

## **Welcome!**

Our school provides a Christian environment open to all children in the community. We promote the values of love, friendship, and service while fostering intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth. We are licensed by the state of Pennsylvania, Department of Human Services, and adhere to all state licensing requirements. A copy of licensing regulations is on file in the school office. This parent handbook has been designed to provide the information necessary for your child's successful participation in our school programs.

## **What Happens At School?**

At St. Paul's our curriculum is based on the belief that social, physical, emotional and cognitive growth are interrelated and of equal value. It is designed to encourage and guide children in the development of individual responsibility and intellectual growth. We believe that children can reach their fullest potential if they are able to develop a positive self-image. To emphasize this goal, our preschool offers an environment where they can learn to cooperate, share and form friendships with peers.

Our curriculum changes as the year progresses but includes:

- Events of the month (cultural/historical events; holidays)
- Personal life experiences (feelings; sharing...)
- Theme oriented activities (animals; weather; professions...)
- Development of large and fine motor skills (balancing; rhythmic movement; arts and crafts)
- Math and critical thinking skills (sorting; classifying; shapes; quantities...)
- The Arts (music; painting; drawing)

Children learn and experience these subjects through:

- Games; play; role playing
- Special programs; visitors
- Literature; songs; poems
- Creating; building
- Cooking; planting; experimenting

***This curriculum is followed by all ages within our school. The intensity and detail of the topics covered will grow with your child. This program was designed to have the most significant impact on children's future success both in and out of the classroom.***

Daily experiences may include but are not limited to: morning greeting/circle time, free play, arts & crafts, gross motor time outside or in our large Fellowship Hall, snacks, and age-appropriate, educational enrichment opportunities. Group supervision is done in accordance with the ratio guidelines set forth by the Department of Human Services.

## **About Us**

### ***Hours of Operation***

St. Paul's Nursery School program hours are as follows:

Early Birds: 8:00AM to 9:00AM

Morning Class: 9:00AM to 11:30AM Afternoon Class: 12:30PM to 3:00PM

Afternoon Adventures: 11:30AM – 2:00PM (unless otherwise noted)

Lunch Bunch/Extended Care: 11:30AM – 5:00PM

### ***Calendar***

Please refer to the school calendar for holidays and other school closings as well as events throughout the year. St. Paul's Nursery School loosely follows the calendar set forth by Abington School District. We do not close for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in the fall.

### ***Admission & Enrollment***

All admission and enrollment forms must be completed and enrollment and initial tuition fees paid prior to your child's first day of attendance.

An enrollment/registration fee is due at the time of enrollment. This fee is non-refundable.

Children are admitted without regard to race culture, sex, religion, national origin, or disability. We do not discriminate on the basis of special needs as long as a safe, supportive environment can be provided.

If your child has an identified special need, families are asked to supply copies of the most recent iep/ifsp available as well as contact information for support staff. A meeting will be arranged, prior to the start of school, to coordinate care.

### ***Inclusion***

St. Paul's Nursery School believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on his/her individual capabilities and needs.

### ***Non-Discrimination***

At St. Paul's Nursery School equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

### ***Confidentiality***

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

### ***Staff Qualifications***

Our teachers and assistants are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications. Caregivers participate in ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by St. Paul's Nursery School.

### ***Communication***

**Bulletin Boards.** Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, announcements, etc.

**Newsletters.** Monthly newsletters provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters are emailed to parents monthly.

**Facebook.** Photos and school highlights are posted at the **St. Paul's Lutheran Nursery School Glenside** Facebook page. Children are never identified in postings.

**Email.** We require parents to provide an email address so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

**Family Visits.** Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip. Prior notification is required for the safety and protection of our children.

**Conferences.** Family & teacher conferences occur once a year in our three and four year old classes. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

## **Curricula & Learning**

### ***Learning Environment***

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others.

Copies of daily schedules are posted in each classroom.

### ***Outings & Field Trips***

Weather permitting; we conduct supervised walking trips around the neighborhood. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, ALL children must be in safety seats and transported by their parents. Please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must.

### ***Celebrations***

Our curriculum affords an introduction to a variety of cultures and traditions. Individual teachers will keep parents aware of classroom festivities. School-wide events, with parent invitations, include our Halloween parade and sing-along and our holiday program in December.

