

# St. Paul Preschool Parent Handbook



St. Paul UMC Preschool

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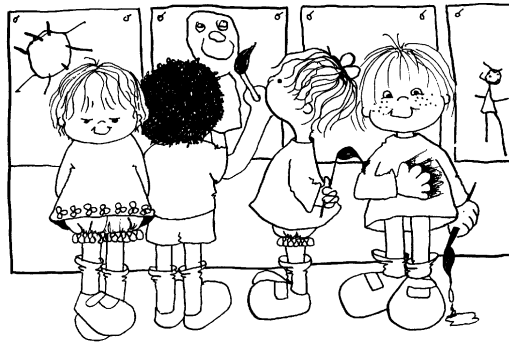
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[www.stpaul-umc.org/preschool](http://www.stpaul-umc.org/preschool)



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# Administration

## Our Philosophy

We believe that God has created each child as a unique and wondrous individual. We strive to consider the individual needs of every child and provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual growth.

We believe that God has entrusted these little ones into our care as parents and teachers. It is up to us to shape and guide them. This responsibility we lovingly embrace. Therefore, we strive to provide our children with all that they will need to lead successful and productive lives.

We believe that young children learn best through various forms of play. Our developmentally appropriate program provides children opportunities to use and build upon their skills and knowledge, and nurture the natural link between play, development and learning.

## Our Goals

- To show Christ's love in all things.
- To prepare our students for entrance into the elementary school setting.
- To provide a nurturing, secure, stable and consistent environment.
- To create an environment that will encourage the child's natural curiosity and desire for knowledge and exploration.
- To nurture each child's self-esteem.
- To provide parental support.

## Enrollment Information

Children are placed in classes according to age. The dates used are based upon the age requirements for kindergarten enrollment in the Prince William County Public Schools. Children must meet the program age requirement by September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Classes are filled on a first come first serve basis, with priority given to children and families currently or previously enrolled at St Paul UMC Preschool and members of St Paul UMC. If classes are filled, the child's name will be put on a waiting list to fill vacancies as they occur during the school year. Waiting lists are created after the registration period in February.

St Paul UMC Preschool is designed to meet the needs of the general populace. Our preschool is not equipped to meet the special needs of children who are extremely gifted or those with extreme learning or behavioral disabilities.

## Enrollment Forms

The following forms are required for enrollment and must be completed and returned before a child may attend St Paul UMC Preschool. Please note that Virginia State law requires the immunization and health evaluation forms that must be signed by your child's medical provider before we can allow any child to attend preschool. Forms are available online or at the Preschool Office.

- Student Information and Emergency Form (proof of age required).
- Health Form

- Medical Treatment Form
- Parent Resource Form
- Developmental History Form

For your protection, all records are open only to authorized preschool personnel and church employees that are authorized representatives of our licensing agencies, along with the child's parent or guardian.

## Emergency Information

For each student, the preschool must keep a 'Student Information and Emergency Form' on file. This form is included in your enrollment packet.

**IMPORTANT: It is the responsibility of parents to make sure that all contact numbers are updated as necessary throughout the school year.**

## Tuition

Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month. A \$35 late fee will be added after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month.

A \$25 fee will be assessed for a returned check; and future payments must be paid in cash, money order, or cashier's check.

St. Paul UMC Members receive a 10% tuition discount (Please note: for tuition discount purposes, "a member" is defined as one who has been a full member of St. Paul for 6 months or longer.) Families with more than 1 student enrolled receive a 10% tuition discount on each additional student. The discount is applied to the student(s) with the lowest tuition option.

## Preschool Hours

Toddler Program – 9:30 – 12:30 (Students bring a snack and a lunch)

Preschool and Pre K Program – 9:30 – 1:00 (Students bring a snack and a lunch)

## Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Promptness for arrival and dismissal is important. Children arriving late may miss important teacher directed learning time.

When arriving or leaving at a time other than the normal hours, children must be signed into and/or out of class in the office by a parent or adult listed on the child's 'Student Information Form'. Children will NOT be released to anyone other than the parents or those listed as an authorized person to pick up with a photo ID.

Please notify the preschool office if you will be late for pick-up. Without a phone call, a late fee of \$5 per 10 minutes will be applied after 1:10pm for 3 and 4 year olds and after 12:40pm for 2 year olds. Each late fee will be added onto the next month's tuition. If pick-up is late more than four times in one month, the late fee will be doubled.

## "Kiss and Ride" Lane

We encourage the use of the "Kiss and Ride" lane for the safety of all students. Parents of all Preschool (age 3) and Pre-K (age 4) students are asked to use the "Kiss and Ride" lane when dropping off and picking up your students. Parents of Toddlers (age 2) will bring their children to the classroom every day

and pick them up there in the afternoons **until the end of September** when they will join the “Kiss and Ride” lane as well.

The “Kiss and Ride” lane utilizes a numbering system to simplify the pickup process. Numbers will be included in the “Back to School” packet that is mailed before school starts. The larger number sign needs to be placed in the front passenger window of your car when you are in the pick up lane. The smaller number sign should be attached to the child’s backpack with a safety pin.

When dropping off at school, please follow the flow of traffic to the curb by the preschool door. Teachers will be there to assist your child out of and into the car and the classroom each morning and afternoon.

Please adhere to the following rules for everyone’s safety:

- All children **MUST** get in and out of the vehicle on the right/passenger side.
- Vehicles must **NOT** pass the car in front of them.
- Parents, please stay in your car and **WAIT** for a teacher to assist your child! If you would like to get out of your car, then please **PARK** in a space and walk your child inside!
- Please have your child’s lunchbox and any other items **INSIDE** their backpack.
- If you are not using the drop off lane, please do **NOT** park in the first row of spaces. This enables us to keep all traffic flowing in an orderly fashion.

Walkers can be handed off to the teachers in the “Kiss and Ride” lane as well.

We follow Virginia State laws (46.2-1095) regarding car seats for the children.

## Licensing and Insurance

St Paul UMC Preschool is licensed by the state of Virginia Department of Social Services as a religiously exempt preschool and is covered by public liability insurance.

## Preschool Board

As a ministry of St Paul UMC, our preschool is governed by the Preschool Board. The board consists of the Pastor, the Preschool Director, a member of the Trustees, and 7 church members.

Parents may bring an idea or share a concern with the board by first speaking with their child’s teacher or the preschool director. If necessary, you may contact the Vice President of the board and ask him/her to bring your ideas or concerns before the preschool board for their consideration.

Send any ideas or concerns to: [preschoolboard@stpaul-umc.org](mailto:preschoolboard@stpaul-umc.org).

## In the Classroom

### Our Curriculum

St Paul UMC Preschool’s curriculum is thematic in nature with a Christian component integrated into it. We present it with a multi-sensory, multi-level hands on approach in an age-appropriate manner.

We use several resources for curriculum development to include “Wonderfilled Weekdays” (Christian component), and “Zoophonics” (Language Arts for Pre-K).

### Play Works

Curiosity, a natural outflow of each child’s drive to learn, finds its expression through play. Play becomes the vehicle by which the young child finds joy, understands the world around him, creates knowledge about human relationships, and tries out new ideas. Problem solving, curiosity, self-esteem, cooperation, and endurance all come through the opportunity to play. Play has many types, all of which have value to the growing child.

*Child-initiated play:* This type of play is the foundation of all play. The staff provides the play materials, observes and participates only as needed.

*Directed play:* The teacher helps children play based on something the children have previously experienced. She/he uses props that allow the children to expand their knowledge based on experience.

*Guided play:* The teacher prompts play, but allows the children to play with little intervention. She/he knows that children learn best without intervention. Intervention by a staff member will come only if a child’s developmental needs call for help.

*Outdoor physical play:* A type of child-initiated play, takes on fresh meaning in the classroom we call the playground.

Each one of the types of play is productive and critical in shaping a child. To a child their play is their work. We encourage learning and growing opportunities by providing ample time for children to pursue their ideas, to do things their own way, and to imagine what it’s like to be someone else. Variety in toys, textures, and art projects encourages imagination, language, motor skills and FUN! This child-centered approach allows each child to control his or her own environment as much as possible and develop a healthy personality.

