



# Parent Handbook

Revised 9/10

## **Welcome**

Thank you for taking an active approach in your child's early learning. A lot of the policies and procedures found in this book are required by the state for the health and safety of the children and staff. A copy of the State Licensing Manual and licensing visit reports will be posted near the sign-in/out book. Please be advised that some of the information within the booklet may evolve over time.

## **Philosophy**

In keeping with the mission of St. James Lutheran Church, the preschool is dedicated to instilling in each child a confident desire to learn and providing children with a balanced routine to develop spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical and social skills through natural play.

## **Admissions Policy**

All children are eligible regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, creed, or disability. You and your child will be asked to visit the program prior to enrollment. At this time you will be able to see the classrooms and look at the curriculum. You will also have a chance to discuss any policy or program issues with staff. There will also be several forms for you to fill out prior to attendance.

A child must be 3 years old and potty trained to attend. We have two class options: TWTh 9:00-11:30am, and TWTh noon-2:30pm. There may be additional enrichment opportunities available throughout the year. Classes run September through May.

## **Tuition Policy**

Tuition is averaged and paid in advance nine times per year. Payment is due between the 1st and 7th of each month. There is a \$5 per school day fee for tuition paid late. There is a \$20 returned check fee. Tuition payments may be placed in the box located next to the classroom door.

The present fee schedule includes a \$50.00 non-refundable registration/materials fee, paid annually, and a monthly tuition of: \$175.00. We cannot give any refunds for days absent and are not able to keep any children in the program if payment is delinquent for one month or more. Please see the administrator concerning payment issues.

## **Registration**

Registration for the following school year will begin in winter or early spring of the previous school year and continue until full. Enrollment will be open to in-house families prior to opening to the public. Students may also enroll during the school year if space is available. The school will enroll approximately 14 students per class, not to exceed licensed capacity.

A \$50.00 non-refundable registration/materials fee shall be submitted with the completed registration forms to begin the registration process.

Before a child can attend the school, the following forms must be submitted: Registration Form, Child Care Enrollment, Health History and Emergency Care Plan, Emergency Care Card, Family and Social Record, Parent Volunteer Form, Financial Agreement, Day Care Immunization Record (within 30 days), Emergency Form, Emergency Card, Child Health Report (within 90 days)..

## **Arrival and Departure**

Please bring children no earlier than five minutes before class time. Teachers will be preparing for class and not always available to have the children until that time. Please arrive promptly to pick up your child after class.. A late pick-up fee of \$5 per 5 minutes will be charged for parents picking up more than 5 minutes late.

Due to insurance and safety reasons, we require that each child be dropped off and picked up at the classroom door by an adult. If a person other than those listed on the emergency form will be picking up your child, a signed note will be required and identification will be verified.

*Please notify the school any time your child will not be attending. We will attempt to verify their absence within 30 minutes of class beginning if no call is received.*

### **Withdrawal / Discharge**

*Parent Initiated:* There is a one month adjustment period. If a parent finds it necessary to withdraw after the one month adjustment period, they are asked to first discuss it with the school administrator. At any other time, one month advance notice is requested prior to withdrawal. Without notification one-half month's tuition will be charged.

*School Initiated:* St. James Preschool will make every effort to meet the needs of each child. If the school cannot meet the needs of a child withdrawal may become necessary. Some factors that may cause St. James Preschool to consider discharge of a child are:

- Continued problematic behavior in the classroom
- Excessive demands on the staff to the detriment of other students.
- Child has special needs which the staff are unable to handle effectively.
- The possibility of danger to the child or others in the class.
- Unwillingness of parents to cooperate with or support staff.
- Failure of parents to make payment when due.

All concerns regarding the consideration of withdrawal initiated by St. James Preschool will be documented in the child's file. Parents will be asked to meet with the teacher and Administrator to establish a timetable with possible solutions. All concerns will be kept confidential with exception to those directly affected.

### **Administration**

St. James Preschool is an outreach ministry of the St. James Lutheran Church, thus the ultimate decision making authority lies with the Board of Ministry and Pastor Kurt Billings..

Administrative authority lies with the Preschool Administrator. In the absence of the Administrator, the line of authority for decision making regarding daily operation of the center passes to Pastor Billings and the St. James Board of Ministry.

### **Problem Resolution**

Through open communication, policies and procedures, we feel most problems can be remedied easily. If for any reason a parent has an issue with a classroom situation, we ask that the teacher be contacted first for discussion. If the problem cannot be resolved, the teacher can then refer the parent to the Administrator.

