



Handbook

updated fall 2021

The Reverend Eric Moulton, *Rector*

Beth McLean, M. Ed., *Preschool Director*

1219 Forest Hills Drive, Wilmington, NC 28403

preschool@stjohnsepiscopalchurch.org

(910) 795-0595

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Mission Statement

As an integral part of the ministry of St. John's Episcopal Church, the preschool promotes physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual growth. The development of young children in our community occurs in a loving and creative atmosphere that reflects our Christian values.

Philosophy

St. John's Preschool realizes that the first five years of a child's life are important stages of spiritual, social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. We offer a learning environment with low teacher-student ratios that builds on each child's strengths.

The full ministry of St. John's Episcopal Church is available to all preschool families.

Welcome!

Registration

Children must be on schedule with immunizations against childhood diseases. Each child must have on file with the school a copy of his or her immunization record.

Children will be enrolled based on their age as of August 31st for the relevant year of admission. If the classes have specific needs, class assignment of students is at the discretion of the Director.

Priority registration is for current students and their siblings and members of St. John's Church. After priority registration is completed, the remaining spaces will be offered to children according to the date in which they were placed on the waiting list.

Tuition

Yearly tuition is divided into 9 payments, with the first payment due May 1st and the remaining payments due August – March.

2 Days per Week	9 payments of \$250.00
3 Days per Week	9 payments of \$270.00
5 Days per Week	9 payments of \$295.00

Tuition fees are due by the **5th of each month**. All tuition payments are paid online.

St. John's Preschool is a non-profit ministry and relies on tuition to cover our operating budget. Tuition is not based on attendance. We do not make deductions for absences, holidays, vacations, or school closures of any kind. Our budget is based on a one-year commitment from our families. Registration fees, supply fees, and tuition are non-refundable.

Please let the Preschool Director know if you are experiencing an unusual financial situation. We will work with families to make payment arrangements.

Withdrawal Policy

Notice of withdrawal from the program should be given to the director 30 days in advance.

Preschool Hours

Regular Preschool Hours are **8:30 am – 12:30. (doors open at 8:20)**

A late fee of \$5.00 will be assessed if your child is not picked up by 12:35 pm. An additional \$5.00 late fee will be assessed if your child is not picked up by 12:45.

Arrival and Dismissal Procedures

Doors will open at 8:20 for drop-off and pick-up begins at 12:20. Please follow drop-off and pick-up procedures for the current year.

If your child is to be picked up by someone other than a parent, we must receive written or verbal permission unless the designated person is listed an *additional authorized pickup* in the ProCare app. Photo identification will be checked.

Reminders

- Help us by not using your cell phone while driving in the parking lot.
- Help us by scheduling a conference or phone call if you need to speak with your child's teacher about an issue at length. During drop off and pick up each teacher's attention needs to be focused on the children.

Communication

Parent-Teacher communication is essential. At any time during the year, conferences may be scheduled by the teacher or at a parent's request. Please refrain from discussing any issues at length with the teachers during the preschool hours or at drop off and pick up. Teachers may be reached via email or phone.

Inclement Weather Policy

St. John's Preschool follows announcements for New Hanover County Public Schools. If:

- New Hanover County Public Schools CLOSE due to inclement weather, we will be CLOSED.
- New Hanover County Public Schools have a delayed opening, we will open on the same delayed schedule. For example, If NHCS has a 2 hour delay – SJP will open at 10:30. Pick up time will remain the same.

We do not schedule make up days for school closings.

Snacks and Lunches

Children need to bring a snack, lunch, and water bottle to preschool each day. The younger classes may have parents sign up for a “snack week” instead of having each child bring a snack from home each day.

Please make sure to clean and sanitize your child’s lunch box and water bottle each day.

Birthdays

We enjoy sharing and celebrating the most precious day of your child’s year. Your child’s teachers will include activities that make him/her feel special. We ask that celebrations at school be limited to a special type of snack. We do not allow balloons, favors, party hats or presents. Please discuss any birthday plans with your child’s teachers. We will distribute birthday party invitations only if the entire class is invited.

Clothing

Please provide proper outer wear because we will go outside to play. All coats, jackets, and sweaters should be marked with your child’s name. When choosing your child’s clothing, please plan accordingly. The children will paint, glue, use markers, etc. Additionally, they enjoy climbing and running on the playground so please make sure they wear appropriate shoes. “Play clothes” are most appropriate with closed toe shoes.

Please send an extra set of clothing, including underwear and socks, in a plastic zip lock bag labeled with his/her name to leave in your child’s cubby.

Personal Items/Toys from home

Please do not allow your child to bring favorite toys, candy, gum, jewelry, money, makeup, etc. to preschool.

