

Saint JAMES
PRESCHOOL



Parent/Guardian Handbook

Revised 2/2016

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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 is available to view in the Parent Room or 2's Room. Licensing visit reports will be posted in the kitchen in the preschool building and inside the 2's Room.

Philosophy

The philosophy of St. James Preschool is to instill in each child a confident desire to learn more about the world in which we live and provide children with a balanced routine to develop emotional, intellectual, physical and social skills through natural play in a loving Christian environment. St. James Preschool does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, or age in admission, treatment, or participation in its programs, services and activities.

Administration

St. James Preschool is an outreach ministry of the St. James Lutheran Church, thus the ultimate decision making authority lies with the Congregational Council and Senior Pastor.

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 the teachers (a list of the line or authority is posted in the school office).

Admissions Policy

All children are eligible regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, or creed. 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 with the Administrator. There will also be several forms for you to fill out prior to the first day of attendance.

A child must be 2 ½ years old to enter the 2 ½'s class and 3 before Sept. 1 and potty trained to attend the 3's class. We are also a site for VASD Pre-K and students must be 4 by Sept. 1 to enroll. 2 ½'s class meets F from 8:00-11:00 and the 3's classes meet either T/W/TH, T/TH or W/F from 8:00-11:10. Pre-K meets T-F from 8:00-11:10. There may be additional enrichment opportunities available throughout the year. Classes run September through the beginning of June and generally follow the VASD school calendar.

Registration

Registration is an ongoing process. Class placement for the following school year for current and returning families takes place in January. New families can begin enrollment at the open house in February. If space is still available enrollment will continue until full. Placement will be priority based in this order; currently enrolled students, currently enrolled families, alumni families, members of St. James Lutheran Church, new families.

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

Note: VASD Pre-K registration is handled by the school district and information can be found at www.verona.k12.wi.us. Priority for VASD Pre-K is given to current and returning families.

Tuition Policy

The present fee schedule includes a \$65.00 non-refundable registration fee, paid annually, and a monthly tuition. 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. Tuition assistance is available to qualifying families.

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 \$30 returned check fee. EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) forms are available from the preschool office to make automatic payments. In person payments may be placed in the box located behind the classroom door. If you pay with cash or check there will be a \$10 fee applied to tuition each month. Fees/rates are subject to change.

Note: There is not a monthly fee for VASD Pre-K students. Private pay is available. There is a \$65.00 activities fee for enrolled students.

Arrival and Departure

St. James Preschool 3's and Pre-K are located at 425 S. Main Street next door to St. James Lutheran Church. Please use the parking lot in the rear of the church to safely bring your child into the building. Enter the building through the parent room door and document your child's arrival time in the sign-in/out book. The 2 ½'s class is located in the upper level of St. James Lutheran Church at 427 S. Main Street in the rear hallway, first door on the left. Parents will sign in and out at the classroom door. Please arrive promptly to drop off and pick up your child after class. Your child will be marked tardy if arriving after 8:15. A late pick-up fee of \$5 per 5 minutes will be charged for parents/guardians picking up more than 5 minutes late.

When arriving at school you should wipe your child's hands and face with the sanitizing wipes provided for you. Please also wipe the hands and faces of yourself and anyone else with you to help control germs and allergies. Sign your child in and then wait to enter the classroom until the teacher opens the classroom door. When entering the classroom encourage your child to hang their backpack and put their things where they belong. We work really hard on promoting self-help skills. Once your child is ready to enter the classroom say your goodbyes and let them enter to do their jobs.

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 at 608-845-6922x235 or the Administrator any time your child will not be attending or will be arriving late. We will attempt to verify their absence within 30 minutes of class beginning if no call is received.

Withdrawal/Discharge

Parent/Guardian Initiated: There is a one month adjustment period. If a parent/guardian 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 parent/guardians to cooperate with staff
- Failure of parent/guardian 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. Parent/Guardian's 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.