### ***Toilet Training***

Toilet training, as it pertains to nursery school, means that children are able to indicate their need to use the bathroom to a teacher in a timely fashion. All children must keep a change of clothes at school in case of an accident. The staff will change those who are in diapers. If necessary, children who use the toilet will be supervised in changing themselves. Parents will be called to help out when needed.

Children entering our Twos classes do not have to be toilet trained to attend nursery school. Parents must supply diapers until the child is using the toilet regularly. Please keep your child's teachers posted when you begin potty training, so they may support your efforts at school. Also, please be sure your child is wearing a fresh diaper when arriving in the morning.

We expect that most children entering our Threes will already be toilet trained. Children enrolled in the PM 3s class need to be fully trained in order to attend. *We ask that parents complete their child's training during the fall semester.* Beginning in January, parents of threes will be called in as needed to assist their children until they are using the toilet independently. Our staff is not authorized to wipe children. All children entering our Fours and Pre-K classes are required to be toilet trained, unless there is a valid medical reason. Parents must submit a doctor's note, prior to the start of the school year.

## **Guidance**

### ***General Procedure***

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions. We appreciate the difference between playful intent and anger and will not tolerate any actions or threats done in anger. Parents will be contacted to address this behavior.

## ***Challenging Behavior***

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self control and kindness. When a child becomes physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children.

Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child.

## ***Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families***

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

## **Tuition and Fees**

### ***Payment***

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*. Statements will be sent home monthly. Payment should be placed in the "Tuition Box" in the upstairs hallway. Please do not leave tuition with teachers or in your child's schoolbag.

### ***Late Pick-up Fees***

Late pick-up is not a normal program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. Late fees will be assessed beginning 5 minutes after scheduled pick up time.

### ***Activity Fee***

In lieu of fundraising throughout the year, we collect an annual activity fee each September. This fee helps fund our special events, new teaching materials and keeps our play equipment current.

### ***Late Payment Charges***

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact.

If payment is not received on the day that it is due, a late fee will be added. Your child may be discharged from the program if your account falls two months behind.

### ***Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges***

All returned checks will be charged a fee. Two or more returned checks will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

## **Attendance & Withdrawal**

### ***Absence***

If your child is going to be absent or late, please email or call us at 215-884-8995 by 8:45AM if possible. Or contact your child's teacher directly.

## *Withdrawals*

A written notice, one month in advance, is required by the center when a child is being withdrawn. Failure to notify will result in additional fees.

St. Paul's Nursery School reserves the right to request withdrawal of a child if he/she is not adjusting to school, if the child is in need of specialized care, or if other children are being harmed. Parents will be advised of these concerns prior to a child's removal from the program.

## *Closing Due to Extreme Weather*

**In the event of inclement weather, Facebook is the fastest, easiest way to get updates about school closing. Follow us at St. Paul's Lutheran Nursery School, Glenside.** Information will also be available on KYW 1060 Radio. Our school closing number is 3129. Information should be available by 7:00 AM. We try to follow decisions made by Abington school district regarding school closings. If Abington schools are closed, nursery school will also be closed. Traditionally we will open on time if Abington schools have a late arrival. If your child is at nursery school when snow begins, tune in to KYW, or call us to check on possible early dismissal arrangements.

Please join your class REMIND group to receive real time notifications directly from your child's teacher.

***In the event that we make a decision that differs from Abington school district, we will post updates on Facebook and institute a phone chain. Please make sure the numbers provided to school are current!***

Please use your own judgment with regard to driving in inclement weather. If you are not comfortable driving ... don't! Please do not worry about your child missing school. Your well-being is more important.

Excessive snow days will be rescheduled upon decision by the nursery school board. These additional days will be held during Spring Break, or if necessary at the end of the school year.

## **Drop-off and Pick-up**

### *General Procedure*

Our classes begin promptly at 9:00AM. **Parents will deliver children directly to their child's teacher at their assigned entrance. Information regarding specific entry points will come directly from your child's teacher. Please make every effort to bring your child to school on time. Late arrivals will be met at the education wing entrance by the director and then delivered to their individual classrooms.**

**The school's main entrance doors are unlocked for approximately twenty minutes at dismissal time (11:20-11:40 AM). Children will be dismissed from their classrooms.**

When the doors are locked, admittance can be gained by pressing the door buzzer, on the upper left hand side of the doorframe. Please make sure the doors close completely behind you when you exit.

### *Authorized & Unauthorized Pick-up*

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

### *Right to Refuse Child Release*

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

## **Personal Belongings**

### ***What to Bring***

Your child will need to bring a large school bag every day, preferably tote-bag style, to take his/her projects and important papers to and from school.

