through role play, creative dramatics, puppets, songs stories, finger plays, etc.

Physical Education experiences stimulate the child's increasing ability to control the body parts and movements using equipment, music, and group games. Large and small muscle development is emphasized.

Science Experiences are designed to enhance the child's awareness of the world around him/her through the study of animals, weather, seasons, senses, and the process of growing.

Creative Art Experiences will introduce the child to various media for self-expression, such as: paint, chalk, clay, crayons, markers, etc. Music experiences include musical games, songs, and rhythm instruments.

Social Science Experiences help the child gain a better understanding of the world of people about him/her.

#### OBJECTIVES (3's and Young 4's)

- Learn about Jesus our Savior
- Learn about Bible stories
- Develop senses
- Develop vocabulary
- Develop capabilities –self-help skills
- Develop environment
- Develop creative abilities
- Develop social skills
- Develop writing skills
- Learning to share
- Learning to take turns
- Learning to cope with life
- Introductory skills in counting, letter, number, color, and shape recognition.

#### ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR 4'S & 5'S

- Recognition and writing of upper and lower case letters
- Recognition and writing of numbers 0 – 10
- Recognition of colors
- Grouping and sequencing
- Beginning to learn the days of the week
- Print first name
- Recognize basic colors
- Learning personal information
- Phonemic Awareness
- Rhyming
- Basic Printing skills
- Pre-writing
- Pre-reading
- Recognition of shapes
- Patterning
- Positions and spatial awareness
- Days of the week and months of the year
- Artistic creativity
- Recognition of number 1-20 & one-to-one correspondence
- Counting up to 30
- Basic life science and scientific exploration

## ADMISSION

Applications for admission are accepted on a first come, first served basis. A child must be able to toilet him/herself and must reach an appropriate age for each class by August 1, or as Indiana State law so dictates.

## TUITION AND FEES

At the time of enrollment, a non-refundable registration fee will be assessed. All fees are assessed online through FACTS Management. If you have any concerns regarding your tuition or payments, please contact the Church finance office.

## ATTENDANCE

Prompt arrival and regular attendance will help your child obtain the maximum benefit from the program. If a child is ill, he/she should be kept at home, for the child's own benefit as well as the other children. Please notify the office if your child has a communicable disease.

## DRESS

Children should be comfortably dressed in simple, washable, easy to manage clothing that is suitable for tumbling, climbing, and crawling, as well as for messy play with paint, clay, glue, etc. Gym shoes are required in the gym and for outside play. Socks must be worn. Girls wearing dresses/skirts/jumpers should wear shorts underneath these articles of clothing. **If your child will not be wearing gym shoes to school, a labeled pair must be provided and kept in his backpack.** No clogs/mules are to be worn--shoes must have backs. **Sandals are not allowed for playing on the playground's wood chips or for riding trikes.**

We will go outside whenever the weather permits, and as the school policy states:

"In order to foster both physical and social growth all students are encouraged to participate in recess activities. All students will remain indoors if the wind chill factor is Zero or below."

Although we are available to help with the toileting procedures, clothing that will help promote independence in this activity is best. One-piece jumpsuits, bib overalls with buckles, and belts are often difficult to manage and are, therefore, discouraged.

Self-dressing is also an important consideration as you purchase clothing for the winter season. Please be sure your child can put on boots before purchasing them. One of our objectives is to encourage the children to dress and undress themselves as well as they are able. We feel that this independence is an important part of learning. We do not expect perfection but do encourage progress toward self-help since this will enhance a child's feeling of competence.

We would like each child to keep a complete extra set of clothing at preschool. All items should be clearly labeled and brought in a covered container or plastic bag to be stored in your child's cubby.

## NAPTIME (FULL DAY CHILDREN)

All children will be required to rest daily. If they do not sleep, they must lie quietly and rest during this time. Your child may bring a naptime buddy which can be a small, soft, stuffed animal or doll to be kept on his/her cot. Please, do not plan on bringing one from home daily.

## PERSONAL TOYS

**NO personal toys from home are allowed** unless requested by the teacher. We do not want to be responsible for their loss. Parents may be asked to take a toy home with them upon arrival.

## SAFE CONDITIONS POLICY

The following steps will be taken to ensure that your child is safe while at our early childhood program.

Children will be actively supervised with the required number of qualified adults (adults who have completed a comprehensive criminal history check, drug screen, and have completed all required training).

Our early childhood program will not care for children in areas that are being remodeled, repaired, or painted. The administrator or director is responsible for maintaining all interior and exterior surfaces, including walls, floors, ceilings, equipment toys, furnishings, and cribs, in safe condition, free of sharp points or jagged edges, splinters, protruding nails or wires, loose parts, rusty parts, or materials containing poisonous substances.

The early childhood center will take the following steps to maintain the facility:

- 1) Clean the childcare rooms frequently.
- 2) Always keep the childcare in a sanitary condition.
- 3) Sanitize toys, furniture, and other equipment used by children, weekly and when they become soiled or contaminated.
- 4) Wash all soiled items prior to sanitization.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

One of the most important lessons we can help children understand is that of discipline and eventually self-control. It is our responsibility to assist the child in learning self-respect and respect for others. The best way to instill this respect is through positive discipline.

Discipline is a process, not a punishment. This process is neither easy nor short. Positive discipline involves talking to the child about the mistake in behavior, stopping inappropriate behavior and then, guiding the child toward the appropriate behavior.

In our classrooms, teachers use a problem-solving approach to conflict. When conflict occurs, teachers use the following steps to resolve the problem.

1. **APPROACH CALMLY:** The adult observes what is happening between the two children and prepares herself for a positive outcome.
2. **ACKNOWLEDGE FEELINGS:** The adult gives recognition to the feelings the children are expressing by using simple, descriptive words such as, "You seem angry/upset/sad."
3. **GATHER INFORMATION:** The adult tells children he/she wants to hear from each of them.
4. **RESTATE THE PROBLEM:** The adult uses details and describes needs the children have described, restates the problem, clarifying any issues by asking for more detail and reframing hurtful language.
5. **ASK FOR SOLUTIONS AND CHOOSE ONE TOGETHER:** The adult gives children plenty of time to think of solutions. The adult respects and explores all the children's ideas, even if they seem unrealistic, considering how each might work.
6. **GIVE FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT:** When children have agreed on a solution, the adult makes a simple statement to recognize this accomplishment.

The problem-solving approach to conflict helps children learn to:

- Express needs and strong feelings
- Hear and respect others' points of views

- Express ideas and experience the give-and-take of relationships
- Develop a desire to engage in positive social behaviors
- Feel in control of the solution and the outcome
- Experience successful cooperative solutions
- Develop trust in adults and other children
- Understand how to make constructive choices
- Experience feelings of competence

At no time is staff permitted to use any of the following when disciplining a child:

- Hitting, shaking, biting, pinching or inflicting corporal punishment
- Inflicting mental or emotional punishment such as humiliation or shaming
- Depriving a child of meals, snack, rest, or toilet use
- Confining a child in an enclosed area, such as a closet. A child is never to be left alone.

When a child is having behavioral difficulties at school the following procedures, listed in increasing severity, may be used to remedy the situation:

- 1. Conference regarding behavior problems:** The parent(s) will be requested to have a conference with the teacher if the following occurs: 1) the child repeatedly refuses to follow the classroom rules, or 2) the child becomes physically or verbally violent and is threatening to the other children or teacher. The Principal and Lead Teacher will be made aware of any behavior problems in the classroom that are problematic to the operation of the class. If the parent(s) and the teacher need further assistance, the Principal and Lead Teacher will meet with the parent(s) and teacher.
- 2. Referrals:** If the child's behavior continues to be problematic, it will be recommended that the parent(s) seek outside help. The Principal and Lead Teacher will provide a list of referral sources.
- 3. Probation:** The child will be placed on probation for an indeterminate time period until help is secured and/or the parent(s), teacher and director agree that the behavior has been corrected and the child may return to school.
- 4. Dismissal:** The child will be dismissed from school: 1) if the child's behavior is continually disruptive and/or threatening to the well-being of others or 2) if the parents have not displayed documentation of securing help for the child when requested by the school.

#### BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special occasions for young children. We celebrate every child's birthday with a simple party during snack time. Many parents enjoy bringing a special snack for the child to share with his/her friends. We encourage parents to consider nutritious treats. Talk with your child's teacher about your plan when your child's birthday draws near. Individual party invitations should be distributed on the *sign-in sheets only, not in children's cubby holes*. **Treats brought in by parents should be purchased and individually wrapped. No homemade goods can be allowed.**

#### SCHEDULE AND ATTENDANCE

Limited Extended Care options will be open from 6:30 am – 8:05 am and 3:30 pm - 6:00 pm Monday through Friday. You must sign up through the Admission office at time of enrollment. Your child's attendance is expected on the days you have designated that they will be attending.

When your child is ill with a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, rash, or a communicable disease, please keep him/her home.



Preschool will be closed for the following holidays and will follow the regular school calendar. (The calendar is distributed at the beginning of the school year and available on the St. Paul's website.)