Program Description

Classrooms use a play-based philosophy with emphasis on one on one, small group and large group instruction that is age/ability appropriate. Centers will focus on colors, shapes, 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. Classes 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. Classes may be multi-age.

Programming Goals

Our program is based on the developmental needs of preschool children and the understanding of the way children learn. We create our own curriculum from research in best practice and experience in the classroom. 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.

As children are ready to begin writing we use the Handwriting Without Tears program.

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.

Early Learning Reading and Math Skills: These skills are introduced to facilitate cognitive development. Overall our goal is to teach literacy and math concepts through informal activities and small group instruction. We use the Handwriting Without Tears Get Set for School numbers and math program.

Health, Safety and Nutrition: These lessons are woven through the curriculum and reinforced as the teacher sees fit. Children are asked to wash hands after toileting, and before and after snacks.

Social and Emotional Well-Being: We currently are implementing The Pyramid Model which is an evidence based prevention/intervention framework that prevents challenging behaviors and promotes healthy social and emotional development by supporting positive relationships, creating engaging environments, providing concrete teaching strategies.

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.

Note: The VASD Pre-K class time will not include any religious education.

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.

Transportation/Field Trips

St. James Preschool does not provide transportation for students. In most cases field trips will occur only when it is a safe distance to walk to. On occasion the drop-off and/or pick-up site may change to allow for a field trip. Transportation will be provided by parents, or arranged for by parents. A signed permission slip from the parents will be required for each trip. Staff will bring proper emergency forms, a cell phone, and attendance record will be brought on all field trips.

The VASD Pre-K class is allowed to take field trips on buses provided by the school district.

Typical Day

Each day will bring new opportunities for children to learn and grow through exploration and education. Upon arriving children will be greeted by their teacher and have options for play. They will begin to develop routines in the classroom. There will be several opportunities for group meetings/circle time as well as small groups and independent or group play. Transition times will be guided to reduce waiting times for the next activity. Children will grow and learn throughout the year and require less prompting to what comes next. Each group of children will have their own dynamic and the staff will create routines around their abilities. See a sample class schedule below:

| | |
|-------------|---|
| 8:00-8:15 | Arrival & Welcome Activities |
| 8:20-8:35 | Hello Circle Time (Hello Song, Weather, Introducing Letter, etc.) |
| 8:40-9:00 | Small Group Work (Handwriting Without Tears, Literacy Work) |
| 9:05-9:15 | Hand washing, Songs, and Stories |
| 9:20-9:40 | Snack, Books, Puzzles or Journals |
| 9:45-10:25 | Centers (Choice Time & Projects) |
| 10:35-10:45 | Closing Circle (Sharing time & Good-bye Song) |
| 10:50-11:10 | Outside Play & Dismissal |

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/Guardian's request.

Crying is normal behavior and should be treated as so. If a child becomes distraught, fussy or will not 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 Administrator if crying persists. If a child is unable to be soothed, the parents may be notified.

Site wide expectations: Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Responsible

Problem Resolution

Through open communication, policies and procedures, we feel most problems can be remedied easily. If for any reason a parent/guardian 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/guardian to the Administrator.

If for any reason a parent/guardian 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 parent/guardian 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/guardian feels the issue constitutes a violation of licensing rules, the complainant may contact a State Licensing Agent at 266-2900.

A copy of Licensing Guidelines and a copy of Policies and Procedures will be available to parent/guardians at all times. These items are located in the Parent Room or in the 2's Room.

Child Abuse/Neglect Reporting

Staff are trained annually and 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/Guardian would first be contacted and it would be hoped that the teacher and Parent/Guardian would work together to find the best help for the child. Beyond this, formal steps would be: Parent/Guardian-teacher conference(s) to address the problem and develop strategies for resolving them. Possible request that the Parent/Guardian come in or provide an in-class helper if problematic behavior continues. Withdrawal may be necessary if staff and/or Parent/Guardians deem the program not to be serving the best needs of the child. See the withdrawal/discharge section of this handbook.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is of utmost importance at St. James Preschool. Issues relating to any child will only be discussed with Parent/Guardians and involved staff. Parent/Guardians 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 Parent/Guardians.