### ***Clothing***

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including: painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

All children must keep a complete change of seasonal clothing in the classroom in case of spills, illness, or "accidents." Also, be sure to dress your child appropriately for the weather, since we have outdoor play whenever possible. For safety reasons, children must only wear sturdy, closed-toe rubber-soled shoes to school.

**"CROC" type shoes are not permitted.**

**REMEMBER TO LABEL CLOTHING, SCHOOL BAGS, LUNCH BOXES,  
AND ALL PERSONAL ITEMS WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.**

### ***Lost & Found***

You can look for lost items and bring found items to the Lost-and-found Box located on the tuition box shelf. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

### ***Toys from Home***

TOY WEAPONS MAY NEVER BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL. Other toys should remain at home unless your child's teacher decides otherwise.

## **Nutrition**

### ***Foods Brought from Home***

Food brought from home is permitted under the following conditions:

- Perishable food to be shared with other children must be store-bought and in its original package.
- Baked goods may be made at home if they are fully cooked, do not require refrigeration and were made with freshly purchased ingredients. A list of ingredients may be required.
- Lunches should be labeled with the child's name.
- Potentially hazardous foods brought for lunch (ie dairy items) will need to be transported with an ice pack in the lunch box.
- Leftover food will be discarded except for foods that do not require refrigeration and/or come in a commercially-wrapped package that was never opened.

Parents take turns bringing in the morning snack for their child's class. You will be given a monthly calendar with your child's snack days noted. The teacher will alert everyone to allergies/dietary restrictions as well as the amount of snack needed for each particular classroom. We do ask that snacks be nutritious. Snack days are special, as your child will also be the line leader for the day!

Our snack rules are simple:

- Dessert snacks are for special occasions.
- Soda and candy are not permitted
- Popcorn, nuts and grapes are not permitted in the two's classrooms

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT SNACK IS SERVED AROUND 10AM! PLEASE REFRAIN FROM SENDING IN FOODS THAT YOU WOULD NOT NORMALLY SERVE YOUR CHILD AS A MORNING SNACK.**

### *Food Allergies*

In order to insure the safety of ALL of our students, we ask that parents refrain from sending in any products containing peanuts.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician. Please contact the office for the appropriate paper work.

## **Health**

### *Immunizations*

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services and the American Academy of Pediatrics, [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org). Unimmunized or under-immunized children will be removed from the program until immunization requirements have been met. St. Paul's Nursery School does not allow exceptions to this policy.

### *Physicals*

Routine physicals are required, annually, according to the current recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics. A copy of your child's physical should be received before your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment is given to the program.

### *Illness*

Children need to be in good health in order to fully participate in their school day. Staff will request a child be sent home if they are unable to participate to their typical level of activity. (For example: if a child is typically very active and refuses to participate we will reach out to parents, or if a child falls asleep in class).

In order to reduce the spread of illness (to both students and teachers), please keep your child home with the following:

- Fever of 100 degrees F or above...child may return to school after being fever free, without medication, for 24 hours.
- Vomiting and diarrhea...child may return to school when there has been no vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours.
- Runny nose (not clear)...child may return when symptoms are gone.

Please report communicable diseases to your child's teacher AND to the office. We will make other parents aware of possible exposures. The following list indicates the guidelines for common communicable diseases:

- Pink Eye (Acute Contagious Conjunctivitis) - Children may return to school after 24 hours of successful antibiotic therapy.
- Rashes or skin conditions such as Impetigo or cold sores - any unusual rashes should be examined by a doctor. A doctor's note may be required for re-admittance.
- Lice (Pediculosis) - Child may return to school 24 hours after specified shampoo treatment has been given and all signs of eggs are gone. Child's head may be checked by a staff member before returning to classroom.
- Other Symptoms - Children will be excluded from the program if the director or Health Department determines it is inappropriate for the child to be at school.

### ***County Health Recommendations:***

In the event that Montgomery County Office of Public Health or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend specific efforts to mitigate the transmission of any disease, St. Paul's will mandate these recommendations. For example, if mask wearing to prevent spread of illness is recommended by these entities, St. Paul's will require masking of all staff and students until these government offices no longer recommend doing so. Any illness can be serious but if there is a highly contagious virus in our area we must consider the impact on our ability to provide care for your children. If multiple staff members become ill simultaneously then we will be forced to close. In an effort to avoid this we will follow all guidance from the County Office of Public Health as well as the CDC.