If for any reason a parent who has a child currently enrolled in St. James Preschool feels that a program policy, procedure and or structure is not in full compliance with State Licensing rules and regulations, it should be brought to the immediate attention of the Administrator in a written, dated description of the noted irregularity. A copy of the statement will be kept in a permanent file in the school office. Once a parental statement is filed, the Administrator will look into the matter, act on it appropriately, and respond to the complaint. The complaint and resolution will be discussed with the Senior Pastor. If a satisfactory resolution isn't reached after this process, and the parent feels

the issue constitutes a violation of licensing rules, the complainant may contact a State Licensing Agent at 266-2900.

A copy of the license and any non-compliance violations are posted by the parent board. A copy of the Licensing Guidelines and a copy of Policies and Procedures will be available to parents at all times. These items are located near the sign-in/sign-out book.

### **Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting**

Staff is required by law to report if they know or have reason to have concern that a child has been neglected or harmed. Reports will be made to Dane County Social Services, in compliance with the State Child Abuse and Neglect laws.

### **Child Assistance Policy**

If a concern arises about a child who may be in need of specific services, the parent would first be contacted and it would be hoped that the teacher and parent would work together to find the best help for the child. Beyond this, formal steps would be: Parent-teacher conference(s) to address the problem and develop strategies for resolving them. Possible request that the parent come in or provide an in-class helper if problematic behavior continues. Withdrawal may be necessary if staff and/or parents deem the program not to be serving the best needs of the child. See withdrawal policy in this handbook.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is of utmost importance at St. James Preschool. Issues relating to any child will only be discussed with parents and involved staff. Parents are asked to respect this policy and to not inquire about issues dealing with other children. Please see the administrator if you have questions regarding this policy. Children's files will be accessible only to staff, the licensing specialist and the child's parents.

### **Health Policies**

Each child is required to have a physical exam by a licensed physician not more than one year prior to or later than three months after admission to school. Children must have a new exam every two years. An individual with a history of contagious disease must show proof that they are not a carrier before participation in the program. The school will post any and all communicable diseases that children have possibly been exposed to. A list of these communicable diseases will be posted in the office or hallway.

To keep the children as healthy as possible, we ask that you not send your child to school if they are ill. Please do not send your child to school with the following symptoms: a fever over 100 degrees, diarrhea and/or vomiting. If a child contracts a communicable disease while at school and exposes others, the parents should notify the teachers (I.e. head lice, chicken pox, strep throat). The child should remain at home until they are fully recovered. Children with a contagious disease may need a doctor's release before returning to school. If a child becomes ill at school, the parents or emergency contact will be notified immediately, and expected to arrive within 30 minutes. Ill children will be kept in the office until parents arrive. NO medications will be given at school. An exception will be made for severe allergies such as bee stings. Please notify the teacher if your child has taken medication prior to school.

*If your child is ill or unable to attend school on a given day, please call the school and let us know.*

### **Food Allergy Policy**

In response to the increasing rates of allergies among children, St. James Preschool is a peanut / tree-nut free school. Protecting a student from exposure to offending allergens is essential in preventing life threatening anaphylaxis. Most anaphylactic reactions occur at school when a child is

accidentally exposed to a substance to which he/she is allergic, such as foods, medicines, insects, and latex. Accordingly, St. James Preschool will adopt policies and procedures as needed in an effort to keep all students as safe as possible.

### **For our school**

- We will have peanut/tree nut -free snacks.

### **If a child/children in your class has a food allergy (peanuts, tree nuts or other)**

- We will work together to make snack time safe and enjoyable for all.
- Please use the class handouts and our website to come up with snack ideas that are safe, healthy and enjoyable for all kids in the class.
- Check the labels of snacks before you bring them in. Check the ingredients and look for warning or safety notices (usually near the ingredients) such as “Contains nuts” or “Wheat free” or “Processed in a facility that processes nuts.”
- Be aware that many organic brands that are usually considered healthy options for children may be processed in smaller facilities that also process nuts.

### **If your child has allergies**

- Let the director and teacher know immediately.
- Please share a list of safe and unsafe foods with the class, including specific brands if applicable.
- If needed, make sure the teacher has an epi-pen for your child.
- If you are not comfortable with snack arrangements, talk to the teacher.
- We encourage you to help us to educate the teachers and other parents on reading labels and identifying risks.

### **For all students, parents and visitors to our school**

- We ask that you enter through our Parent Room door and clean your hands with sanitizing wipes before entering the classroom. We also encourage you to clean the face of your child.
- Place snacks and/or drinks in or on top of the refrigerator in the Parent Room.
- Any lunches brought to school, to be eaten on or off site, should be prepared with these policies in mind.