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 and notify Parents/Guardians of any and all communicable diseases that children have possibly been exposed to. A list of diseases that are considered "communicable diseases" will be posted in the parent room or office.

Since children who come to school are expected to participate fully in school activities, parents need to decide if their child is well enough to be in school. Please notify the teacher if your child has taken medication prior to school.

If a child becomes ill at school, the Parent/Guardian or emergency contact will be notified immediately, and expected to arrive within 30 minutes. Ill children will be kept in the office until Parent/Guardian arrives.

Here are some guidelines to help parents make the right decisions on when to send your kid to school...

Vomiting, severe stomach pain or diarrhea: Children with these symptoms need to stay home until they have been free of symptoms for at least 24 hours and can tolerate a normal diet.

Fever: Any student with a fever of 100 degrees or more should be kept at home and not return to school until the fever subsides without medication. Illnesses that cause elevated temperatures can make it difficult for a student to function in school and generally indicates an illness that could spread to classmates.

Infectious Diseases: Some diseases, such as strep throat, impetigo and pneumonia, require a doctor's exam and prescription for medication. Once the medication has been taken for 24 hours, and the child is feeling well enough to participate, he/she may return to school. If your child needs to take medication in school, please stop by the preschool office to drop off the medication and fill out a medication administration permission slip.

Food Allergy Policy

In response to the increasing rates of allergies among children, St. James Preschool is a peanut/tree nut free school.

For our school:

- We monitor for peanut/tree nut free snacks

If a child/children in your class has a food allergy (peanuts, tree nuts or others):

- We will work together to make snack time safe and enjoyable for all
- Check the labels of snacks before bring them in
- Check the ingredients and look for warning or safety notices

If your child has allergies:

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

For all students, parents and visitors to our school:

- We ask that you clean your hands and face with sanitizing wipes before entering the classroom. We also encourage you to clean the hands and faces of your accompanying children as well.
- Any lunches or snacks brought to school, to be eaten on or off site, should be prepared with these polices 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 and concerns and to ask questions. The perimeter of the grocery store is the best place to start looking for healthy snacks. If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to contact the Administrator.

Snack Policy

Each parent will provide a snack for their own child. We suggest packing it in a lunch bag with an ice pack if it needs to stay cold as we have limited fridge space. Snack needs to be healthy and consist of **at least 2 different food groups**. Please remember this is a time for a light snack

not a lunch. Water is always available for children but you may pack a drink for your child if they want. Juice boxes have to be 100% real fruit juice. Examples of snacks include: milk and applesauce, yogurt and carrots, raisins and string cheese, cheese and crackers, 100% apple juice and carrots and ranch. Please contact the administrator if you have any questions.

If your child does not have snack we will supply them with a snack. We will then send a note home notifying you and asking for payment for the snack that was given.

During snack time children will sit together at the snack table. They will have the opportunity to eat the snack provided by their Parent/Guardian. It is the child's option to take and/or eat snack.

Birthday Treats

Your child's teacher will set up a time with you to bring in treats for your child to share with their class. We will try to plan to celebrate on their birthday or as close to as possible. If your child has a summer birthday we will try to celebrate at their half birthday.

The students will eat their healthy snack before birthday treats are passed out. Treats can be homemade or store bought but needs to be peanut/tree nut free. No candy for birthday treats. We also prefer no cupcakes due to the large mess they cause. Some examples are: cookies, Oreos, rice krispie treats, fruit snacks, trail mix without nuts

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

Parent/Guardians 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 and vice versa. Someone from the church staff will be available, within 5 minutes, for emergency support.

Emergency Procedures

Weather: Cancellations due to weather will follow the lead of the Verona Area School District. If VASD delays school, it is most likely that Pre-K, 2 ½'s and 3's classes will be cancelled. If schools are released early we will expect preschool children to be picked up by that time also. Please call if you have questions. We will update our Facebook page and try to send out an email as soon as possible once we find out. Watching the news or going to the VASD website will provide school closing information as well.

