

St. John's Preschool Handbook

This handbook is designed to acquaint you with the policies and guidelines of St. John's Preschool, as well as explain some of the advantages of an early childhood program. Our mission is to nurture each child academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually towards a readiness for Kindergarten.

A good early childhood program provides needed care, protection, and continuous developmental educational experiences while children are away from their parents. Preschool is an opportunity for students to be with other children, learning individually or in groups, under the guidance of skilled professionals.

Young children want to learn. They need an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Our program will provide an environment where children learn through direct and indirect experiences. This type of program is vital to the growth and development of young children during their formative years.

St. John's Preschool will provide a setting where children will learn socialization skills, participate in imaginative play, learn about our community, the world around us, our health, our families, the seasons, and holidays, and many other skills needed for later success. It is a place where each child will receive our love and respect. It is our promise to parents, that we will use our experience, skill and professional training to help every child learn and grow according to his/her individual potential, all within an atmosphere of acceptance and love.

The Preschool is sponsored by St. John's United Methodist Church. Christian values are incorporated in our daily activities through songs, stories, prayers and conversation.

We hope this will be a happy and rewarding year for you and your child. We are looking forward to working with each of you. Please do not hesitate to call us with your praise, comments, suggestions or concerns. We want our school to be the best it can be; we can only do that with your help and support!

A Morning at St. John's

Your child's day will include:

Discovery and Free Play – Individually or in small groups, he/she may look at books, build with blocks, play dress-up or in the housekeeping center, paint, use creative art materials, care for pets and growing things, use educational materials at a concept formation center or play with manipulatives.

Group Time – Includes conversation, listening to stories, prayers, hearing poems, acting out stories, finger plays, calendar and weather information, development of self concept, social skills and Christian values which aid in working with and understanding others. Unit concepts are introduced at this time and a great deal of emphasis is placed on the development of language.

Nutrition Snack – All children will eat together, giving them the opportunity for social interaction, learning desirable table manners, good food habits, a variety of blessings, and independence in caring for themselves.

Music – Includes learning and singing songs, playing rhythm instruments, listening to records and tapes, moving to music and developing large muscle control and body awareness.

Large Motor Skill Play – Helps develop muscle coordination and teaches the child to obey simple rules in games. Activities will include running, jumping, swinging, climbing, riding tricycles, scooters and bikes, sand and water play. During inclement weather, large motor activities will be organized indoors. This will include bean bags, balls, hoops, parachutes, jump ropes, scarves and obstacle courses.

Policies and Guidelines

Religiously Exempt from Licensure

St. John's Preschool is operated under the auspices of St. John's United Methodist Church which complies with the requirement of Section 63.2-1716 of the Code of Virginia. Therefore it is Religiously Exempt from licensure. A Copy of St. John's Preschool exemption status is posted on the Parent Board in the main hallway of the preschool.

Physical Facility

St. John's Preschool is located at 1716 N. Augusta St., Staunton, VA in St. John's United Methodist Church. There are four classrooms and three bathrooms for the children. The rooms contain both carpeted and uncarpeted areas. The facility is well maintained. All areas are heated or air-conditioned as the weather dictates. There is a teacher workroom, storage area, as well as an outside storage building for playground equipment. The church kitchen is also available to the preschool when needed. There is a fenced-in grassy area, as well as a paved area on the playground. In inclement weather, the church social hall is used for large motor activities. The facility is inspected by fire, health, and building inspectors in compliance with the Commonwealth's mandates for religiously exempt child day care centers.

Enrollment Capacity

As mandated by the State, enrollment capacity is based on the age of the children, the number of staff members, building specifications and fire inspection. According to information supplied by the Building Official for the City of Staunton, he has set the certificate of occupancy for St. John's Preschool at 60 people. The Department of Social Services mandates 1 to 10 ratios of adults to children ages 2-6 years of age.

Insurance

St. John's Preschool and Staff are covered under St. John's United Methodist Church's accidental injury and public liability insurance.

Staff Information

The Director shall have a bachelor's degree, preferably in a child-related field. Head teachers shall have a bachelor's degree and/or at least 5 years of teaching (young children) experience. Aides/Assistant Teachers must have a high school diploma or G.E.D. The Preschool welcomes parent volunteers to help in areas of interest. The choice to use volunteers is up to the discretion of the Director.

It is preferred that all personnel have prior experience with children and more educational background than the minimum required by the state. Above all, the staff is to be sensitive to the needs of children, have an ability to relate socially and emotionally to children, and to portray to the children that they care.

Staff meetings are held to acquaint the staff with each month's activities and update them on each child. Training sessions are also a part of staff meetings. These include, but are not limited to, child abuse and neglect seminars, hand washing procedures, health screening tactics, first aid and CPR training, emergency procedures, child development, etc.

Health Requirements of Staff

All staff members are free of any disabilities or disorders which would prevent them from caring for children, and have never been convicted of any felony or misdemeanor related to abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or adults.

All staff members must have record checks done by the State Department of Social Services and State Police for a criminal record history and a sex offender record with no convictions found.

Annual examinations by medical physicians are required, as are current CPR for the head teachers and first aid certifications for the total staff.

Entrance Requirements

Any child, regardless of race or creed, is eligible to be enrolled in St. John's Preschool. The child must be between the ages of 2 ½ – 5 years old on or before September 30th. Three & Four year old students must be potty trained. The child must be in good health and submit the [Commonwealth of Virginia's Department of Education School Entrance Health form](#) with physician's signature affirming the necessary immunizations.

Upon payment of the registration fee the parent or guardian agrees to complete and sign all the necessary forms for the child's file at the school. In compliance with section 63.2-1809 of the Virginia Code regarding proof of a child's identity and age, a staff member must see an original birth certificate and make a file copy for each enrolled child.

All requirements must be satisfied prior to the first day of school. Failure to do so may result in dismissal.

Registration Fee

A registration fee is to be paid when the parents submit the Preschool application. This fee is not refundable should the parent or guardian cancel. As a courtesy, please inform the Preschool Director if you decide to withdrawal at any point following registration.

Tuition

The tuition fee is figured on an annual basis, payable in nine monthly installments. The first tuition for new students is due by August 5th. Thereafter, tuition payments are due by the fifth of the month, September through April. Tuition is paid one month in advance. Parents are responsible for the delivery of payment, not children. No tuition will be refunded and it is understood that a thirty day notice is required for withdrawal. Checks should be made payable to ST. JOHN'S PRESCHOOL.

2019-20 Tuition Rates

2 day program (Tuesday/Thursday OR Monday /Wednesday)	\$140.00 /9 installments
3 day program (Tuesday – Thursday)	\$210.00 /9 installments
4 day program (Monday – Thursday)	\$240.00/ 9 installments

Attendance/Absence

If your child is to be absent, please call the child's teacher before

8 am or call the church office (886-1500) after 9 am. It is helpful for us to know when your child will not be attending. There are no make-up days for absences.

School Day – Arrival and Dismissal

The school day is from 8:45 – 11:45 am. We ask parents to bring their children into the school at 8:45 and to pick them up promptly at 11:45. The school doors will not open until 8:45. Parents are expected to come inside the school when leaving their child. Please encourage the child to find his/her own hook, hang up his/her own coat, etc. At dismissal time, please come into the hallway and wait to pick up your child. The teacher will call the children, help them get their belongings and send them out to you. All names of potential people who might pick up your child need to be on an authorization form. In the case of an emergency, a note or phone call is necessary. Pets are prohibited during drop off and pick up on church property.

What to Wear - What to Bring

Dress your child in play clothes and comfortable shoes. In cold weather, be sure your child wears a hat and mittens.