Food allergies are a serious issue and we appreciate your cooperation in ensuring the safety of all of our children. We encourage parents to share restrictions, concerns and to ask questions. The “perimeter of the grocery store” (produce, cheese, and yogurt) is the best place to start looking for class snacks.

If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to contact the Director or Parish Nurse.

### **Building Service Loss (due to: flood, fire, tornado, etc.)**

St. James Preschool will close in the event that the building loses:

- Heat that creates a temperature less than 67 degrees or air conditioning that creates a temperature of more than 80 degrees
- Water accessibility
- Electrical Service

- Plumbing capabilities

Parents will be notified by phone to make arrangements for pick-up as soon as possible, if telephone service is out, children will be sheltered in the preschool until contact can be made. In the event that the Preschool is affected but the church is not, temporary shelter will be sought in the church. The church administrator will be available, within 5 minutes, for emergency support.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Cancellations due to weather will follow the lead of the Verona Area School District. If Schools are delayed two hours or less, we will run as scheduled. If schools are released early we will expect preschool children to be picked up by that time also. Please call if you have questions. Fire drills will take place monthly. In a drill or actual fire, teachers will take count of the children to make sure all are accounted for and then lead the children out following the posted evacuation plan. A face-to-name attendance will be taken again when we meet outside and we will return after an all-clear signal from the Administrator or "Incident Commander". Emergency cards and attendance forms will be with the teacher at all times. If there is a tornado warning the children will be led to the basement. We ask that parents do not try to pick up their child during a tornado warning, but are encouraged to take cover immediately.

*Minor Injury:* If your child suffers a minor injury, our first step is to administer first aid if necessary. Superficial wounds shall be cleaned with soap and water only and protected with a bandage. An ice pack may be applied. Parents will be informed of the injury when they arrive and the injury will also be logged. A first aid kit will be taken on all field trips.

*Serious Injury:* If it is determined that your child needs professional medical treatment, the following procedure will be followed:

- 911 will be called if it appears life threatening.
- The Administrator will be notified.
- The Administrator will call the parents
- If the child needs transport to the clinic or hospital, the teacher will go with and stay with the child until the parents arrive. Children will be taken to UW Hospital unless otherwise determined by paramedics.
- The Administrator or other teacher will tend to the rest of the class.
- The Administrator will fill out an accident report form, whenever a child receives medical treatment, and send to the State Licenser within 48 hours.

(The same procedure will be followed away from the preschool; a cell phone will accompany the group on all outings.)

### **Child Guidance**

We try to create an atmosphere of genuine caring and respect for each child. Our guidance technique will be to restate the rule, redirect the child and reinforce positive behavior. Under no circumstances will staff tolerate or use physical force in disciplinary procedures. Hitting, spanking, withholding or forcing snacks, naps, or verbal abuse is not permitted, even at the parent's request. During snack time children will sit together at the snack table they will be offered a snack and drink. It will be the child's decision to eat or drink what is offered. Crying is normal behavior and should be treated as so. If a child becomes distraught, fussy or wont stop crying. The first step is to identify the cause of the distress; it may be that a child needs some extra time and attention. Attempts will be made to soothe the child and those attempts may include letting the child cry for a few minutes. A teacher may request assistance from another teacher or Director if crying persists. If a child is unable to be soothed, the parents may be notified.

### **Program Description**

Classrooms will be blended, with emphasis on small group instruction that is age/ability appropriate. Classroom focus will be on beginning learning skills. Color, shape, letter and number

recognition as well as activities that stretch the mind, express feelings and encourage cognitive development. Social interaction will also be a focus as these children learn to relate to peers and adults. Children will be encouraged to verbally express needs and desires. This class will have the opportunities for free play, music, art, science, early math and literacy concepts, stories, role playing and more. The staff will promote Kindergarten readiness through pre-reading and math activities. .

### **Religious Education**

The St. James preschool program includes a focus on Christian development in the form of guided chapel times, daily prayers, songs with Christian content and seasonal activities (Christmas, Easter, etc.). Signs and symbols of faith may be a part of the preschool environment. All discussions of faith and Christianity are ecumenical in nature, keeping in mind that the children come from a variety of religious backgrounds. Our program will strive to incorporate cultural diversity through daily exposure to differences in race, age, ability, etc, through materials and equipment in the classroom.

### **Programming Goals**

Our program is based on the developmental needs of preschool children and the understanding of the way children learn. We base our curriculum on weekly thematic units. We believe that play should be at the heart of any quality preschool program. Play makes a major contribution to the physical, social, emotional and intellectual development of children.

