

# ST. PAUL'S PRESCHOOL

## PARENT HANDBOOK



**2023 – 2024 SCHOOL YEAR**

**St. Paul's Preschool: 412-486-5591**

**Website: [www.stpaulspreschoolnorthhills.org](http://www.stpaulspreschoolnorthhills.org)**

**Email: [preschool.office@stpaulsumc.com](mailto:preschool.office@stpaulsumc.com)**



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**\*This handbook may be provided in a family's primary language, if their knowledge of English is limited.**

## **REGULATIONS**

We are a state licensed early childhood center. To access our regulation electronically please visit:  
<http://www.pacodeandbulletin.gov/Display/pacode?file=/secure/pacode/data/055/chapter3270/chap3270toc.html&d=>

If you have any questions or concerns you can call our regional office of the department of Human Services at:  
 304 Wood Street, Suite 400  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
 Toll-Free: 888-340-3572  
 Phone: 412-350-3577  
 Fax: 412-350-3575  
 E-mail: [elrc5@allegheycounty.us](mailto:elrc5@allegheycounty.us) Their preferred method of contact is via email.

**NONDISCRIMINATION OF SERVICES**

Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex.

Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aides, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods.

Any student (and/or their guardian) who believes they have been discriminated against, may file a complaint of discrimination with:

St. Paul’s Childcare Preschool and Kidz Korner  
1965 Ferguson Road  
Allison Park, PA 15101

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of Human Services  
Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Room 225, Health & Welfare Building  
P.O. Box 2675  
Harrisburg, PA 17110

PA Human Relations Commission  
Pittsburgh Regional Office  
301 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 390, Piatt Place  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

U. S. Dept of Health and Human Services  
Office of Civil Rights  
Suite 372, Public Ledger Building  
150 South Independence Mall West  
Philadelphia, PA 19106-9111

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of Human Services  
Bureau of Equal Opportunity  
Western Field Office  
301 Fifth Avenue  
Suite 410, Piatt Place  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

**Parent’s Rights**



St. Paul’s Preschool is committed to the policies of the following regulatory bodies:

**Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS)**

The regulations are kept in the preschool office and can be viewed at any time. They can also be found in the plastic wall holder in the hallway going towards the Child Care rooms. Licensing regulations cover health and safety standards and minimum policy and procedure requirements for childcare and early learning programs in the state of Pennsylvania.

### **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

This professional organization has developed a voluntary accreditation process which addresses several program areas including curriculum, teacher/child interactions and parent/staff issues. In February 1993, St. Paul's Preschool was awarded accreditation by NAEYC after a lengthy self-evaluation and outside review process. Our accreditation has been maintained since 1993. Brochures about NAEYC standards are available at the Parent Communication station or by contacting the preschool office, 412-486-5591 or [preschool.office@stpaulsumc.com](mailto:preschool.office@stpaulsumc.com)

### **Pennsylvania Keystone STARS**

Keystone STARS is a system of continuous quality improvement (CQI) that guides early learning and school-age programs toward achieving and maintaining high quality and best practices. CQI is an ongoing process that includes reviewing sources of evidence that indicate program quality, planning goals and implementing strategies that move learning programs toward best practices. St. Paul's Preschool has been awarded a STAR FOUR level (highest) since October 2018.

### **The Right to Confidentiality**

Types of information which are kept confidential and shared only with those who need it to carry out their jobs include: medical history including any current or suspected medical problems, family status; financial information; and other personal issues like family matters or children's behaviors.

Access to written records is restricted to administrative staff, state monitors and the teachers directly responsible for the child. For records to be released to any other person, school or agency, permission is needed from the child's parents.

Areas of concern (like problem behavior or other special needs) are discussed with parents in private and in a problem-solving manner, respecting the roles we all can play in helping children feel competent and successfully become part of the group.

### **The Right to Participate in Your Child's Education**

The teaching staff has professional education and experience with children and the way they develop and learn. Parents have very specific experiences of their own child and family, culture, and background. Finding time to regularly share these perspectives benefits everyone (especially the children!)

Opportunities like the Parent Orientation, twice annual parent/teacher conference, daily informal conversations and helping in or visiting in the classroom are all meant to involve parents in our joint responsibility, the education and care of your children. Teachers want you to feel welcome in the classroom. The teachers can always give you suggestions about ways you can participate here at school or in learning activities you and your child can do at home.

Center-wide monthly calendars, a school website, a school FACEBOOK page, a daily classroom bulletin board of the day's activities, displays of children's work and daily emails are written methods of communication and keeping you, the parents, informed and involved.

### **The Right to Express Concerns**

If you have a concern or problem involving the classroom, the teacher is the first person to talk with. Since it can be difficult to constructively air concerns in the classroom, arrange a meeting with the teacher. This way concerns and problems can be discussed productively and privately.

Problems can also be raised with any administrative staff member. Set up an appointment to give you plenty of time to talk confidentially.

Serious grievances should be communicated in writing to the Director, Laurel Webster. You may also request a meeting with the Director at any time.

We look forward to working with you on our joint concern: the education and care of your children. With a teamwork approach we are all better able to help children learn and grow to their potential. Let us know how we can assist you, and we will let you know how you can help us in our efforts.

## **FAMILY CULTURAL POLICY**



St. Paul's Preschool will make every effort to meet the needs of your child physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially within our abilities based on our staffing, ratio, and facility resources. We will work with families in making necessary plans to accommodate your child in our program.

To that end, we encourage our families to share with the staff your preferred child-rearing practices and any information you wish to share about your linguistic or cultural background.

We look forward to working with you at every stage of your child's development to ensure a warm, secure environment for your child to grow and learn.

Please let the staff know if you need any materials translated into your preferred (home) language.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Paul's Preschool will provide a warm, loving environment in which children can learn and grow. Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of clients shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, or sex. We will reach out to the community to be inclusive, non-judgmental, and accepting.

## **PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS**

We believe that all young children can benefit from a developmentally appropriate program designed to help them reach their full potential. We believe that each child is unique, special, and capable of learning. St. Paul's staff strives to provide each child with skills and self-confidence they need to succeed.

St. Paul's staff functions as facilitators to accomplish the above goals. We believe that play is a child's way of discovery and learning. Children are provided with opportunities to learn through play using techniques such as floor time, parallel to group play, creative play, and role play.

We believe that a developmentally appropriate program provides opportunities for children to choose educational experiences, which enhance their growth and abilities. It is the goal of St. Paul's Preschool to provide activities and materials designed to promote "hands on" learning to achieve the following goals:

1. achieve a positive separation from home.
2. foster positive self-concept and self-understanding.
3. encourage children to think, reason, question, and experiment.
4. develop social skills and ability to function in large and small groups.
5. encourage language development.

6. encourage physical development and motor skills.
7. encourage sound health, safety, and nutritional practices.
8. encourage creative expressions and music/art appreciation.
9. respect cultural diversity
10. gain understanding and appreciation of the world in which they live.
11. engage in appropriate readiness activities.

Parents are an integral part of our program. We believe that parents are their child's first and most important teachers. Their input and information about their child are continually sought and valued. Parents are involved in every part of the St. Paul's program.