Each child should have at school a complete change of clothes (including socks and underwear). Each item should be marked plainly with the child's name. A book bag of sufficient size to carry notices, projects, and show and tell should be brought to school each day.

Nutrition Break

The Preschool will provide a nutritious, attractive pre packaged snack for your child daily. Sometimes the snack may be something the children have “assembled” themselves. We hope to expose the children to a variety of easy to prepare and healthy snacks throughout the year. A calendar of snacks will be posted each month on the Preschool bulletin board. Throughout the year, there will be occasions that parents may sign up to contribute items needed for a party.

Messages

If you have a message for your child's teacher or the Preschool, please send a written note in the correspondence sleeve provided in your child's backpack the first day of school. Verbal messages from children cannot be accepted.

Health

For your child's own well being and the other children at Preschool, please keep your child at home when they show symptoms such as sore throat, nausea or vomiting, runny nose(that is not clear), diarrhea, skin rash, inflamed eyes, discharging ears, cough, earache, enlarged glands, flushed face or fever. If your child has a fever (even if it is below 100 degrees), please keep him or her home from school until they have been fever free for 24 hours.

Administration of Medication is Prohibited

Any medication should be administered by parents before their child arrives at preschool. St. John's Preschool Staff will not administer medication of any kind, prescription or over the counter.

Transporting of Preschoolers

Parents transporting children for any field trip or official St. John's Preschool outing are required to have a valid driver's license for the state of Virginia. The vehicle that he/she will be driving has a current inspection sticker and is insured for bodily injury liability and property damage liability by an insurance carrier authorized to do business in the Commonwealth. Limits on this policy are in compliance with Section 46.2-472 of the code of Virginia. Also all children will be secured in a child restraint device, properly equipped with a safety belt system, consisting of lap belts, shoulder harnesses, combinations thereof or similar devices.

Snow Days

In the event of bad weather, the Preschool follows the Staunton City Schools for their decision making. If the city schools are closed, then St. John's Preschool is closed. If the city schools have a two hour delay, then the Preschool will open at 9:45pm. The Staunton City Schools usually post their closing information on the local television stations and is usually displayed by 6:00 am. Please call your child's teacher if you have any question as to the opening hour of the Preschool.

Student Conduct

It is our desire to give the child every chance to grow to be responsible and self-directing. We do not expect any child to be "perfect". We manage behavior problems by helping the child develop his/her own conflict resolution skills. Thus, discipline is firm and consistent, yet tempered with kindness and love, and a genuine regard for the student. Our positive approach focuses on what is good rather than concentrating

upon what is not. Most disciplinary action is handled by simply redirecting the child's behavior. If the behavioral problem persists, then the teacher and child talk about the behavior, making sure the child understands the reason it is unacceptable. The child is then given an acceptable alternate activity. The teacher makes it clear to the child that it is the behavior that is inappropriate, not the child. Should the negative behavior continue, the child will again be spoken to and then be moved away from the activity to think about his/her behavior. The length of time spent sitting, correlates with child's age. In some instances, the child will be removed from the classroom and taken to the director, who will talk with him/her, and try to determine a course of action that will be satisfactory for both teacher and child. Parent notification describing the behavior and how to redirect will also be issued to work on behavior as a team effort. If the behavior continues after this, the child will be taken to the director who will again counsel the child giving acceptable alternatives.

Should it progress beyond this point, or should the child have repeated trips to the director, the parent will be called and asked to come conference with the child, and/or the teacher and director.

Constant demonstration of an uncooperative spirit through documented continual disobedience and negative attitude will result in the child's dismissal from the Preschool program.

There's a no tolerance policy regarding physical violence (biting, hitting), aggressive behavior and/or inappropriate language. Following a warning, any continued behavior of this nature is grounds for dismissal.

Failure to abide by the St. John's Preschool Handbook as well as Preschool policies and expectations may result in your student's withdrawal from the Preschool program.