

2011~2012

PARENT HANDBOOK

These policies were written to provide a clear description of what parents can expect of St. Mark's Preschool and what St. Mark's Preschool expects of parents.

1. PHILOSOPHY

At St. Mark's Preschool, we believe that each child should have the opportunity to develop emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually to his/her fullest potential. We encourage each child to experience the joys of learning and growing. Our purpose is to provide activities that meet the developmental needs of each child and provide a Christian atmosphere for group interaction. We believe each child is special and prayerfully respect the trust each family is placing in our hands.

St. Mark's Preschool strives to meet the individual needs of each child and provide valuable experiences on his/her road to learning and growing. Our curriculum encourages developmental growth through planned activities and information presented. We share our love and concern as we interact with each child every day. We share our faith as we reach out with love and acceptance, impart attitudes and values, celebrate the Christian holidays, and offer thanksgiving to God through prayer.

2. CURRICULUM GOALS

The curriculum is designed to:

- Provide opportunities that encourage physical, emotional, social and intellectual growth.
- Enhance fine motor and gross motor skills, whether outside on the playground or inside each classroom.
- Support the development of social skills such as sharing, cooperation, generosity and empathy.
- Foster positive self-esteem, a sense of self-worth and his/her own unique gifts.

The daily schedules provide for a balance between child-directed and teacher-directed activities, quiet and active time, and inside and outside play.

Children have daily opportunities to read books, use a variety of art media, explore math and science materials, music experience, and work alone or together with friends.

Through unit study, each child will be exposed to new information and ideas and will be given opportunities to develop thinking and reasoning skills appropriate to his/her age and developmental level. There will be a balance of enrichment/cognitive knowledge material and readiness skill material when

developmentally appropriate. Every child will be praised for his/her efforts and accomplishments.

In accordance with state law, we present a personal safety curriculum to all children beginning in their three year old year. "Keeping Kids Safe" takes a holistic approach to the safety of children. The curriculum is composed of the following units: Self Esteem, Family and Friends, Feelings, Problem Solving, Personal Safety (general) and Personal Safety (4-5 year olds), and Safety Around Me.

We recognize the importance of adults as models of acceptable and loving behavior. We seek ways to teach values for Christian living: honesty, obedience, love, forgiveness, sharing and responsibility. In keeping with this, all children beginning in their three year old year attend chapel weekly. Here they actively engage in songs of worship, prayer, and Bible stories.

3. ENROLLMENT

St. Mark's enrollment is open to children of any race, national origin, sex or religion who are able to participate in a developmentally age appropriate curriculum. All applications are subject to evaluation according to the specific needs of the child and the ability of St. Mark's Preschool to accommodate those needs through its program, current staff and facilities. St. Mark's Preschool reserves the right to request withdrawal of any child who requires such attention or supervision that the entire class is unfavorably affected. The Preschool Teacher, the Preschool Director, and the Preschool Board will make this decision through a process of evaluation and consultation

4. HOURS OF OPERATION AND ATTENDANCE

St. Mark's hours are 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Monday – Friday. Children may begin coming to the classroom at 8:25 a.m. Extended care is available for children 30 months and older: Early Birds from 8:00 a.m. until 8:25 a.m. and Stay & Play from 12:30 p.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Each school day, every child is to be signed-in upon arrival and signed-out upon dismissal by their parent or guardian. Upon arrival to your child's classroom each morning, we ask that you leave your child relatively quickly since transition and separation can be difficult. Please make every attempt to have your child arrive on time. Children not currently registered in our program may not be left unattended to visit for the day.

5. IMMUNIZATIONS

Immunizations must be up-to-date and filed in accordance with state guidelines. Children under 30 months of age, new to the program, shall have proof of a physical examination within 3 months prior to admission, signed or stamped by a physician or health care provider.

6. DISCIPLINE

We believe that discipline and guidance should be consistent and based on an understanding of individual needs and development. A positive guidance technique promotes self-discipline and acceptable behavior. These techniques will include but are not limited to:

- recognizing and encouraging appropriate behaviors
- developing reasonable and clear rules and expectations in each group
- explaining the consequences of inappropriate behaviors
- redirecting children into positive behaviors
- enforcing limits and rules consistently and fairly
- helping children to identify and express feelings in acceptable ways

7. ILLNESS

One of the most serious challenges facing group situations for young children is preventing illness. We will strive to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness. Proper hand washing procedures will be followed and taught to the children. The eating surfaces and toileting and diaper areas will be sanitized regularly.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of disease is to have strictly enforced standards regarding the exclusion of ill children. We need your help for this. Do not bring ill children to school and if your child becomes ill at school, please pick the child up immediately. If a child shows any of the following symptoms, he cannot attend school: earache, digestive disturbance including diarrhea, cold symptoms less than 3 days old, fever within the past 24 hours, or any symptom of a contagious illness. Impetigo and diagnosed strep shall be treated appropriately for 24 hours prior to readmission of the child to the center. Children diagnosed with scabies or lice shall have proof of treatment and be free of nits prior to readmission. Do not send a child to school unless he/she is well enough to play outside. A parental/custodial authorization form must be completed if medication is to be administered by staff.

8. TUITION AND FEES

Tuition will be due the 1st of each month. Preschool tuition is prorated into 10 equal payments. Tuition is as follows: 1 day per week - \$75 monthly, 2 days per week - \$160 monthly, 3 days per week - \$210 monthly, 5 days per week - \$335 monthly. A late fee of \$5.00 will be charged after the 15th of each month. There are no discounts for days missed due to illness, absences, vacation, or school being closed for holidays or emergencies. Tuition is due and payable as long as a child holds a place in the program. Since expenses continue, two weeks notice of withdrawal is required. Tuition must be turned in to the

mailbox outside the director's office. Please do not give tuition payments to the teachers.

Extended care programs are available for children 30 months of age and older for additional fees. Early Bird fee is \$1.00 per day and Stay and Play fee is \$6.00 per day. All children 30 months of age and older will be placed in Stay & Play if they have not been picked up by 12:30 p.m. and will be charged the regular Stay and Play fee. If left after 2:00 p.m. an additional charge of \$1.00 per minute will incur. A \$10 fee will incur for late pick up of children who do not qualify for Stay & Play.

9. LUNCH AND SNACKS

Snack will be provided. Lunches (finger foods) are to be sent from home consisting of 1 serving milk, 2 servings fruits/vegetables, 1 serving grains/bread, and 1 serving meat/meat alternative. Do not send carbonated drinks, glass containers or red juice.

10. CLOTHING

Dress your child in clothing that is durable and comfortable. Many of your child's favorite activities may tend to be a little messy, like finger painting and digging in the dirt. Children should wear closed shoes like tennis shoes. Sandals, cowboy boots, and Sunday shoes are unsafe on the climbing equipment and cannot be permitted. We will be playing outside unless the weather is bad (rain or temp. below 40), so a jacket, coat, gloves or hat may occasionally be required. Each child also needs a complete change of clothing (including socks and shoes).

All children who are not yet potty trained are to wear diapers and have additional diapers and wipes for changing. If your child comes to preschool in a pull-up, please have diapers available for changing needs.

11. BRINGING ITEMS FROM HOME

Children frequently want to share with their class nature items and treasures from home. Such items are especially welcomed if they support the topic being studied. It is always a good idea to check with your child's teacher first before bringing objects to school. Specific share days will be scheduled by the teacher.

We strongly discourage your child from bringing toys from home, although we do occasionally allow items of comfort, such as a soft cuddly stuff animal, to help with separation. We know that bringing toys from home makes it difficult for any child to share and could get lost or broken. We will not be responsible if these items are lost or damaged. St Mark's does not allow toys of violence like guns, swords or violent action figures. Children will not be allowed to bring cosmetics, candy, gum or money to school.

12. BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday refreshments are welcome but need to be pre-arranged with the teacher. Cookies are preferred over cupcakes. Balloons are prohibited.

13. LABELING

Please label all items brought to preschool including clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes, share toys, etc.

14. PARTICIPATION

Your participation in and observation of our program is welcome. However, we ask that you pre-arrange a visit or consultation with the teacher.

15. RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children will be released only to a parent or person authorized by the parents (as listed on the registration form), unless the teacher or director is notified in writing or by a phone call by the child's parent or authorized person. The St. Mark's Preschool staff will not release any child(ren) to anyone whose behavior may place the child(ren) in immediate risk. If this situation occurs, the St. Mark's Preschools staff will take one or more of the following actions as deemed necessary:

- An authorized person (as listed on the registration form) will be called to come for the child(ren).
- The child(ren) at risk will be supervised by a staff member until another authorized person comes for the child(ren).
- The Murfreesboro Police Department may be notified of the situation and assistance may be requested.

All children must be transported to and from preschool in appropriate child restraints according to the Tennessee Child Passenger Safety Law:

- Any child under 20 lbs, regardless of his/her age, **MUST** be in a rear facing restraint seat, in the back seat when available.
- Any child ages 1-3 weighing more than 20 lbs should be in a forward facing child restraint seat in the back seat when available.
- Any child 4-8 years old, measuring less than 5 feet in height, **MUST** be in a belt positioning booster seat, in the back seat when available.

16. COMMUNICATIONS

St. Mark's offers numerous methods of communication. Prior to the beginning of the school year a Visiting and Orientation Day is offered. There is an Open House after the school year begins. The bulletin board in the entrance foyer will have basic school wide information. There is also a bulletin board, titled PIE, for parent information exchange. Each month the

Director will provide a newsletter, which will include information pertaining to the month. The classroom teacher will hand out monthly calendars and lessons plans, as well as offer conferences throughout the school year. There may be additional conferences upon request. To speak with the Director or to leave a message with a teacher, please call the office. Phone messages will be checked throughout the day.

17. WEATHER CLOSINGS

For weather related closings, we follow the decision of the Murfreesboro City School System (not Rutherford County System). If the city opens 1 hour late, the preschool will open 1 hour late also. However, if the city opens 2 hours late, the preschool will be closed. Families are encouraged to pick their children up early on days when there are severe weather warnings issued.

18. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire and/or tornado drills will be held monthly to acquaint your child with evacuation procedures. If it is ever necessary to completely evacuate the premises of St. Mark's UMC, the children will be taken to Belle Aire Baptist Church. Parents or emergency persons listed on the enrollment form will be contacted. If necessary, your physician will be notified and 911 emergency personnel will be called.

19. FIELD TRIPS

A variety of educational and recreational field trips are taken during the year. Some field trips may require an additional fee. Parents will be notified regarding field trips by posted notice. Parents are encouraged to participate in the field trip with their children. You must sign a permission form or your child will not be allowed to participate. All children who participate in the field trip must ride with a parent volunteer. All children will be required to ride in a child restraint according to the Tennessee Child Passenger Safety Law.

For additional information, contact Sherrie Gilliam, preschool director, at 615-895-1803.