Teachers provide questions, information and materials based on each child’s uniqueness and ability. Early childhood professionals help children by extending their ideas, by involving other people to help them understand the world (this is where you as the parent greatly affect the program), and allowing children to see they have many options available to them. Cooperation, generosity and compassion develop as adults model these traits for young children. Opportunities to think occur as children are guided to find their own solutions and figure things out for themselves.

St. Paul Preschool encourages the natural link between play, development, and learning. These opportunities place play at the center of our curriculum. Play Works!

### Enrichment Classes

St. Paul UMC Preschool offers two weekly specials for the children: a music class taught by a licensed music teacher and a chapel session led by the Senior Pastor. Both classes reinforce the monthly themes and the Christian principles presented in class.

### Our Staff

The teachers at St Paul UMC Preschool are required to possess a minimum of a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate and at least one year of classroom experience.

The teacher's aides must be at least 18 years of age, be a high school graduate, and have a minimum of one year of experience working with young children.

Staff members are required to take 16 hours of continuing education annually and must be certified in CPR and First Aid.

Background checks are performed on all staff members prior to employment.

## Class Size

St Paul UMC Preschool provides small class sizes, with a maximum of 12 children per class, to provide optimal care and attention for every child.

We maintain a teacher to child ratio of **2 teachers** for every **12 children**; which exceeds the requirements for the State of Virginia.

NOTE: The toddler class maintains a ratio of **2 teachers** for every **10 children**.

## Lunches/Snacks

Parents will need to provide a nutritious morning snack as well as a lunch for their child. Many children are fussy about the things that they will eat, and it may take many attempts of introducing a particular food before your child will try it. Healthy eating habits are a learned behavior and parents are their child's best example of making healthy choices.

Please remember that we have no means to refrigerate or to heat foods.

**Soda, candy and gum should NEVER be brought to school.**

## Allergies

In addition to listing allergies on your child's Emergency Information Form, please be sure to inform your child's teacher and the preschool director if your child has any food allergies.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are very special days for young children and recognition is given to each child on his/her birthday. Parents may choose to provide a special snack in celebration of this important day. Please remember that some children have severe food allergies. To accommodate these allergies please discuss birthday plans with your child's teacher in advance.

## Change of Clothing

It is important that each child have a change of clothing at school. This extra clothing is not just for bathroom accidents. Children may get their clothing wet or dirty in a variety of ways; paint, playing in water, getting in mud, spills... Please provide a complete change of clothing to include shirt, pants, socks, and underpants for your child. Items should be labeled and placed in a labeled zip lock bag to be kept in your child's backpack. Clothing should be changed out seasonally.

**Please remember to label everything.**



## Hand Washing

Hand washing is the most important means of interrupting the transmission of infection. Children wash their hands before eating, after going to the bathroom, and when hands come into contact with bodily secretions (sneezing, coughing, etc.).

## Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is always welcome and appreciated. The preschool believes that parents are the child's primary source of influence. We have an open door policy for parents and consider it a privilege for you to share your time and talents with the children and staff. Participation offers the opportunity for you to follow through with experiences, songs, activities and games presented in your child's classroom. Parents are invited to participate, but we do ask you to schedule your visit with your child's teacher so that she can plan accordingly.

## Guidance

The preschool staff and board are dedicated to keeping the classrooms safe and happy places for all children.

We will use re-direction, positive re-enforcement, and simply correct the behavior whenever possible.

Children who are misbehaving to the extent that they are interrupting the class and are not responding to redirection or correction, will be asked to sit in a time-out for no longer than 3 to 4 minutes – determined by age. If needed, the child may go into the hallway with the director for redirection and to calm down. Parents will be notified of the behavior.

Continuously disruptive behavior will result in conferences involving the parent, teacher, and director. We will work with the parents to improve behavior. If a child's behavior is determined by the director and the preschool board to be inappropriate and corrective measures are not successful, the child's enrollment in the preschool may be terminated.

## Parent Communication

### Communication

Parents are informed of the activities at the preschool through teacher emails, our monthly newsletter, as well as through the preschool's "share-site" and occasional fliers. The newsletter will address pertinent topics, class activities, important dates and upcoming events. Please check your child's backpack daily for any information or artwork that is being sent home.

The "share-site" is a private website for St Paul UMC Preschool families only and is hosted by Shutterfly.

