

ST. ANDREW LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL
PARENT HANDBOOK
2012-2013

Table of Contents

Organization and Staff.....	3
Enrollment Eligibility.....	3
Registration.....	3
Physical Examination and Immunization Certification.....	3
Tuition, Fees and Class Schedules.....	4
Withdrawal Procedures.....	4
Inclement Weather Policy and School Closings.....	5
Medical and Safety Policy.....	5
Attendance.....	5
Emergencies.....	6
Medications (Epi-pens only).....	6
Policy for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse.....	6
Miscellaneous Information.....	7
Transportation.....	7
Arrival and Pick-up.....	7
Parent Involvement.....	7
Clothing and Backpacks.....	8
Snacks.....	8
Field Trips.....	8
Conferences.....	8

Organization and Staff

Our Preschool is an outreach ministry of St. Andrew Lutheran Church. A Board of Directors provides oversight and top-line planning and serves as part of the education ministry of the St. Andrew congregation. The entire program is overseen by a School Director, an Assistant to the Director, and an Accountant.

Each class is staffed by two teachers, a lead and an assistant. Teachers are hired on the basis of educational background, appropriate experience, and demonstrated skill in working with young children. All lead teachers are required to have a degree in early childhood education or a related field plus course work in early childhood education. All teachers are members of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and are required to continue their professional development by attending continuing education events in the field of early childhood education. All staff members are trained in Child CPR and certified in First Aid. Staff members receive yearly physicals and bi-annual TB tests and have been screened through criminal history and sex abuse registry checks from the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Enrollment Eligibility

Eligibility for enrollment is without regard to religious preference, race or ethnic background. Enrollment of children with special needs shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. Optimal class size for 3's is 14 with a teacher and an assistant teacher; for 4's and Pre-K the size is 16 with a teacher and an assistant teacher.

All Preschool students **must** be toilet trained.

Registration

Every January we begin registration for the following school year. The first two weeks are set aside for Priority Registration, allowing families of current students, alumni, and church members to submit Preschool applications and non-refundable registration fees. These applications are recorded in the order they are received. On a designated date, class placements for these priority applicants are made, using the applications on a first-come-first-serve basis, **within categories** outlined on the application; families are notified about class placement by letter. To fill the remaining class openings we also hold an Open Registration for children who are age-eligible but do not qualify for our In-House Priority registration. These applications form a pool for the Registration Lottery, again held on a designated date. All children who are placed into our program through our lottery are notified by letter with an explanation that, upon receipt of a nonrefundable registration fee, the child's placement in our program is assured pending completion of enrollment requirements. Though placement is made on a first-come-first-served basis, we reserve the right to balance the classes for the optimal learning experience for each child. All remaining applicants in our program are placed and ranked on our waiting lists and are also notified by mail.

We mail a packet of enrollment forms including tuition schedules in April. Information about previsits is mailed in August. Previsits are scheduled for the week before Labor Day each year. Each child, in small groups, spends a few minutes with his/her new teacher, getting to know each other. At the same time, parents spend some time with the assistant teacher, completing paper work requirements for enrollment.

For a more detailed explanation of our registration procedures please call the Preschool Office.

Physical Examination and Immunization Certification

A physician's report that includes your child's immunizations must be completed and signed by both a parent and a physician. **This form must be received by the school prior to your child's first preschool session.** Failure to submit the report in a timely manner may result in temporary withdrawal from the school until the appropriate forms are received.

Tuition, Fees and Class Schedules

Tuition and fees are subject to an annual review and may be changed with the approval of the Preschool Board.

3 Yr. Old Classes: (3 yrs. by 9-30-12)	Tues/Thurs (2 days/wk.)	\$190/month	9:00am - Noon
	Wed/Fri (2 days/wk.)	\$190/month	9:00am - Noon
	Tues/Wed/Fri (3 days/wk.)	\$250/month	9:00am - Noon
4 Yr. Old Classes (4 yrs. by 9-30-12)	Mon/Tues/Thurs (2 classes)	\$250/month	9:00am - Noon
	Mon/Wed/Fri	\$250/month	9:00am - Noon
Pre-K (5 yrs. By 1-31-13)	Tues through Fri (afternoons)	\$295/month	12:30pm - 3:30pm

Registration Fee (Non-refundable) \$95.00

Activity Fee (Non-refundable) \$90.00

Classes the first week of the school year will be shortened to two hours to help children become acclimated to the school routine. Each of our classes will meet for two shortened sessions that first week.

The Activity Fee is due in full by September 15, 2012, or at the time of registration. It is used for pull-in programs and field trips. The one-time fee covers all activities for the school year.

Checks should be written to **ST. ANDREW LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL**. Payments may be sent in monthly in your child's backpack, or payment may be submitted directly to the Preschool office. All tuition is paid one month in advance and is due on the 1st day of each month, September through April. A \$15.00 fee will be assessed if tuition is delinquent by more than ten days or if tuition or registration checks are returned to us by the bank due to insufficient funds.

If tuition is more than 30 days in arrears, the family will be contacted to determine whether they wish their child's enrollment to continue. If no effort is made to clear the delinquent account, the child will be considered to be withdrawn, and the space will be filled from the waiting list.

If a child is absent from class for an extended period due to illness, vacation or for any other reason, but expects to return to school and desires a place reserved, tuition will be charged during the period of absence.

There will be no tuition refunds for short-term school closures due to weather conditions, health precautions, area-wide emergencies or situations beyond the control of the school.

Withdrawal Procedures

If, during the school term, a family finds it necessary to withdraw their child from the program, notice must be given to the Director one month in advance. With less than 30 days' notice, a one-month tuition payment will be required. The May tuition payment cannot be counted as payment for the last month in which the child is attending and will not be refunded.

If, in the opinion of our staff, any child should be unable or unwilling to participate meaningfully in the group or a child's needs are preventing the balance of staff and child interaction, the family will be called for consultation. The family and staff can work out the child's continuance or withdrawal from the program, and such decision may be reviewed by the Preschool Board. At all times, our goal will be to provide the best solution for the child and support for the family.

Inclement Weather Policy and School Closings

The Preschool will observe the same emergency closing policy as Fairfax County Public Schools:

- If Fairfax County schools are closed for inclement weather, the Preschool is also closed. Snow days will not be made up.
- If County Schools open **two hours late, morning sessions will open two hours late and will meet from 11:00am - 1:00 pm with children bringing a bag lunch ; afternoon sessions will meet from 1:30pm - 3:30pm.**
- If County Schools are closed **two hours early due to hazardous winter conditions, afternoon sessions will be canceled. Morning sessions will not be affected by early closings.**
- If Fairfax County schools are closed for teacher workdays or other special days when the Preschool is open and there is inclement weather requiring Preschool closure, the preschool teachers will notify the parents by phone.

Medical and Safety Policy

In the event your child becomes ill at school, parents will be notified immediately. Arrangements must be made to have your child picked up as soon as possible. If one of the students contracts a communicable disease and we believe that other children have been exposed to it, parents will be notified promptly.

When influenza has been identified in our school, we will send a notice home informing you of this. Should the concern go beyond what has previously been experienced in flu season, (such as a more potent strain to which there is limited or no vaccine available), we will monitor information from the health department and take action as advised by such an agency.

In order to limit the spread of illness as much as possible, please cooperate by keeping your child home:

1. Whenever there is a deep cough or heavy nasal discharge;
2. Fever (100 degrees or greater) – Children may return to school when they are fever-free (without medication) for 24 hours;
3. Vomiting and/or diarrhea – Children must remain at home until free of both for at least 24 hours;
4. Infections requiring antibiotics – Children may return to school only after taking medication for at least 24 hours.

Should it be discovered that a child has head lice the parent will be contacted and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible in the Preschool office. The child cannot return to preschool until he/she is free of live lice and nits (lice eggs.)

All children are expected to participate daily in outdoor play, weather permitting. Outdoor play is necessary for good physical development and general health. Do not send your child to school if she/he is not well enough to participate in outdoor activities. We cannot arrange for an adult to watch a child inside during this period as both teachers are required to supervise their class outdoors. We do not apply sunscreen. If a parent wishes to have sunscreen applied to their child, they should do so before the child comes to school.

Attendance

Because attendance at Preschool is not required by law, our procedures for checking attendance are less formal than those followed by elementary schools. We **do** take an official attendance check each day, but we do **not** call your home to verify the reason for the child's absence unless it has been an extended absence and we have not heard from you. We ask that you call or email the preschool office when you know your child will not be present. This helps teachers implement their day efficiently and can help us to gather information about the spread of some communicable illnesses. Especially for illnesses such as strep throat, chicken pox, head lice, etc., it is essential that you notify us promptly so that we can take proper precautions to halt the spread of infections through the school. In addition, we inform families (without disclosure of the sick child's identity) of the possibility of exposure.

Emergencies

We work very hard to make sure that your child is healthy and safe here, but, because emergencies can arise, we have made plans to handle them. In the event of an accident or other medical emergency, a parent or designated emergency contact person will be notified immediately. At the beginning of the school year each family must file an Emergency Contact Form listing people we may contact in case of an emergency if both parents or guardians are not available. These individuals must know they are emergency contacts for your family and should be regularly available. We also require an Emergency Treatment Form authorizing medical treatment if parents are not available and immediate medical care is advised. **We require that all of these forms be on file no later than your child's first day of school, and we ask that you keep the information on the forms current during the school year.**

If we have an area-wide emergency that would prohibit parents from being able to pick up their children for a prolonged time, we have a shelter-in-place plan, made in coordination with the Preschool Board. Should we have a building emergency and need to evacuate our preschool, we have made plans to house the children at Stone Middle School. We would then contact families as soon as possible to arrange for pick-up of children.

Medications (Epi-pens only)

Our policy and training in a course approved by the Board of Nursing and the Virginia Department of Social Services covers the administration of Epi-pens and Epi-pen Juniors prescribed by a child's health care provider. We will not administer Twinjects or any oral or topical medications. A *Written Medication Consent Form* issued by the state of Virginia (available through the preschool office) must be submitted with the Epi-pen or Epi-pen Junior. Parents are responsible to make sure the consent forms and medications are kept current.

We maintain emergency medications **prescribed by the child's health care provider** in our Preschool Emergency "Go" bag in an area not accessible by children. Staff members administering emergency medications have completed a competency-based course in medication administration approved by the Board of Nursing and Virginia Department of Social Services. **Information about such severe health situations must be reported on the Emergency Treatment and Health Forms, and medication authorization forms must be signed by both the prescribing physician and parent every six months unless otherwise noted by your physician in writing. We require that all such medications be brought to school on your child's first school day in September and left at school for the entire school term.** Parents will be responsible for ensuring that each medication is current and will not expire during the course of the school year.

Policy for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse

According to the law, the definition of child abuse and neglect is:

1. The creating or inflicting by a parent or responsible caretaker of a non-accidental physical or mental injury upon a child under 18 years of age or permitting the inflicting of such injury;
2. The creating by a parent or responsible caretaker of a substantial risk of death, disfigurement or impairment of bodily or mental functions of a child;
3. Neglect or refusal by a parent or responsible caretaker to provide care necessary for the child's health;
4. Abandonment of a child by a parent or other person responsible for his/her care;
5. The committing upon a child of any sexual act in violation of law, or permitting the commission of such acts.

Teachers and school employees (including nursery schools and day care centers) are required by law to report suspected child neglect or abuse. If the teacher suspects abuse or neglect has taken place, a report will be made to the church pastor and the Preschool Director, who will then immediately contact the Department of Social Services and file a report, offering whatever support documents and observations are available.

Miscellaneous Information

Transportation

Transportation to and from the school shall be the responsibility of the parents. The Preschool will provide parents with a class directory to facilitate the formation of carpools. The Preschool must be given a written list of persons authorized to transport your child. Your child will not be released to individuals whose names do not appear on this list. As you transport your child to and from Preschool, please remember that children should always ride in the back seat and should always use child safety restraints.

Arrival and Pick-up

Our class sessions begin at 9:00 am or 12:30 pm. We have a carpool line, where teachers meet parents' cars in the parking lot and greet each child as they move from the car to the waiting area. Preschool staff will remove and return children to and from the right side of the parents' vehicle. To keep our carpool line moving smoothly, please pull forward and park to buckle your child into his/her car seat.

Teachers and children gather to walk to our classrooms together. If your child is ever reluctant to stay at school, please follow the guidance of the teacher handling the situation. A map of how the car line moves through the church parking lot will be available at the pre-visit. If you walk to preschool with your child or park in our lot and walk up to where your child's class is gathering, you are to hold your child's hand until they are safely received by a Preschool staff member. If you arrive late and the children have already gone to their class area, please walk your child into his classroom, making sure that the teachers note the arrival. Our responsibility for each child begins when he/she arrives and is received by the teacher or staff member.