## **RELATIONSHIP OF CHURCH AND SCHOOL**

What better place could there be for a child to begin the love of learning than in a church setting! St. Paul's church provides space and support for our Preschool. We were developed as an outreach ministry for the community. Our curriculum is different from the educational programs of the churches. The church's staff provides prayer chain support for Preschool families. The schools are maintained by tuition funds and have a budget separate from the church's budget. The Preschool programs pay utility fees for the use of the church building.

## **CURRICULUM**

St. Paul's Preschool follows the Pennsylvania State Early Learning Standards as the basis of our curriculum. The teaching staff uses these standards to create a framework (scaffolding) when creating their daily lesson plans. This framework remains flexible due to the individual needs of the children. Educators use their observations and assessments of the students to augment their teaching support. Educators change their lesson plans and learning activities based on the skill levels of the students and their interests. The curriculum is underlying the various learning centers and units...the manner of presenting the material varies from class to class and from teacher to teacher in response to their students.

As the children gain competence and understanding of the material, the educators create new challenges (built on the scaffolding) and present new learning opportunities for the children to use their base knowledge. Learning centers with materials to extend the concepts encourage hands on learning experiences.

## **SEPARATION**



Let's face it—everybody wants to stay in bed some days. Sometimes being part of a group is not as much fun as staying home with mom and dad. Unexpected visitors, going out for the morning, having a relative “stay over” are all events which make it difficult for the child to want to come to school. Children have difficulty leaving exciting events at home. A day off for an important event can't hurt, but a child needs to be taught that attending school regularly is important and fun.

Here are some hints for helping children overcome this separation:

1. Sometimes prolonged discussions make the problem worse. Explain that your child will be going to school...that school is your child's "work".
2. Notify the teachers if the problem occurs frequently. Make an appointment with the director to talk over concerns.
3. Suggest that the child bring a favorite toy for Show and Tell or free play.
4. Mention a school activity that is going to be happening that day.
5. Have another parent drive to school and you pick up the children.
6. Most often children stop crying minutes after their parents leave. The teacher will call you and let you know how your child is doing.
7. Leave your keys or purse with a picture in it; children know you will be back for these.

**\*8. Read the story "The Kissing Hand".**

Leave your child with a smile even if he or she is fussing. The educators are willing and able to help the child through this stage. If your child is crying **don't linger**. Leave and call in about 15 minutes to check on him/her. Within a few days things should be back to normal. If the problem persists, **make an appointment to talk with the director**.

## **PARENTS**

Parents are an important part of our preschool program. We are proud that you have chosen to share your children with us. We would like you and your child to have a successful year. Educators and families work together to help children participate successfully in preschool with respect to each family's values and practices. Educators are always willing to schedule times to discuss strategies for blending school and home practices.

Since St. Paul's is not a cooperative preschool, we don't **require** parents to participate in the program. We do encourage you to participate as you wish and offer many opportunities for you to do so. Please see pages 26 and 27 for information about our Parents of Preschoolers parent group and other parent committees. Please see the director for more information about this committee.

We provide a parent library and have books which help to work with children on critical issues such as death, illness, and divorce.

Parents are kept informed during the year with orientations, sing-a-longs, parent conferences, and family fun nights.

**You may come and visit your child's class at any time during class hours.** Please contact your child's teacher to set up a time for a more formal visit.

You will receive a survey at the end of the year. Please share your comments and feelings about our program at anytime. Your feedback helps us improve our program.

A list of resources for children such as speech therapists, play therapists, and testing services are available in the Preschool office. **Translation into home language is available.**



A Family Resource Guide is now available online and contains great information for families. It is a guide of medical, developmental, therapeutic, education, support, and recreational services in Southwestern Pennsylvania for children with medical and developmental needs. Visit the website at: <https://elrc5.alleghenycounty.us/families-resources>

We have a designated room (Conference Room beside the preschool office) for breastfeeding mothers. Please stop in the office to let us know you will be using the room.

Check the center's newsletter and parenting boards for parenting tips.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Arrival and Departure Times</b>	Morning:	9:00am – 11:30am
	Afternoon:	12:30pm – 3:00pm

<b>2Day/2Year old classes</b>	9:00am-11:00am (first ½ of the school year)
	9:00am-11:30am (last ½ of the school year)

*Families can enter the building to drop-off children at the classroom door. A drop off at the classroom door will enable us to keep the classrooms as clean and sanitary as possible. Please do not congregate for conversations in the hallways once you have dropped off your child. This can be done outside the building. We will be taking your children to the entry door for dismissal. Thank you!*

### Welcoming Children and Families



Thank you for bringing your child to school. As children come into the room, each child is greeted by an educator. Please deliver and pick up your child at the stated times. While we don't expect every child to arrive at the same moment, we like the children to begin the day together. Children feel "put on the spot" when entering after the class has begun. Educators, although they arrive at least a half-hour before class time, are often busy with planning or setting up rooms. Rooms will be open for children **5 minutes before class begins**. **PLEASE DO NOT ENTER YOUR CLASSROOM WITHOUT YOUR EDUCATOR.**

*Parents/guardians will be allowed to enter the building and walk their children to the classroom door. Educators will be available for sharing information and chatting before class begins.*

Please bring children to the classroom door and leave them with their teaching team. We enjoy sharing information and saying hello to you. Check the door for calendar, last minute information and snack for the day. Each class will have an area displaying your child's work. Please visit this area often with your child.

If you are going to be late picking your child up, we ask that you please call and let the office know. Children become very worried whenever you are not there at dismissal time with all the other parents. If we know you will be running late, we can tell your child that you have called to let them know you will be here shortly. **If you are running later than 10 minutes after dismissal time, we will take children to**

**Child Care if they are registered. Those not registered for Child Care will be kept in the classroom and parents will be charged \$5.00 every 15 minutes after dismissal time.**

## SECURITY SYSTEM

St. Paul's Preschool has a security fob system. All doors leading into the preschool area are secured and require a fob for entrance. Families must purchase fobs for a one-time fee of \$10.00. Additional fobs can be purchased for family members at \$10.00 each. To gain entry to the building the fob must be swiped across the pad at the door. When your child completes the preschool program, you can discard the fob. If your child will be attending the Drop-In childcare or Kidz Korner programs, you will keep your fob which will be reprogrammed for those programs' hours.

**Key fobs are not to be copied.** If your fob is copied it will be deactivated and you will lose your ability to enter the building.

Fobs work between the hours of 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

All visitors **MUST** ring the buzzer and will be admitted after being cleared by the administration. They are immediately escorted to the preschool office. ***Please do not hold the door open for others. We want to keep our children safe by allowing only those who have fobs to enter.***

## DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

Children want and need limits. Young children can learn how to meet their own needs while being considerate of the needs of others. Helping them learn this may be our greatest and most important job. This can only occur in a well-organized classroom where a trust level between teachers and children has been formed. This works best when children are in small groups.

Helping children develop self-discipline takes a great deal of time initially but is very rewarding in every way when it starts working.

- A. Modeling Behavior: Educators talk to children and interact with the children as a way of modeling how they should talk and interact with each other in positive ways.
- B. Alternative. Children are given a chance to cooperate in a no-lose situation. “You have to pick up, but would you like to do blocks or the cars?” “Shall we put on your jacket or boots first?” “You may put your toy on the shelf, or I’ll keep it for you.” “You may sit next to your friend as long as you both can sit quietly.”
- C. Redirection: Educators help children turn their attention to other tasks, toys, or activities.
- D. Problem solving: Educators help children decide how best to solve problems. This is reviewed at the end of the day with the children.

The better a child feels about himself, the better he will be able to see the needs of others. Educators stress (with exact examples) good behavior. As a child learns how to behave, he will make mistakes and will analyze why a mistake was made.

## St. Paul's Preschool Suspension and Expulsion Policy

St. Paul's Preschool strives to promote children's social-emotional and behavioral health by limiting the use of expulsion, suspension, and other exclusionary discipline practices. These exclusionary measures are used only as a last resort in extraordinary circumstances where there is a determination of a serious safety threat that cannot otherwise be reduced or eliminated by the provision of reasonable modifications.

St. Paul's Preschool will take steps to ensure children's successful participation in the program by partnering with families, consulting with specialists, helping the child and family obtain additional services as appropriate, supporting the staff in creating behavior plans, and collaborating with early childhood and other social service programs ...Early Intervention (EI), Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC), Behavioral Health, Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support (PAPBS) and OCDEL's Technical Assistance.

Other steps to reduce expulsion or suspension include assessing children's needs and determining the behavioral supports necessary for the child to succeed, keeping staff/child ratios to 1:10 and supportive services to help reduce teacher stress.

Should a situation arise where there is documented evidence that all possible interventions and supports recommended by a qualified professional have been exhausted and it has been determined that transitioning a child to another program is necessary for the well-being of the child or his or her peers, St. Paul's Preschool will take steps to ensure a smooth transition into another setting that offers a rich social context and opportunities for interactions with socially competent peers so that children's learning and social skills practice is optimized in a natural environment.

This policy was developed with the assistance of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit and the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning. It complies with federal and state civil rights laws.

### **NAME TAGS**

You will notice all staff members wear special name tags. Children are taught that people wearing these name tags are "safe people". **All parents who are working in the school should get a name tag from the Preschool office.**

### **HEALTH RULES**

St. Paul's vision of ministering to all children requires that we establish policies that incorporate best practices. To nurture and protect all children in our preschool program, we insist that all children be immunized and have all necessary vaccinations recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and otherwise mandated by Pennsylvania State law. 28 Pa. Code 27.77

Please see that your child has a complete physical exam before starting school. **The state requires that all immunizations be up to date.** Parents will be required to show proof of flu shots. All children must be properly immunized for their own protection. A physical exam is required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for all children attending accredited and state licensed preschools.

To prevent spreading disease, please do not send your child to school with a fever, bad cold, cough or upset stomach. If a child becomes ill during school hours, then the child is made comfortable in a location away from other individuals and supervised by a familiar caregiver. The family will be immediately notified and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible.



Ill children should be excluded from the program for the following reasons:

- Illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- Illness results in a need for care greater than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- Child has a specific disease, condition or symptoms requiring exclusion as stated by the American Academy of Pediatrics. This information is available through the preschool office.

If your child has a communicable disease, such as **pink eye, chicken pox, etc.**, please notify the school so that the educators may then provide information to other families about the signs and symptoms, transmission communicability and prevention measures.

Although it is not necessary to call for short illnesses, we would appreciate a note stating why your child was absent when the child returns to school. Please notify us if the child will be out for a prolonged period. **Please make sure you talk with the Director about any special health problems or needs.** If a child's health needs change during the school year, please tell the teaching team and write down any additional information for your child's file. We have forms to fill out if a child needs medicine while at school. This requires both a doctor's and parent's signature on the permission form.

A care plan will be completed by families and physicians for children with special health needs.

If your child has allergies or any other special environmental health needs, please contact the director. We will make all the necessary adaptations that we can to ensure your child's safety.

*Please keep your child at home if he/she displays any symptoms including cough, fever, muscle aches, shortness of breath, chills, repeated shaking with chills, new loss of taste or smell or generally not feeling well. If your child's symptoms are consistent with COVID-19, please contact your child's pediatrician immediately and ask for guidance.*

## **ADMINISTRATION AND STORAGE OF MEDICATION**

**Safeguards are used with all medications for children.**

- Staff administers both prescription and over-the-counter medications to a child only if the child's record documents that the parent or legal guardian has given the program written permission.
- The child's record includes instructions from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended medication for that child; alternatively, the licensed health provider's office may give instructions by telephone to the program staff.

A Medication Log must be filled out by the parents and a copy placed in the child's file.

Teaching staff who are required to administer special medical procedures have demonstrated to a health professional that they are competent in the procedures and are guided in writing about how to perform the procedure by the prescribing health care provider.

- Medications are labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled, or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the licensed health care provider, the expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it.
- All medications are kept in a locked cabinet, out of reach of the children.

Children with food allergies, asthma or any other special health need will need to have medical action plans completed for their files. Families and health care professionals (if needed) will meet with classroom staff and the school director before school begins in September to go over medications, procedures, and special care plans.

## **MEDICAL AND DENTAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURE**

An Emergency Medical Contact/Parental Consent form will be given to each child's parent or guardian to be completed before the child begins school. One will go into the child's school folder and the other will go into a class binder that will be used for emergency situations where the school needs to be evacuated or to be taken on field trips for the 4- and 5-year-old classes. The final copy is placed in a binder to be taken to the gym or the playground area. **We must have these completed forms before your child's first day of class or they will not be permitted to attend.**

If an accident should occur at school that requires emergency medical or dental attention the following steps will be taken:

- a. One of the classroom teachers will pull the child's Medical Emergency form from the child's folder and proceed to the hospital. The remaining class teacher will inform the director immediately of the situation. An ambulance will be called if the child cannot be removed and taken to the closest medical facility, UPMC Passavant Hospital, unless the driver feels it is necessary to go to a trauma center.
- b. Another member of the staff will pull the child's Permanent Record from the child's file and will begin to call the child's home number, then parent/guardian's work number and will then proceed to the three emergency names and numbers given on the form. The staff member will continue to call all numbers until someone is reached.
- c. The staff member will inform the parent or emergency person as to what happened and where the child has been taken and who has accompanied the child to the hospital.
- d. At the end of the session, the teacher who remained behind will fill out an accident form and leave it with the director. A copy will be placed in the child's folder. A copy will be sent to the Pennsylvania DHS department.

In cases of minor accidents which don't require emergency procedures the following steps will be taken:

- a. A member of the class teaching staff will bring the child to the preschool office to administer the necessary first aid and inform the director of the situation.

- b. If it is felt the accident warrants, a call will be made to the parents to let them know what has happened. If no call is needed, the parent is to be notified immediately upon pick up arrival that an accident involving their child has taken place and will be informed of what happened. A copy of the accident report will be given to the parents.

The accident form will be given to the director to be filed and entered into the injury tracking log. A copy will be placed in the child's folder.

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT POLICY



St. Paul's Preschool is a mandated child abuse reporter. We are required by law to report suspected child abuse. The reporting procedure is:

- All observations and/or suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be immediately reported to the child protective services agency no matter where the abuse might have occurred.
- The staff member will call Childline/1-800-932-0313 to report suspected abuse or neglect and then will report this call to the preschool director.
- The preschool director will follow the direction of the child protective services agency regarding the completion of written reports.
- If the parent or legal guardian of a child is suspected of abuse, the preschool director will follow the guidance of the child protective agency regarding notification of the parent or legal guardian. Reporters of suspected child abuse will not be discharged for making the report unless it is proven that a false report was knowingly made.
- Staff members who are alleged perpetrators of child abuse may be suspended or given leave pending completion of an investigation.
- Parents/legal guardians of other children in the program will be contacted by the preschool director so they may share any concerns they have had.
- It is important to note that no accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Caregivers found guilty of child abuse will be summarily dismissed or relieved of their duties.

## DRESS



Your preschool is a busy place with a variety of activities each day. Children learn best when they are totally involved in a learning experience. Our art experiences include painting, finger painting, use of markers, paste, scissors, play dough and sand and water play. We sometimes get messy. While we do protect the children with smocks and use "washable" paint and markers, paint still seems to escape and get on clothes. Please send an extra set of clothes in your child's book bag in case of any accident. Preschool has extra clothes, but children are more comfortable in their own. Since we also do a lot of physical activity and large motor play, we suggest comfortable, sturdy **clothing and tennis shoes**. Dress shoes slip

when climbing and running. Please DO NOT allow your child to wear flip flops. They can be dangerous on large motor equipment.

As the weather begins to change, please send sweaters and sweatshirts to keep children warm on chilly days. Classes will go outside often so dress your child accordingly. The playground has both sunny and shady areas. Sunscreen should be applied to your child before coming to school.

***We are requesting families send in a complete change of clothes in a labeled Ziploc Baggie.***

**Please label sweaters, coats, boots, and mittens. They all look alike at dismissal time.**

## **SHOW AND TELL**

One of our most important tasks in preschool is to work on language development. Show and tell allows the children to bring something from home to share with the other children.

Children work in small groups for this activity. They learn to listen to one another. Each child has a turn to talk about what he/she brings. Sometimes we will ask children to bring in an object that may be used in the unit they are studying. This will be mentioned in your class newsletter. You will be told when your child's Show and Tell day is during your orientation meeting.

If your child is bringing a live show and tell, please notify your child's teaching team ahead of time. **Guns or toys which depict violence are not permitted.**

## **SNACKS**



**CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) guidelines are provided through an email at the start of the school year. This provides guidance for snack quantity per child.**

All foods and drinks brought from home should be labeled with the child's name, class color and date. If any snack needs to be refrigerated there is a refrigerator in the center's kitchen.

Snack time is a time for nutritional snacks and fellowship. Children are assigned a specific snack time during the year. During your snack week you will provide **drinks, snacks, cups and napkins for that time.** You will receive a sheet with your assigned time for bringing snacks. During this week, children will pass them out. It is even more special if they help to make the snack. We thank God for food and the opportunity to be together before eating. You will receive a sheet to write snacks and water for the week. This will be posted at your classroom door. Please indicate your child's special day on that sheet.

Water is the preferred beverage for snack time. Milk may also be provided by parents.

Some nutritious suggestions for treats are:

cheese cubes  
Jello in a cup

celery and carrot sticks  
yogurt

fresh fruit  
whole grain crackers  
yogurt popsicles  
pretzel rods

granola  
breads  
graham crackers  
low-fat or fat-free milk

**Children younger than 4 may not be served the following foods: hot dogs, either whole or sliced into rounds, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, spoonfuls of peanut butter, large pieces of carrots that cannot be safely swallowed whole, whole, and large hard pretzels.**

**Please make sure all snacks brought from home have not reached their expiration date. These items will not be served to children. They will be discarded.**

Children with severe food allergies will be constantly monitored by their classroom teaching team and their parents. Educators and administrators will meet with parents at the beginning of the school year to review what needs the child has because of food allergies. Food allergies will be clearly posted in the snack room. Parents of children with food allergies will check snacks each day. Children will receive the day's snack only if the parent signs the snack permission form. The child's classroom educators will be the only adults allowed to distribute the snacks. Accommodation to your child's allergies will be dealt with on an individual basis and considered as needed to maintain a safe classroom environment. **If your child has a severe food allergy, please call the preschool office to set up a time to meet with the administration to discuss your child's needs and to receive a copy of the school's Allergy Action Plan.**

Children with disabilities who have a special feeding need will be accommodated. A meeting will be held with the director, classroom teachers, and any therapists to review the procedures which need to be followed. A daily record will be kept documenting the information needed by families.

Water and milk are appropriate drinks. **ABSOLUTELY NO CARBONATED DRINKS AND SUGARY JUICES, PLEASE.** If carbonated or sugary drinks are sent in, they will not be served. Please send in at least 6 oz. cups. We don't completely fill them, but the smaller cups spill too easily. **According to state regulations, we cannot serve drinks in Styrofoam cups.**

Mark the bag and drink with your child's name and class color and give it to the teaching team.

This program does not use a microwave to heat children's food or beverages.

## **SPECIAL DAY CELEBRATIONS**

You may choose one day in your snack week to celebrate your child's birthday. This is his/her special day. This is a good day for the special treat. **Please remember snacks should be of a nutritious nature.** An attempt is made to coordinate the child's treat week with his/her birthday. This is not always possible (since most children seem to be born in December or June!) Therefore, you may choose a day during your child's week to celebrate his/her special day. Please let the educators know **AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK** which day will be your child's "special day." Many parents have been kind to us and donated a **favorite book** or toy to the school in honor of their child's birthday instead of bringing in sugary snacks.





## SAFE TRANSPORTATION

We would be happy to help you with contact information for the purpose of setting up a carpool. It often helps a child feel more comfortable if he can come to school with a group of children. For your child's safety please give your teacher a list of all the children in your carpool. **We will not release a child to anyone other than the person you have authorized.**

If a problem should occur and you will be late, please call the school to plan for the care of your child.

If someone other than you or your carpool partner is to pick up your child, we **must** have that information in writing. Please describe the person who will be picking up your child. When that person arrives at Preschool, they must present a photo ID and will sign a form before they can leave with the child. They must be on the Emergency Consent form for the child to be released to them.

***We will NOT release children to anyone under the age of 18 years.***

***We will NOT release children to any adult appearing to be under the influence of alcohol or other substances.***

## SCHOOL CLOSING AND DELAYS

In case of school closings or delays, local television stations (KDKA, WPXI and WTAE) will be notified and the preschool's answering machine message will be changed to reflect these changes. These changes will also be noted on the television stations' web sites. **If three out of the following districts** are closed or delayed, St. Paul's Preschool will be closed or delayed. These school districts are Hampton, North Allegheny, North Hills, and Shaler Area.

**Please note your class calendar for dates the program will be closed during the 2023-2024 school year.**

**If three out of four of the districts are delayed,** we will use this delay schedule for classes:

Morning Classes -	10:00am – noon
Afternoon Classes -	1:00pm – 3:00pm

School closings and delays are placed on the phone answering system in the preschool office and can be listened to starting at 7:30 a.m. The phone number is **412-486-5591**.

Classes cancelled will be made up **using our online Google Classroom platform.** Your online classroom will be set up at the beginning of the school year and can be accessed at any time the building must be closed (inclement weather, building issue, disease pandemic, etc.)

School closings and delays will also be communicated to parental cell phones via **REMIND** (parents **MUST sign up for this**) and will be noted on the school **FACEBOOK** page.

## CHILD CARE

There is a drop-in childcare service located in the facility. This is a separate program from the preschool. Your child must be registered with the childcare to use the facility. You should contact the Child Care Center at 412-486-4595 for more information.

## KEEPING IN TOUCH-COMMUNICATIONS

### NEWSLETTER:

You will receive a monthly letter and calendar from your children's educators telling you about coming activities. **This is written after the teaching teams have their planning meeting. It will not be the first day of each month.** *All newsletters and calendars will be posted on each class Google Classroom site.* Please keep this handy as it will contain a list of special events. **We will work with families who need communication from the school translated into their preferred language. Please contact the director for assistance.**

### **NOTES:**

Please check the child's school bag and mailbox **each day** for notes. A calendar of events will be posted outside your child's classroom door. This helps us to keep you informed.

*These items will be posted on your child's Google Classroom site as well.*

If you have any comments or concerns, please contact your classroom educators first. If the issue cannot be resolved, please contact the director.

Please feel free to call if you have any questions. Our answering machine will take calls from 4 P.M. to 8 A.M. They will be returned promptly each morning. Our main office number is:  
412-486-5591.

### **PHONE POLICY – HOW TO CONTACT YOUR CENTER:**

**Preschool Office (412-486-5591)** – If you are unable to reach one of the staff you may leave a message on the answering machine. (In the case of an **emergency** please call the main church office at 412-486-7006 and someone there will reach a staff member or will take a message).

### **HALL BULLETIN BOARD**

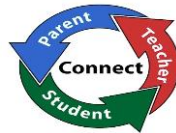
Please check the hall bulletin board each time you come into school. This will have up to date information and schedule changes. If you are in a carpool, let other parents know of new information on the board. There is also a bulletin board with tips on parenting. Please drop off parenting tips and articles you would like to share in the preschool office. No items can be posted without office approval. Information from the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is posted on the preschool parent bulletin board inside the entry door. This information is updated weekly or as needed.

## SIBLING POLICY:

Our preschool is dedicated to serving the family while working with your individual child. Activities for the **whole** family include Sing-A-Longs and Class Open House Nights.

Several times a year there are activities only for the parents and their preschool child. These are **field trips, parties,** and the **end of the year picnic.** These are limited because of size and the activities and interaction of child and parent.

## CONFERENCES



There are several types of Preschool conferences:

1. **Informal** – Any time a problem arises, contact your teacher. Educators can be contacted after school hours. Their contact information is included in their September newsletter.
2. **Scheduled** – There will be two conferences scheduled for you during the year. During the first conference, children’s individual screening results and assessment information will be shown and explained to parents to mutually set goals. The second conference will be a review of those goals and results of additional assessment. Written reports will be provided to families at both conference times.

*Sign up for conferences will be done using an online tool...Sign-Up Genius.*

Individual children’s records are kept in a locked cabinet in the office. The children’s family, classroom educators, office manager and the director are the only individuals to have access to these records. **All conference materials can be translated to families’ home language if needed.**

Students’ assessments and screening results are kept in their files and are only viewed by the staff and parents when being interpreted for goal setting purposes. **Parents must complete forms for the release of these records and assessment results to any other party, including school districts, consultants, or therapists.**

## CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY FOR ST. PAUL’S PRESCHOOL

Individuals with access to the children’s records:

- parents...always
- educators of the current school year only
- preschool director...always
- office manager
- regulatory agencies

The **educators of the current school year** have access to the records because they are adding information to these records and are using the assessment information in the records to help in their evaluations of the children's progress and to write individualized educational plans based on these evaluations.

The **director** has access, as the administrator, who needs to make sure the records are correct and include all information required by the state and by NAEYC accreditation criteria. When called in for conferences with parents, the director may also need to review the child's progress and evaluations to be able to participate fully in the process.

The **office manager** has access to the files to put forms into the files as they are received in the mail or hand delivered to the office. The office manager also routinely checks the files to make sure the medical and emergency release forms are up to date and will often update phone numbers, etc. as requested by parents.

**Regulatory agencies** have access to review the files, making sure the school has the required items in each child's file.

- Parents have the right to review their child's files at any time. They always have access.
- Children's files are kept in locked file cabinets in the preschool office. The only people who may open the locked files are the preschool director, the educators of the current school year, and the office manager under the eyes of the parents who request access to the files.
- Parents need to sign and date a third-party release form before records can be reviewed by anyone other than the person listed in #1. This includes school districts, therapists, and agencies working with the children and the families.

## **ST. PAUL'S PRESCHOOL ASSESSMENT POLICY**

Assessment...the use of a comprehensive evaluation system to determine the quality of a program or the progress of a child. An Ages & Stages assessment will be completed for your child within the first 45 days of school.

Assessment of individual children:

1. Should always reflect as much information about the child as possible.
2. The purpose should be clear.
3. The technique should be appropriate for children of a given age.
4. Should be embedded within the child's normal day as much as possible.
5. Should reflect the child's previous experiences and cultural background.
6. Effective assessment of a child should be ongoing.
7. Both the information from individual evaluation procedures and the cumulative information gleaned through an assessment program should be used to plan more effective learning experiences for the children.

Techniques for assessment:

1. Anecdotal records
2. Checklists and rating scales
3. Time/activity samples (if needed for behavioral observations)
4. Samples of children's work (portfolios for the parents)
5. Detailed conference forms (translated into home language if needed)

Information from assessments is used to individualize instruction for students, help teaching staff improve classroom instruction, develop specific professional development for the staff and know to which community resources we can direct families.

Teaching staff are required to take two hours of training each year on classroom observation and assessment techniques. Training is conducted by the Keystone STARS, Penn State Better Kid Care, or Child Care Lounge and is approved by PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning.

## **SUPPORT AND EVALUATION SERVICES**

The Keystone Stars program has a special education consultant available for classroom observation and consulting with families on child development issues. If you would like to use this service, please contact your child's educator or the office. If you feel your child may be delayed, either in speech or with development, the following services are available to you.

Please note, St. Paul's does not endorse or recommend any specific agency. They are provided for our families' information only and the school does not take any responsibility for advice or suggested programming done by any of the agencies listed below.

**These materials can be provided in the family's primary language if their knowledge of English is limited.**

**DART** - Call 412-394-5904 to arrange a **free** screening/evaluation. Once your child is eligible for Early Intervention Services, you will most likely have more questions regarding the program. For these as well as questions regarding your child's IEP, talk to a DART Special Education Supervisor. If you don't know who your child's Special Education Supervisor is, call 412-394-5736.

**CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL** – a thorough evaluation of a variety of delays and issues.  
General Information – 412-692-5325  
To schedule an appointment, call 412-692-5560.

## **COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES**



(This is a list of the ones of which we are aware of in the local area. These programs may be able to give you additional information. Again, this is provided for your information only and St. Paul's does not endorse or recommend any specific agency.)

**NORTH HILLS OUTREACH CENTER** – Assistance with housing issues, food and nutrition, financial planning, referrals for medical services. 412-487-6316

**NORTH HILLS YOUTH MINISTRY** –Counseling services, parenting programs, referrals to the appropriate agencies for community resources for children and families. 412-366-1300

## **PSYCHOLOGICAL AND BEHAVIORAL SERVICES – EARLY INTERVENTION**

### **NORTH HILLS PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES**

4068 Alpha Building – corner of Mount Royal and Duncan Ave 412-492-0644

**ALLEGHENY INTERMEDIATE UNIT** – (ask for behavioral evaluation) 412-394-5700

**CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL** 412-692-5325

**THE WATSON INSTITUTE** 412-741-1800

**EASTER SEALS** – special needs, workshops on disability awareness  
412-281-7244

**LITERACY PITTSBURGH-** [www.literacypittsburgh.org](http://www.literacypittsburgh.org) ESL services, one-to-one tutoring, adult and family literacy programs  
412-487-8290

**NORTH HILLS ANTI-RACISM COALITION-** <http://arc.northpgh.org> North Hills community group formed to foster a spirit of appreciations and understanding of our racial, religious, and cultural diversity.  
412-496-7461

**SCHOOL DISTRICTS** – Call your local school district. Many times, they can suggest appropriate agencies. The preschool office has information on local school districts.

If you have a need, please contact either your classroom teacher or the director and we will try to find more information for you.

A Family Resource Guide is now available online. It is a guide of medical, developmental, therapeutic, education, support, and recreational services in Southwestern Pennsylvania for children with medical and developmental needs. Visit the website at:  
<http://www.elrc5.alleghenycounty.us/families-resources>

<https://www.bigburgh.com> Provides financial/legal help, health and healthcare assistance, jobs and education, housing crisis, food pantry/supplies/needs.

Free resource and information hub that connects people with community, health, and disaster services eleven Pennsylvania counties:  
[www.pa211sw.org](http://www.pa211sw.org)

## **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

**Tuition** – Tuition shall be paid in any of the following schedules: (These payments are based on the annual tuition and not on the number of classes in any given month.)

1. One payment – Those paying the total tuition by June 15<sup>th</sup>.
2. Trimester – Three payments payable on June 15<sup>th</sup>, September 30<sup>th</sup>, and December 31<sup>st</sup>.

3. Nine payment plan – Nine payments beginning June 15<sup>th</sup> and running through February 28<sup>th</sup>.

**REGISTRATION** – THIS IS A YEARLY PROCESSING FEE. This fee is **NON-REFUNDABLE** and is not pro-rated if a child registers late.

### **Tuition Payments, Overdue Accounts and Refund Policy**

- I. The **Tuition Agreement** is a contract between you (the parent/guardian) and St. Paul's Preschool for a nine-month period from September 2023 through May 2024. Families are expected under this contract to fulfill their financial obligation to St. Paul's Preschool even if their child does not finish the school term. Budget and staffing are based on enrollment at the start of the school year.
- II. Tuition payments may be made by cash or check made payable to: "**St. Paul's Preschool**". Please write your child's name in the memo. Cash payments will be issued receipts at the time of the payment. We do not accept credit cards or PushPay payments at this time.
- III. The initial payment for tuition is due on June 15, 2023, as per the **Tuition Agreement**. If this payment is not received by June 30, 2023, your child will be removed from the school roster for the 2023-2024 school year and his/her spot offered to students on waitlists.
- IV. You will have a grace period in which you may request to withdraw your child from St. Paul's Preschool and have all tuition refunded. Requests for withdrawal must be made in writing and received by midnight on **July 31, 2023**. **ABSOLUTELY** no refunds of tuition will be given after July 31, 2023. Requests to withdraw may be emailed to: [preschool.office@stpaulsumc.com](mailto:preschool.office@stpaulsumc.com)
- V. An administrative processing fee of \$200.00 will be deducted from any refund granted.
- VI. Tuition payments must be current by the first day of school before a child can begin class.
- VII. All tuition payments are due by the date(s) stated on the **Tuition Agreement**. Any payment not paid by the due date may be subjected to a 10% late fee.
- VIII. Payments that are more than 10 days late must be paid in cash and brought to the Preschool Office. A receipt will be issued for cash payments.
- IX. If an account is 15 days past due, the student will not be permitted to attend school until the account balance becomes current.
- X. All accounts must be current to register this student or any of his/her siblings for the 2023-2024 school year. In-house registration for the 2024-2025 school year will begin in mid-November 2023.

- XI. If a student's account remains unpaid, this student and/or any siblings will be removed from the 2023-2024 rosters.
- XII. If a student leaves or withdraws and does not finish making tuition payments per the **Tuition Agreement** contract, the child will not be permitted to return to St. Paul's Preschool until all past financial obligations are met.
- XIII. No siblings will be permitted to register until all outstanding balances are paid in full no matter the length of time the balance has remained outstanding.
- XIV. No tuition adjustments will be made if the child is absent from school regardless of the length of time missed.
- XV. If a student registers after the first tuition payment has been collected, tuition/payment schedules will be prorated and adjusted accordingly for that student.
- XVI. We do not offer refunds if the Preschool is shut down due to public health emergency, such as the Coronavirus. The Preschool will continue to provide instruction via Google Classroom in any event students are unable to meet in the building as outlined in the **Tuition Agreement**.

**Tuition payments may be made by cash or check made payable to St. Paul's Preschool. Currently, we DO NOT accept credit cards or PushPay payments.**

#### **FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION**



St. Paul's has a financial aid program available. The St. Paul's Parents of Preschoolers parent group works diligently during the year to fund the tuition assistance program. **No tuition dollars are used for tuition assistance.** Donations from church members and Preschool parents are welcome. It is our goal that no child should have to drop out of school for financial reasons. To secure a financial aid application, call the Preschool office at 412-486-5591. All information is strictly confidential. The Federal Government guidelines for a family to receive discounted or free lunch are the criteria we use to determine eligibility for financial aid. Other considerations are also taken into account. Financial aid will not be granted for the following classes: 2day/2-year-old classes and Stream classes.



## **County Assistance office (CAO) Department of Public Welfare**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) helps parents pay for childcare. DHS manages the subsidized childcare program for low-income working families and families receiving cash assistance. The subsidy fund helps eligible parents pay for their childcare costs. **For more information, call the Child Care Works helpline on 1-877-4-PA-KIDS or visit: Child Care Works.**

### **CCIS**

CCIS agencies offer information to all parents on selecting childcare which meets their family's needs, as well as helping parents pay for childcare.

#### **Allegheny County – City**

Phone number – 412-255-1281 or Toll-free phone number – 1-800-392-3131

#### **Allegheny County – Northeast**

Phone number – 412-246-4540 or Toll-free number phone number – 1-800-392-3131

#### **Allegheny County – South**

Phone number – 412-349-0303 or Toll-free phone number – 1-800-392-3131

The preschool office has a list of zip codes served by each area.

### **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)**

A federal tax benefit is available for families or individuals working full or part time and earning a low to moderate wage. Questions on Tax forms OR eligibility? Contact the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 or visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) (search Earned Income Tax Credit)

### **Pennsylvania Tax Back/Tax Forgiveness**

Working families may get back some or all their state income tax using the state's Tax Forgiveness program.

You must file a PA-40 Personal Income Tax return and complete PA Schedule SP

A state tax benefit for low to moderate income workers – please check the website or call the PA Department of Revenue.

Contact the PA Department of Revenue with questions on 1-800-362-2050 or [www.revenue.state.pa.us](http://www.revenue.state.pa.us).

### **CHIP – PA's Children Health Insurance Program**

If your child(ren) needs health insurance, CHIP is worth looking into. CHIP covers everything from regular checkups, immunizations and well-baby visits to emergency care, prescriptions, vision exams and dental checkups.

**Pa211sw.org**: Free resource and information hub that connects people with community, health, and disaster services in 11 Pennsylvania counties.

Information about Pennsylvania's Promise for Children can be found at: <http://paprom.convio.net>  
This site will help parents learn why the first five years are so important in their child's development, how to help prepare their children for kindergarten, how to choose and afford quality childcare and how to use their voice to become an advocate for friends and family.

Our preschool is a member of the **Keystone STARS**. Keystone STARS is a state program which receives public funding. Please contact your Regional Key for more details: [www.pakeys.org](http://www.pakeys.org).

### **THE ST. PAUL'S PARENTS OF PRESCHOOLERS PARENT GROUP**

Parents are an important part of our preschool program. Parents of Preschoolers is the parent support group for the Preschool and the teachers. Any parent without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national origin (including limited English proficiency) age or sex is encouraged and welcomed to the Parents of Preschoolers parent group.

The Parents of Preschoolers oversees the coordination of fundraisers. The group works together with the school and educators to promote quality education for our children. You have an opportunity to see other ways you can contribute to the program.

All fundraisers must directly benefit the children. Monies from fundraisers will go to the Tuition Assistance fund, and to purchase supplies for the children.

Meetings are held throughout the school year. You will receive a list of dates and times.

The Parents of Preschoolers parent group appreciates and welcomes the help of all parents. Please consider giving a little bit of your time and skills to help our children's preschool.

### **CLASSROOM VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**



**To volunteer for the following committees, you must submit current Child Abuse and PA Criminal Check clearances. If you have been a resident of Pennsylvania for less than 10 years, you will also need to submit an FBI Fingerprinting clearance. You will also need to complete a NSOR (National Sex Offenders Registry) application. All clearances are good for five years.**

**These MUST be received by the preschool office BEFORE you can work in the classroom.**

**Information and forms are available in the preschool office.**

#### **Party Committee (For 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old classes)**

This committee plans and directs all activities, decorations, and food for parties, except in the 2day/2year old class where the teachers will run the parties. The teaching staff will be available to assist parents as needed. Any needed art materials can be taken from the preschool's supply. Parents will be able to sign up to work at specific parties. In the 3-year-old classes, the party committee will organize and run the Christmas, Valentine, and Easter parties. In the 4-year-old classes, the party committee will organize and run the Christmas, Valentine, and Easter parties. In the 5-year-old classes, the party committee will run Halloween, Christmas, Valentine and Easter parties. **NO SIBLINGS ARE PERMITTED AT PARTIES.** Please notify childcare in advance if you need it for siblings.

The Director will meet with each party group to go over procedures and policies.

No money is to be collected from parents without notifying the school office.

### **Library Committee (For 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old classes)**



Parents are needed to check in books being returned by the children, organize, and maintain the library. This will be scheduled by the teachers beginning in October.

Our library program supports many pre-reading activities. We again appreciate your support of this very important program for preschoolers. Ways to augment our program are:

1. Help on the library committee.
2. Buy your child's favorite book and donate it to the preschool in his/her honor.
3. Donate to the library fund
4. Check the teaching staff's wish list and buy a book wanted for the classroom.

Interest in books and pre-reading skills are achieved in the following ways:

- Most important** – 1. Reading stories to children
2. Having books available for children to read and enjoy with friends and with their families. It is helpful to have a special place to keep school library books where they are safe from younger siblings.

**Home reading is the most common and most valuable book experience parents can provide to their children!**

### **Equipment and Repair Committee**

If building is your hobby, please help us to build and repair equipment.

Parents who can sew or knit are needed to make doll clothes, and smocks for painting and dress up clothes.

### **Parent Helper Committee**

Parent helpers work in the classroom assisting with art, cooking projects, and other activities. The parents help the teaching team directly. You will be contacted in advance by the classroom educators when help is needed.

### **Volunteer Teachers Assistant**

We ask volunteers to work in the classroom when a Teacher Assistant is absent. **This is a volunteer job.** There will be a training session with the director. You will not be allowed to work alone with the children. You will be working with one of the classroom educators during the time you are in the classroom.

## FIELD TRIPS

The four- and five-year-old classes will have several field trips. You will be asked to drop off and pick up your child at the field trip site. If you are unable to transport your child to the field trip location, please contact your educator so other arrangements can be made. Educators always have cell phones with them on trips as well as first aid supplies and emergency forms with contact numbers. If there is an emergency during the trip, parents will be notified, and emergency vehicles will be called if necessary.

We have planned several field trips this year at off site locations for our 4 and 5 year old classes. Due to stringent Pennsylvania guidelines about car seats, we have adopted the following field trip policy.

1. There will be a sign-up sheet posted on the Google Classroom site if we need parent helpers. Parent helpers will assist the teachers as extra hands on the field trip. There will only be a certain number of parent helper slots available per field trip. Please sign up **only** once so that other parents have an opportunity to help. Be aware that **NO SIBLINGS** are allowed to attend field trips, so you may **NOT** bring siblings if you stay as a parent helper.
2. Parents not acting as Parent Helpers will drive their children to the field trip site and drop them off. The educators will be there waiting for the children. Maps will always be provided. You will also be responsible for picking your child up at the field trip site when the class is over.
3. If you are unable to provide transportation, please contact another classroom parent to transport your child. The classroom teaching team will assist in connecting you with other classroom families. All children should be able to attend all field trips.
4. Please call the school if your child will not be attending the field trip. The educators will be waiting for him/her and the field trip can be held up if they think your child is coming.

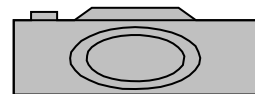
We are sure our field trips will be an exciting learning experience for the children, and we appreciate your help in making our policy work.

## PHOTOGRAPH PROGRAM

One of the teaching techniques we use to help children structure their thinking, learn sequences of events, and remember what they have learned is the use of photographs. We take pictures of rooms they will use during the day. We also take pictures of them working, going on field trips, attending parties, playing, and sharing with their friends. They recall sharing an activity with a friend and see themselves as part of all that is happening.

As a parent you can enjoy the pictures and talk over what was happening with your child. You can help us with the program in the following ways:

1. Share duplicate copies of pictures you take of school activities.
2. Contribute to the photograph budget.
3. Donate photo print paper or ink



## **St. Paul's Preschool Inclusion Policy**

**St. Paul's Preschool** welcomes all children and is committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences that support the full access and participation of each child. We believe that each child is unique, and we work in partnership with families and other professionals involved with the child to provide the support every child needs to reach their full potential.

### **Procedures:**

Admissions/waiting list. Children of all abilities are accepted into St. Paul's Preschool and families interested in having their child attend the program will be given an equal opportunity for admission. A waiting list may be maintained, and children will be accepted from the list on a first come first served basis.

Inclusive environment. Early childhood educators at St. Paul's Preschool use developmentally appropriate practices and consider the unique needs of all children while planning. Staff will make every attempt to make any adaptations or modifications necessary to meet the needs of the children. Schedules, routines, and activities are flexible and early childhood educators will work with therapists, special educators, and other professionals to integrate individual accommodations, modifications and strategies into classroom routines and activities. Any adaptations will be reviewed with the families and other professionals supporting the child.

Family Centered Practices. St. Paul's Preschool acknowledges and respects the priorities each family has for their child. Families are encouraged and supported to collaborate with staff to ensure that each child has an opportunity for optimum success. St. Paul's Preschool communicates with each family daily and has regular meetings to discuss the child's successes and challenges. Resources for families which detail the legal foundations for the inclusion of children in typical early childhood settings can be provided by the preschool office.

Professional Development and Support for Staff. Training and support are provided to ensure that all staff are comfortable, confident and competent to meet the developmental and educational needs of all children. All staff receive an orientation on inclusion policies and take training focused on effective inclusion and/or other disability topics whenever possible. The director provides additional support and resources as appropriate.

Collaboration with Other Professionals. Many children with disabilities or other special needs are supported by developmental and educational professionals such as therapists, TSS, local agencies and others. St. Paul's Preschool welcomes those professionals and works with them to assure the child's success. The service provider is encouraged to provide services to the child in the context of the early childhood classroom environment and the child's teacher and the service provider work collaboratively to determine the best strategies to support the child in the group setting. St. Paul's Preschool supports the teachers' participation in Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

### **St. Paul's Preschool Policy Regarding Servicing Children with Disabilities**

St. Paul's Preschool will make every effort to meet the needs of your child physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially within our abilities based on our staffing, ratio, and facility resources. We will work with families in making necessary plans to accommodate your child in our program if necessary. We look forward to working with you at every stage of your child's development to ensure a warm, secure environment for your child to grow and learn.

All interactions between parents and St. Paul's Preschool will remain confidential. No child will be labeled.

The following steps will be followed:

1. Supporting the Student
  - Observation and documentation by staff
  - Trying to define student's needs (family input and cultural practices included)
  - Examining the environment (How can the program be adapted to be the best place to meet the student's needs?)
  - Meetings as needed with parents and therapists (IEP, evaluations, supportive strategies, or routine updates)
  - Positive reinforcement
  - Space for calming or movement, if needed

If student or classroom needs are not being met the next section will be addressed:

2. Support beyond the student
  - Director available to family to discuss data collected.
  - Staff needs in classroom management (Does the student need extra support in the classroom? Can the staff manage students without the support of agencies?)
  - All children must be physically and emotionally safe.
  - Impact on all children as far as teacher relationships and time teachers have for important staff/child relationships.
  - All parental concerns for the safety of their children
  - Ongoing meetings will be conducted with families if the above issues occur.
  - An action plan will be created with a timeline for implementation.

If issues persist the next section will be addressed:

3. Making placement decision
  - Can the program provide physical and emotional safety for all the children in the classroom?
  - Has the program exhausted all in-house and outside options?
  - Are there situations and patterns of behaviors which cannot be addressed in this environment?
  - Collaboration with parents for suggestions and input has been followed through without successful results.

Once it has been determined that the emotional and/or physical safety of children in the program is threatened and cannot be resolved, a follow through meeting will occur:

4. Termination meeting
  - Timeline for leaving program will be determined.
  - Collection of resources for families directing them to agencies for future placement
  - Affirmation for the student and family
  - Plan for continued caring communication.

## **St. Paul's Preschool Registration Procedures**

When a family expresses an interest in their child attending St. Paul's Preschool, a parent or legal guardian completes the registration form and submits it to the school with a non-refundable registration fee.

Once the registration form is submitted, a parent or legal guardian must sign the following Pennsylvania state forms:

- Tuition agreement form
- Emergency contact form
- Medical form

### **For parental custody issues:**

Legally, the preschool must be presented with documentation from the court showing which parent was determined to be the primary custodial parent. Once this is provided, the preschool is required to follow the instructions of the primary custodial parent.

## **TRANSITION PLAN**

St. Paul's Preschool supports each child's transition from classroom to classroom and from the program to kindergarten. Information will be sent to families explaining the procedures and how the transitions will occur.

In January of each year, a Kindergarten Forum is held, which is open to all families. Area kindergarten teachers and school administrators will discuss the transition to kindergarten with families.



In May, a teacher from the classroom to which the children will be transitioning in September will visit the class to read a story and talk about what they will be doing the next year in their new classroom. A kindergarten teacher will visit the Pre-K classes to read to them and to talk about all the things they will be doing in kindergarten the following year.

Parents will be sent information about the school district registration process.

## BUILDING EMERGENCY PLAN



Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- Immediate Evacuation. Students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc.
- In-place sheltering. Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- Evacuation. Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation area at the Celebration Villa facility, 2224 Walter Road, Allison Park, PA 15101, 412-487-6925. If it becomes necessary to relocate, a sign will be posted on the door stating where we have gone. **If you are not sure how to get there, please ask for directions before there is an emergency.**
- Modified Operation. This may include the cancellation of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problem (such as utility disruptions or sewage problems) that make it unsafe for children but may be necessary in a variety of situations.

A detailed letter will be given to each family during the first week of school.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

All concerns will be dealt with in the following manner:

- With confidentiality
- Meet with staff members in a group (if appropriate) to discuss the issue.
- Outside agencies or community resource programs may be accessed if families and the center require the support
- The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct will be adhered to

Conflict Resolution Strategies followed:

- Focus on the issue, NOT the position about the issue.
- Attack the problem, not the person.
- Accept and respect that individual opinions may differ...work to develop a common agreement.
- Work toward a solution where both parties can have some of their needs met.
- Listen without interrupting; ask for feedback if needed to assure a clear understanding to the issue.
- Build "power with" not "power over" others
- Thank the person for listening.



## SUMMARY

Preschool should delight and excite children and increase their interest in learning. We appreciate you choosing St. Paul's Preschool for your child. We welcome your comments. If you have a concern, you should:

1. Contact your classroom educator and relay the concern to him/her.
2. If you are not satisfied with the response, you can contact the Director, Laurel Webster at 412-486-5591.
3. If you are still not satisfied with the response, you can contact the minister at St. Paul's United Methodist Church at 412-486-7006.

Or you may contact NAEYC AT 1-800-424-2460.

- This handbook may be provided in a family's primary language if their knowledge of English is limited.