### Assessment Reports

Assessment reports will be sent home in early October, February and May for all children. The reports will assess the skills the child has developed and provide information on the skills that have been introduced. The assessments encourage exposure to a wide variety of skills, ideas and lessons.

## Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are held twice a year for our Pre K students. This conference is an opportunity for the teacher to get to know each of the parents, share goals for the year, and familiarize parents with the methods of observation and evaluation. It is also an opportunity for parents to ask questions, voice any expectations for the year, and provide pertinent information to the teacher.

Conferences are generally held in the fall and spring.

If at any other time during the year a conference is needed, one may be scheduled by either the parent or teacher.

## Policies

### Dress Code

Children are encouraged to wear play clothes and tennis shoes. Shoes without backs or open toed shoes should not be worn to school as they present a safety hazard for children. Daily preschool activities include active and messy forms of play. Children should feel comfortable enough to enjoy themselves without having to worry about their clothes.

**Please remember to put your child's name on all outdoor clothing.**

### Items from Home

We ask that children **not** bring items from home unless specifically requested by the teacher. The preschool is not responsible for any personal items brought from home.

### Toilet Training

Students in the Toddler program are not required to be potty trained. Potty training is a part of the toddler curriculum at St. Paul Preschool. We encourage that potty training be in progress at home as well.

Children ages 3 and older must be toilet trained. This means that the child can go to the toilet independently, to include pulling down his/her own clothing, wiping himself/herself and then pulling back up his/her clothing with minimal help.

### Illness

Children will need to remain at home if they display any of the following conditions:

- Fever
- Red or sore throat
- Severe runny nose or persistent cough
- Unusual rash
- Green discharge from eyes or nose
- Vomiting or diarrhea

- Any other communicable disease

**Children must remain at home until 24 hours have passed since the last evidence of symptoms and/or they are no longer contagious. The child should be fever-free for 24 hours prior to their return. A doctor's note may be required.**

If a child displays any of these symptoms during the school day, he/she will be placed in an isolated area until the parents or authorized person has arrived to take the child home. Children should be picked up as soon as possible.

No child who arrives at school noticeably ill will be admitted for that day. If your child is unable to participate in our daily activities, including outdoor play, he/she should remain at home. If your child will be absent for any reason, we would appreciate a phone call or e-mail.

It is critical that everyone adhere to these guidelines for the health of all of our students and staff.

## Medications

For the preschool staff to administer medication, parents must submit a 'Medical Consent Form'. Parents can obtain this form in the preschool office. Medication must be in the original labeled container as prescribed by the child's doctor.



## Security and Child Protection

Our staff is trained to recognize and report any signs of child abuse and/or neglect. All staff members are trained to abide by the child protection and safety policy as set forth by the State of Virginia. Each child will be within sight and sound of an adult at all times to ensure proper safety.

For the safety of the children and staff, the preschool door will be locked at 10am each day. Entrance to the building between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. may be obtained by ringing the buzzer next to the entrance.

In the event of an emergency, procedures are in place to ensure the children's safety. Copies of these procedures can be obtained in the preschool office.

## Inclement Weather

St Paul UMC Preschool follows the Prince William County Public School Inclement weather policy. In the event that Prince William County Public Schools have a delayed opening, the preschool will follow the below schedule.

1 hour delay – The preschool will open one hour late and close at 1:00 p.m.

2 hour delay – The preschool will open two hours late and close at 1:30 p.m.

If Prince William County Public Schools are closed due to inclement weather, the preschool will also be closed.

In the event that an early dismissal is necessary, staff members and/or the Director will contact parents by phone and email.

## Special Events

### Field Trips

Field trips and special programs will be planned throughout the school year. Details and requirements will be sent home well in advance of each event.

The preschool is not able to provide transportation for off-site field trips. During off-site field trips, children will be in the care of their parents or a designated guardian.

### Special Programs during the School Day

Throughout the school year, the following special events take place during the school day:

- October: Costume Parade
- November: Thanksgiving Feast
- December: Christmas Program to celebrate Jesus' Birthday

Parents are invited to attend these events.

### Graduation and Promotion

At the close of the school year, we will host a special day to recognize the accomplishments of all our students. This is a special day for our students and parents are encouraged to attend. Information regarding graduation will be sent home in early May. Please be sure to mark your calendar!