We make every effort to end our class day and to arrive at our area promptly for pick-up at noon and at 3:30. Our teachers first make sure that all of our students are safely seated and then we begin putting them into parents' cars. Prompt arrival and pick-up each day is important to the child's well-being and sense of security. Please contact the Preschool if you know you will be late so that we can reassure your child. If, after other children have been picked up, we have received no information, we will attempt to reach you and your other emergency contacts. The child will remain in the care of the teacher, Director, or a Church staff member until an authorized adult picks up the child.

If you plan to carpool or have other individuals transport your child to and/or from preschool on a regular basis please request a Transportation form from the preschool office. We use these sheets to ensure that we follow your wishes when releasing your child at the end of the school day. Please keep the form current through the year. If your child gets invited for a "play date" and your child is going home with someone other than you or your carpool group, please send a note, email or call the preschool office to let us know. Both families need to send notification.

If, in an emergency, it is necessary for someone **not** on the Carpool Pick-up Sheet to pick up your child, please provide ID information for that individual to us. We will verify the identity of the adult getting your child before we release him/her. Your child's safety is very important to us so we ask your help with this process.

Parent Involvement

The Preschool fosters an "open-door" policy and welcomes parents to visit and observe at any time, although teachers may find it necessary to limit the number of persons who can visit at any one time. Parent should consult with the teacher before bringing non-enrolled children into the classroom. Parents assisting or visiting the classroom who bring non-enrolled children with them must assume all responsibility for them. We encourage parents to volunteer their help and share their talents to extend the teachers' programs, and there will be many opportunities for your involvement. Please remember that classroom time is not appropriate for conferring with the teacher about your child. A private meeting can be arranged at your request.

Clothing and Backpacks

We ask that all children bring a large back pack, clearly marked with your child's name to Preschool each day. We do not permit backpacks on rolling wheels due to safety issues. Please leave an extra set of clothes, **including underwear and socks**, in your child's backpack. Please update your child's extra clothing as the seasons change and your child grows.

Our program will involve all types of painting and creative activities, outdoor and active on-the-floor play. Messiness is a valuable and releasing experience. Clothing, therefore, should be durable, casual, and washable. Children are more inclined to participate in messy activities when they are not worried about getting their clothing dirty. Rubber-soled shoes are safer than hard-soled shoes or sandals for climbing, running, etc. All outerwear clothing and other items brought from home should be marked clearly with the child's name and will be stored in the child's back pack or hung on his/her coat hook. All clothing should be easy for children to manage themselves. Please remember that we will use the playground daily weather permitting.

Snacks

We strive to avoid all products that may contain peanuts or are processed in a facility that uses peanut products. Any child with a food allergy that necessitates having an EpiPen must provide their own snack at school. A nutritious snack and water are provided for children daily. Teachers frequently plan food preparation projects as small group or individual classroom activities designed to reinforce an idea, concept, or theme being explored with the children. Regular snacks may include fruits, vegetables, crackers, pretzels, raisins and cheese. All these foods are approved for children three years old and over.

If children have special dietary requirements teachers will work with you to provide suitable alternatives. Children are encouraged to try different foods, but may choose not to eat what is offered on a given day.

Field Trips

Field trips are scheduled as far in advance as possible so that parents can receive ample notice. A signed permission slip will be required to assure that parents are aware of their child's whereabouts during school hours. These permission slips must be completed and returned on or before the day of the field trip, or the child will not be allowed to participate. **If a child has emergency medications kept at the preschool then a parent must accompany him/her on any school field trip.**

As required by Virginia State Law, **all preschool children** must be properly restrained in a child safety seat or a booster seat. No child will be allowed to participate on field trips without an appropriate safety restraint. Parents are required to provide a car or booster seat on the day of the field trip and to secure it in the driver's vehicle.

Conferences

Two formal conferences are offered each year, one in the fall and one in the spring, to discuss goals for your child and overall developmental progress. It is vital that parents and teachers communicate freely to do the best job for your children. We welcome any opportunity to speak with you.

We look forward to a great year of growth and fun, sharing the love of Jesus with your child and family!