### ***Medications***

Our staff will not administer any medications.

### **Safety**

#### ***Extreme Weather and Outdoor Play***

All children use our outdoor playground for a twenty-minute period each day, weather permitting. For days that are rainy, or too uncomfortable to be outdoors, we have riding toys and other play equipment in Fellowship Hall.

#### ***Injuries***

Safety is a major concern in child care and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations.

In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

#### ***Biting***

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter to learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notification will be made to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

#### ***Respectful Behavior***

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

#### ***Smoking***

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form, including vaping and e-cigarettes, is prohibited on the center's premises.

#### ***Prohibited Substances/Weapons***

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances, unauthorized potentially toxic substances or weapons is prohibited.



Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Parents are asked to refrain from bringing any type of weapon onto St. Paul's campus.

### *Child Custody*

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

### *Suspected Child Abuse*

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

## **Emergencies**

### *Fire Safety*

Our center is fully equipped with fire alarms, extinguishers, smoke detectors and a county emergency link system.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

### *Emergency Transportation*

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. Parents will be notified using information they provide at the start of each school year. **It is critical that parents keep their child's forms updated with any changes that occur throughout the year, especially daytime phone numbers and cell phone numbers.** A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

**Infectious Agent Pandemic Protocol** (implemented in the event of a pandemic and under the advice of the County Office of Public Health as well as the CDC)

- Employees who are sick will STAY HOME.
- Sick employees must remain home until they are symptom free for the recommended duration.
- Children who are sick (fever, cold symptoms, cough, symptoms of pandemic illness) must STAY HOME.
- Sick children will remain at home until they are symptom free for the recommended duration.
- Sick children or staff will be moved to the building's designated holding area, provided with a mask and the director should be notified. A staff member will be assigned to wait with the child until parents arrive.
- Quarantined children will be supervised at all times.
- **ALL PARENTS MUST AGREE TO HAVE SICK CHILDREN PICKED UP NO MORE THAN 30 MINUTES AFTER BEING CONTACTED. NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- Entry/Access points will be limited and monitored to prevent inadvertent infectious entry.
- Entry protocol signs will be posted at each entry point. Parents will receive these protocols prior to their implementation.
- All staff and children MUST use hand sanitizer immediately upon entering the building.

- All children will be greeted at entry/access points by designated staff to make sure each child receives and uses hand sanitizer.
- All children will be greeted at entry/access points by designated staff to triage sick children and to check temperatures.
- Any child, employee or visitor found upon arrival with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher will be refused entry and sent home. In the event of a child exiting a bus, they will immediately be quarantined and their parents will be notified.
- All children and staff must have current emergency contact information on file.
- Parents will be greeted at the door by designated staff and NOT permitted to travel within the building. If parents “must” enter the building, even for a brief period, they must use hand sanitizer and pass all screening criteria. All parents must wear a mask while in the building and drop off/pick up areas.
- All permitted visitors/outside agencies must be greeted by designated staff, use hand sanitizer and be triaged for sickness/fever as noted above. All visitors must wear a mask while in the building.
- Any person found in school to be sick will immediately be provided a mask and moved to the designated holding area to be quarantined and the director should be notified.
- All routine handwashing of staff and children at appropriate times must be maintained.
- Staff and children will be routinely reminded to not touch their face. Signs will be posted in each room and in bathrooms as a reminder.
- Staff and children will be routinely reminded to cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue. Signs will be posted in each room as a reminder.
- All used tissues must be disposed of immediately and the affected person will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer.
- Strict disinfection policies will be maintained as well as increased disinfection of high contact areas. Schedules for disinfecting will be issued to the appropriate parties.
- Adequate levels of personal protective equipment as well as hand sanitizer will be maintained.
- Ensure that immunizations are up to date for all staff and children, including for pandemic illness if available.
- These protocols will be distributed to all staff and parents via facility handbooks. Documentation of receipt of protocols, by each family, will be kept on file in the office.

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# Family Handbook Acknowledgement

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the workbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

The handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are completed.

Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to getting to know you and your family.

I have received the **St. Paul's Nursery School Family Handbook**. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask school personnel any questions I may have regarding any policy, procedure or information contained in the **St. Paul's Nursery School Family Handbook**.

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Child's Name

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Date

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Recipient's Name