Comfort items, such as blankets, stuffed animals, or pacifiers are acceptable for toddlers and two's.

Toilet Training

St. John's Preschool recognizes that each child grows and learns at his/her own rate; therefore, it does not set an age requirement for toilet training. If a child is developmentally ready for a class and meets the age requirements but is not yet toilet trained, the child will not be held back in the younger age group. In some cases, older preschoolers may have difficulties with toilet training. Should this occur, the staff will work with the family and medical professionals when needed. Consistency between home and school is crucial for effective potty training.

Typical Day

At St. John's Preschool, we believe that children learn best within the context of a small community group that follows a predictable daily routine. The following schedule is an example of what a typical daily routine might look like for our preschool children.

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
8:30 am	Arrival Children enter the classroom and are greeted by teachers and begin to play with activities that are out for morning arrival. (puzzles, play dough, blocks, etc.)
8:45 am	Circle Children and teachers come together for group time: share news, sing songs, talk about the topic for the day,
9:00 am	Explore in Play Creating, discovering, and experimenting in center areas; Theme activities; Music and movement;
10:00 am	Snack Children sit together for snack and conversation.
10:30 am	Outside Children play together while actively supervised by teachers.
11:30 am	Lunch Children return to the classroom and prepare for lunch. Children and teachers sit together for lunch and conversation.
12:15 pm	Close Children and teachers come together for closing circle, review and goodbyes.
12:20 pm	Pick up

Immunizations

Children must be up-to-date on their immunizations against childhood diseases. Each child must have on file with the school a copy of his or her immunization record.

Medications

We will not administer medication to any child unless written instructions and permissions have been filled out by the parent and approved by the Preschool Director.

Illness

Current guidelines for Covid-19 have been sent home to all families.

We assume parents will not send a child to school if he or she shows any sign of illness. Also, if a child is not well enough to go outdoors, please so not send him/her to school.

Please do not give a feverish/sick child fever reducing medication (Tylenol, etc) and send him/her to school. This does not stop a child from becoming ill – it only masks the illness and contributes to the spread of viruses.

If a child becomes ill at preschool, we will notify parents to pick their child up.

Parents are required to notify the preschool immediately if children contract infectious or communicable diseases or head lice. Your communication with staff is critical to controlling the spread of childhood illnesses.

General Guidelines for Illness

Keep your child at home for 24 hours if he/she has:

- temperature of 100° or higher: Keep your child at home until the temperature has been normal for 24 hours without medication.
- cold/cough/flu with sneezing and excessive nose drainage: Parents should remember a cold can rapidly become Bronchitis or Pneumonia. Children with Bronchitis or Pneumonia do not necessarily run a temperature, but when they do, it is sudden and exceedingly high. Having to wipe a nose or cover a cough more than 3 times in 15 minutes is excessive.
- diarrhea/3 stools within an hour (watery stools or foamy bowel movements, more frequent than usual).
- vomiting.
- rashes that have not been diagnosed by a physician.
- conjunctivitis: an eye infection commonly referred to as "pink eye". The eye is generally red with some burning, and there may be some yellow drainage. The child must be kept home for 24 hours once the treatment has begun. If after 24 hours there is excessive drainage, the child should continue to remain at home.
- strep throat: If the doctor diagnoses a strep throat infection and places your child on antibiotic medication, the child should not be brought to the preschool until 24 hours after the first dose of an antibiotic.

Children must be kept at home until they are fever free for 24 hours without medication to control or mask fever.

By helping us observe good health standards, you will be protecting your child and the other children who attend preschool. Any child's individual medical concerns should be discussed with the Preschool Director.

Discipline Policy

Teachers use positive techniques of guidance, including logical or natural consequences applied in problem situations, redirection, anticipation of and elimination of potential problems, and encouragement of appropriate behavior.

Our discipline methods include:

- Conscious Discipline, a comprehensive self-regulation program that integrates social-emotional learning throughout the day.
- Second Step, an early learning program that teaches skills to help children manage their feelings, make friends, and solve problems.

Our program recognizes that biting/hitting may be typical behavior of toddlers (through 36 months). We are always upset when children are bitten or hurt in our program and we recognize how upsetting it is for parents. While we feel that biting in excess is an inappropriate behavior, we know that they bite for a variety of reasons, most of which are not related to behavioral problems. Our program focuses on effective techniques that address the specific reason for the biting or inappropriate behaviors and teach new, more appropriate behaviors, rather than on a punishment for biting and or hitting.

Under normal circumstances, we will not implement a policy focused upon termination of care for the child who is biting or has any disruptive behaviors. We believe that this kind of exclusion policy does not help a child learn different, more appropriate behaviors.

We will:

- