



St. John's Preschool Handbook

2021-2022

Welcome!

We are so excited that you have chosen to send your child to St. John's Episcopal Preschool. This handbook will provide you with important information about our preschool program.

Mission Statement

St. John's Episcopal Preschool is a theme-based academic program nurturing character development and faith. Our primary mission is to provide a safe, caring, and positive environment that fosters a lifelong love of learning. Our engaging program encourages the social, emotional, physical, creative, spiritual, and cognitive development of the whole child. We proudly focus on teaching our students our core values of kindness, honesty, respect, and compassion...values that are integrated into the daily routines and that form a strong basis for all of our academic and social/emotional learning throughout the year.

Preschool Guidelines

Attendance

- If your child is going to be absent, please call the main office at 301-774-6804 or email your child's teacher.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival

All parents will park in designated spots and escort their child from the car to the gym doors. A staff member will help and bring your child to their classroom, as well as support student sign in for preschool. Drop off in the morning will be between 8:00 and 8:15 am.

Dismissal

In the afternoon dismissal will be at 1:00 pm for the half-day program, and at 3:00 pm for the full-day program, Monday through Thursday. On Friday, dismissal will be at 1:00 pm for the half-day program and at 1:30 pm for the full-day program, as

that is an early release day for STJES students. You will again park your car and meet your child at the gym doors.

If someone other than the parents is going to pick up your child, please send in a note to the teacher. The person designated to pick up your child must be able to provide identification.

If your child is going to be late for school or needs to be picked up early, please call the front office and send an email to your child's teacher. Then your child would be dropped off or picked up through the main office.

Bathroom Needs and Extra Clothes

All children in preschool must be potty trained. The teachers are not permitted to assist the children with wiping needs. Please practice good bathroom hygiene habits at home, so your child will be prepared for school. Children will be reminded during transition times and periodically throughout the day to use the bathroom and to wash their hands (with soap, for 20 seconds).

With the expectation that there could be accidents, we are asking each family to provide a change of clothes for their child. This should include a shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. Please provide these labeled items in a Ziploc bag. We will send soiled clothing home to be returned the following day. Parents need to be sure that their extra clothes are seasonal. For example, if you start the school year with shorts in the extra clothes bag, you'll need to change that to pants when the weather gets cooler!

Behavior Expectations

In keeping with the Goals and Criteria of a St. John's Episcopal Preschool education, we want to teach our children to make good choices, to develop problem solving skills, and to learn kindness and patience with those around them. We will guide the children in learning self-control and personal responsibility as they grow and develop. Our intent is to create an environment that puts classroom community first. It teaches children to care about one another and to help their friends.

The guidelines for behavior expectations in our preschool are:

- Setting expectations from the very first day of school that will set the tone for a kind, calm, healthy, and respectful classroom environment
- Setting realistic limits and consistently reviewing them
- Reinforcing positive behavior
- Modeling appropriate behavior, such as speaking in a calm voice, when difficulties occur
- Intervening when necessary to facilitate a problem solving session (group resolution), with the goal of children becoming more accountable for their actions and choices

In response to inappropriate behavior the teacher/staff will:

- Speak to the child or children involved regarding the inappropriate behavior
- Guide the children in talking it out in order to make things better for the individuals and for the class
- Remind or inform the child or children of the classroom expectations
- Redirect the child or children to an appropriate activity, when necessary
- Give the child or children choices in the redirection, as applicable
- Remove the child from the situation completely, if necessary, for the appropriate and needed amount of time, a “take a break time,” for both the individual child and the group as a whole

Examples of behaviors deemed unacceptable in the preschool environment include:

- Inflicting or attempting to inflict bodily harm to any child or staff member
- Disrupting activities with extreme or unsafe behavior
- Using a rude voice or inappropriate behavior

When biting occurs:

- If a child inflicts a bite in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the behavior and how the behavior will be modified.
- If the child again inflicts an additional bite, in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant

mark, the child will be sent home, a conference will be held with the parents, and the child will be asked to take a determined break from school.

- If the child, who has been through steps 1 and 2 and goes for 2 weeks of school attendance without biting, we will go back to step 1 if the child bites again.

If an inappropriate behavior persists, the teacher and an administrator will meet with the parents to determine a positive plan to help the child be successful in school. These are the general guidelines to ensure the safety and well being of our students and to maintain a positive learning environment in the classroom.

Clothing

Please dress your child in washable, comfortable play clothes and closed-toe shoes. Please think about playground and PE safety and comfort when choosing shoes. Sneakers are most preferable. We are requiring that preschool children wear shoes that do not have shoe laces that will need to be tied by an adult. Sneakers with velcro straps are one option, as are slip on sneakers with built-in elastic laces (that do not need to be tied). If you need help, please be sure to ask!

Preschool children do not wear school uniforms. Check the weather daily and dress your child accordingly. Outdoor activities will be planned most days, with the exception of inclement weather. When the weather gets cooler, please label all coats, mittens, and hats with your child's name. In the spring and summer, sun hats or caps may be worn to protect your child's eyes from direct sunlight.

We are asking that you purchase an inexpensive pair of rain boots to be kept at school for the school year. Many times, the rain will stop, but the ground will be wet, and we'd still love to go outside to get fresh air and to play. Please be sure to label the boots with your child's name, so there's no confusion in the event we have boots that look alike! On rainy days, rain coats with hoods would be a great choice of outerwear for your child to wear to school.

Communication

The teachers provide weekly emails and newsletters to parents informing them of what's happening in the classroom. We'll include "talking points" to help you start conversations with your child about their time in school! Parents can also contact

their child's teacher by phone, email, or by putting a note in your child's backpack with any questions or concerns. Friday Folders come home each week with all of your child's work inside. You send these folders back to school on Monday. You will also receive communication from the Head of School, Margery Bank, on a regular basis, letting you know what is happening school-wide at St. John's; these newsletters are called the Eagle Express and the Eagle Update.

Preschool also uses Homeroom, a secure photo-sharing app. It's a wonderful tool - for us to share what's happening in class, and for you to prompt conversations with your child. Keep an eye out for an app invite in the fall.

Evaluation and Parent/Teacher Conferences

We will keep you up-to-date about your child's progress in the areas of Fine Motor Skills/Writing, Language Development/Reading Readiness, Math Concepts, Independent Work Skills, and Social Development, with Progress Reports coming out twice per year.

In November, we will schedule and hold parent/teacher conferences. For preschool, this is a great time to touch base and let you know how the first few months of school are going. We will present and review your child's evaluation and discuss development, milestones, and progress. We will talk throughout the year so you will have a very good idea of what your child's strengths and challenges are. We will also provide suggestions for working with your child at home.

The teachers will inform parents of conference dates via a class email or newsletter, and a sign-up sheet will be available for you to choose the day and time. The teachers will meet with parents at any time throughout the year as deemed necessary by the teacher or desired by the parents.

Health and Safety Protocols

As we return to school, the health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff remain our top priority. The protocols we are following for best practices may change throughout the school year, and we will continue to communicate those changes as they happen.

Please read the STJES Family Handbook (separate from this Preschool Handbook) and the “[Fall Plan](#),” for important information regarding policies and procedures for illness, health and safety, and allergies. STJES is following CDC, State of Maryland Department of Health, and American Academy of Pediatrics guidelines for all health-related protocols.

Lunch and Snacks

Parents need to provide lunch for their child daily. Keeping an ice pack in the lunch box is also required to keep all perishable items cold.

A snack will need to be provided daily as well. This can be in a Ziploc bag or a container labeled “child’s name/snack,” so that we know it’s not a part of your child’s lunch! This is the snack that we will have mid-morning in our classroom or outside.

If your child stays for aftercare, please also provide a snack labeled “child’s name/aftercare.” Labeling snacks with your child’s name and when you’d like them to have that particular snack will help us to stay safe and organized! It will also help us know that it’s a snack and not part of your child’s lunch.

Please send in a reusable water bottle to be kept in class and sent home at the end of each day. We can refill these during the day as needed.

We, as a school, do not provide milk or juice to your child during the school day, but you are more than welcome to provide these drinks as part of your child’s lunch.

It’s very important that you let your child’s teacher know if your child has any food allergies. Please also be sure to fill out any and all forms that go to the front office by the due date.

Outdoor Play

Our class will go outside at least twice a day, weather permitting. We utilize both the front and back playgrounds at St. John’s. Please make sure that your child has the appropriate outerwear for the day’s weather (see clothing section for more

information). During hot, sunny weather, please apply sunscreen each morning at home.

Rest Time

All children enrolled for full days will have a daily rest time. The preschool provides the cots for resting. These will be cleaned and sanitized daily. We ask that parents send in an *All-In-One Nap Mat*, labeled with your child's name, for rest time. These are easy to store and easy for the children to handle. Nap Mats will come home every Friday for washing, and will be sent back to school on Monday.

Please do not send in sleeping bags, sheets, pillows, blankets, or stuffed animals.

Technology/Screen Time

Preschool students do not have individual electronic devices. To enhance our theme-based units, we sometimes project short educational videos, songs, and movement activities. Students will have an opportunity to learn more about technology during Library time once a week.

Specials

Preschool students participate in Specials during their weekly schedules. These specials are Chapel, Library, PE, Spanish, Religion, and STEM.

Shared Responsibility

Please take a few minutes to read the "[Fall Plan](#)" for vital information. Every individual in the STJES community—student, parent, faculty, and staff—is responsible for our collective safety. We are counting on each of us to follow public health guidance consistently, while on campus and off. Please be mindful of your responsibility to the whole school community. We will be mindful of our responsibility in preschool and at STJES. We are looking forward to a fantastic year of fun and learning in preschool!

Thank you so much for reading this Preschool Handbook. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to email us.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

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