- Labor Day
- Teacher's Conferences
- Thanksgiving Day & Wednesday before and Friday after
- Christmas Break (dates announced)
- Martin Luther King Day
- Mid-winter Break (dates announced)
- Spring Break
- Easter Monday
- Memorial Day

#### ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

When you and your child(ren) arrive for Full time or Morning Preschool, doors open at 8:05 am:

1. Please arrive on time
2. Pull into the car line – **DO NOT PARK**
3. Stay in your car with your child
4. Staff will come to your car
5. Your child will exit the car and enter the building, using hand sanitizer in the entryway
6. Your child will then proceed to their classroom with the help of a staff member
7. Dismissal for morning preschool class will be at 11:00 am, use the car line to pick up
8. Dismissal for full time preschool will be at 3:15 pm, use the car line to pick up

#### DROP-OFF/PICK-UP (EXTENDED CARE)

Parents who need Extended Care should park and walk their child into the entryway and ring the buzzer. Please sign your child in using the designated book. Those who pick up their child after 3:30 pm must ring the buzzer when they arrive, and the staff member will bring your child to you in the entry way.

Under no circumstances will a child be released to anyone other than a parent. The designated person must be over 18 years of age and/or a person previously authorized in writing by the parent. Please note that a late pickup fee is assessed after 6:00 PM. Please be courteous to our staff and call if you anticipate a late pickup. Additionally, a late fee of \$5/family for the first 5 minutes will be assessed, then after it's \$1/minute.

#### TRANSPORTATION SAFETY POLICY

Our Early Childhood Center does not provide transportation to school or other-extra-curricular activities. Occasionally we take field trips and parents are invited to participate. Child/staff ratios will always be maintained and only qualified staff or volunteers will be used to transport children. Parent volunteers who drive for a field trip must submit a copy of a valid state driver's license and proof of insurance. If children are transported for field trips, you will always know prior to that day. Children will always be restrained in proper seats and seat belts.

#### TOILET TRAINING POLICY

Preschool is an important step in preparing your child for kindergarten. Part of your preparation as a parent before preschool begins is ensuring that your child can function independently while using the bathroom. Faculty and staff at all grade levels, including preschool, are in vulnerable positions and must create the best possible safe environment for your child and themselves. The independence of a completely toilet trained child is a prerequisite for the 3-year-old and 4/5-year-old preschool classrooms. Completely toilet trained includes:

- Recognizing the need to use the toilet without frequent reminders.
- Being able to remove the necessary clothing to use the toilet.
- Cleaning private areas with toilet paper after using the toilet.
- Dressing self before exiting the bathroom.
- Washing hands after using the toilet.

The use of a “Pull-Up” or similar brand of undergarment is not a substitution for being toilet trained. Please let us know if there is any medical reason your child needs to wear such a garment.

### Accidents

We realize and expect that accidents will happen. Accidents are unusual incidents and should only happen infrequently. If there is a wet accident, students will be given their change of clothes and any supplies necessary to clean themselves. Wet clothes will be sent home at the end of the day.

If there is more than a wet accident that requires cleaning beyond a change of clothes, parents will be notified and will be expected to come to St. Paul’s to clean their child.

### Accident Policy

If your child has multiple accidents two weeks in a row, a conference will be held with the child’s teacher. If it is determined by the teacher that your child is not fully toilet trained, options for your child are to move to half day class (if applicable) or take a break from school for a determined amount of time to work on toilet training skills at home. The preschool teachers do not have the time, staff, or facilities to toilet train students.

If accidents continue to occur more than once a week after moving to half day (if applicable) or after a break from the program, dismissal from the program will be the next step.

If you are unsure if your child is truly toilet trained ask yourself, “Does my child stay accident-free everyday including during nap?” “Does my child go to the bathroom without me reminding them to?” “Can my child pull pants and undergarments up and down on their own?” “Does my child have their bowel movements in the toilet?” “Does my child understand the concept of wiping and can wipe their own private areas?” If you cannot answer “YES” to all these questions, your child will need more time and work to be fully trained.

### LUNCH AND SNACKS

Lunch and snacks will be provided by the St. Paul’s Lutheran. The School Town of Munster provides all lunches to our school and preschool. *(During the summer program, parents are to provide a lunch, with milk provided St. Paul’s.)* The menu for the week will be posted. Children will be provided with healthy meals and snacks and will be encouraged to try a variety of foods. Please let us know if your child has any food allergies.

### EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Please keep the preschool informed if your cell phone number and/or work number changes. We have the information you have input on FACTS online to use in emergency closing situations or if your child becomes ill during the day. You can change any of that information when logging into the FACTS family portal.

# NOTES



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