Fire: 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.

Tornado: Tornado drills take place monthly April through October. If there is a tornado warning the children will be led to the basement. We ask that Parent/Guardians do not try to pick up their child during a tornado warning, but are encouraged to take cover immediately. If you are already on school property we suggest going over to the church basement or school basement.

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. Parent/Guardians 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 and is also in each teacher backpack.

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 Parent/Guardians
- If the child needs transport to the clinic or hospital, the Administrator will go with and stay with the child until the Parent/Guardians arrive. Children will be taken to UW Hospital unless otherwise determined by paramedics
- The teachers will tend to the rest of the class
- The Administrator will fill out an accident report form, whenever a child has received medical treatment, and send to the State Licensor within 48 hours.

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

Parent/Guardian and Teacher Communication

In the fall of each school year, there will be an opportunity for Parents/Guardians to have a parent-teacher conference and set goals for your child.

In May of each school year, there will be an opportunity for Parents/Guardians to view their child's portfolio and discuss their child's progress.

We use a Shutterfly Share Site to communicate the majority of what happens on a daily basis. This site is private and shared only with Parents/Guardians. Each week a newsletter is posted as well as photos of what the children have been doing in class. Volunteer opportunities, events, fundraising, and other helpful items are posted there as well. Let us know if you need information in a different format.

The teachers and Administrator will also use email to communicate with Parents/Guardians.

At the end of each week a folder is sent home containing your child's work and important information. Please make sure you check it when it comes home.

You can always reach the Administrator via phone, text or email on her cell phone.

Parent/Guardian 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/Guardians to take an active role in their child's school. Parent/Guardian involvement is not only welcomed but encouraged. Some are able to assist more than others, but it is hoped that all will give of their time and talents. We also will do multiple fundraisers throughout the school year and ask for your participation and support.

New this year we have a Parent Advisory Committee made up of two parents from each age group. They meet with the Administrator monthly to help make decisions, make suggestions and bring concerns to the staff. You can find more information about them on our Shutterfly page. They are a great resource to go to and you may also go to them if you have any problems or concerns you would like shared.

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/Guardians should note that teachers will not discuss another person's child – either problems or progress.

Some opportunities to serve are:

- Property Up-Keep/Improvement: Responsible for fall and spring inside/outside clean-up days and general oversight and care of the Gardens. Help with “maintenance” projects is also a need.
- 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. This can either be something you do for work or as a hobby.
- Playdoh Maker: Each month we have a parent make a new batch of playdoh for the school.

Parent/Guardian Provided Supplies

Parents/Guardians will be sent a supply list before the beginning of the school year. Items on that list may include, but are not limited to, art supplies, classroom consumables, change of clothes, backpack, folder, binder, etc. Parents/Guardians are also asked to provide daily snacks for their child.

During the school year, we sometimes have a need for additional supplies. We will notify you when we are in need of those and ask you help contribute to the stock. For special events or parties we post a list of things needed that parents can sign up to bring in. We also have a wish list of items we keep updated on our Shutterfly Share Site.

Parking

Please drive carefully when entering and exiting our parking lot.

Pets

Currently there is a fish tank with fish in the Pre-K room and the 3’s room. We do not have any other pets at this time and will notify you before any new pets would arrive. 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 Administrator. All dogs and cats must have proof of vaccinations, including rabies, and must be tolerant of children. Please notify the Administrator with any concerns.

Parent Statement of Acknowledgement

This is to acknowledge that I have received a copy of the St. James Preschool Parent/Guardian Handbook. I understand that it provides guidelines and a summary of information about the preschool’s policies and procedures. I also understand that it is my responsibility to read, understand, and become familiar with the policies and procedures that have been established. I further understand that the preschool reserves the right to modify, supplement, rescind, or revise any part of this book from time to time, with or without notice, as it deems necessary or appropriate.

Parent/Guardian’s Name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

***Please sign and return this form to school as soon as possible.**