At St. James Preschool we incorporate play into the following activity areas:

*Large Motor Skills*—Development is encouraged through both indoor and outdoor play including balance, climbing and coordination.

*Small Motor Skills*— we provide a wide variety of materials to promote fine motor skills such as puzzles, Legos, bristle blocks, crayons, etc.

*Drama, Art and Music*—through self-discovery and creativity children will identify feelings and emotions, practice speech, learn problem solving skills and use their imaginations.

*Science*-We encourage curiosity and help to develop a sense of wonder at the world around us.

Children become aware of and become comfortable with basic patterns and principles of nature.

*Reading and Math*-*Early learning skills* are introduced to facilitate cognitive development. Overall our goal is to teach literacy and math concepts through informal activities and small group instruction

*Health, Safety and Nutrition*– These issues are woven through the curriculum and reinforced as the teachers see fit. Children are asked to wash hands after toileting, and before and after snacks.

### **Parent Involvement**

We strive to keep our preschool on the forefront of emotional, intellectual, physical and social learning at an affordable price. To continue this passion we count on parents to take an active role in their child's school. Parent involvement is not only welcomed but encouraged and needed..

Some are able to assist more than others, but it is hoped that all will give of their time and talents.

Parents who wish to volunteer in the classroom are required to have training in the daycare programming and procedures. This training will be incorporated into the parent orientation class in the fall. Please remember that personal information or observations of the other children should be considered confidential. Situations in the classroom should not be discussed with others. Parents should note that teachers will not discuss another person's child—either problems or progress.

*Parent / Teacher Communication:* In the fall and spring of each school year there will be an opportunity for parents to view their child's portfolio and discuss their child's progress. These conferences are scheduled at the parent's convenience and each parent is responsible for signing up for their time.

Some opportunities to serve are:

*Program Support:* Coordinate volunteers to organize field trips, guests in the classroom and organize informal social get-togethers with other SJP parents, family gatherings

*Outreach:* Plan and organize advertising, promotions, bulletin boards, community outreach.

*Fundraising:* Plan and organize fundraising programs and maintain current programs, help to sell Bucky Books, help with fund raising ideas and implementation.

*Property Improvement:* Responsible for fall and spring inside/outside clean-up days and general oversight and care of the Gardens.

*Room Parent:* Plan and organize class parties, special events and general

*Share a talent:* If you have a talent that you would like to share in the classroom or do behind the scenes please let the teacher or administrator know.

*Visitors:* Parents are encouraged to visit as often as their schedules allow. Young children, other than those enrolled, may not be left for a visit in the classroom due to state licensing regulations. Visits by others may be arranged with the administrators and teacher.

### **Parent Provided Supplies**

Parents are asked to provide a complete change of clothes, labeled, for their child in case of an accident. Parents are also asked to provide snacks for our daily snack time. A snack calendar will be sent home and one will be posted in the parent room. State guidelines require two “credible” snacks at each snack time. Below is a list of credible items. (hint: if the first ingredient in an item is sugar it is not credible; if the first ingredient is flour it must be enriched.) The preschool will provide a credible snack if one is not provided. Parents should provide snacks for children with particular allergies as an alternative to daily snack. Specific accommodations may be made with Administrator.

Juice (100%) Pretzels Yogurt Breads Snack mixes  
Juice Pops (100%) Milk Muffins Fruits Crackers

**\* Please notify us of any food allergies.**

### **Outdoor Play**

We believe that outdoor play is important for a child’s health and development. Within each teacher’s lesson plan will be activities for outdoors. Please dress your child appropriately. We will not go out if the temperature/wind chill is below zero or if the heat index is above 90 degrees.

### **Pets**

We periodically have dog visitors at our school. These and all other dogs and cats must have proof of vaccinations, including rabies, and must be tolerant of children. All pets shall be handled in a manner which protects the well-being of both children and pets. No animals will be allowed in the food prep areas. All pet visits must first be approved by the Preschool Administrator. Please notify the administrator with any concerns.

### **Parking**

Please **drive carefully** when entering and exiting our parking lot.

## What Our Day Might Look Like . .

9:00-9:10 (Noon - 12:10)	Arrival and Welcome, table activities.
9:10- 9:40 (12:10 - 12:40)	Large Group (Bible story, weather, songs, special person, calendar, etc.).
9:40—10:30 (12:40 - 1:30)	Centers (art, home living, science, etc.) small group time.
10:30—10:50 (1:30 - 1:50)	Snack and Quiet time (toileting, hand washing).
10:50—11:10 (1:50 - 2:10)	Music and/or Movement.
11:10—11:30 (2:10 - 2:30)	Large or small Group, Clean up and Dismissal.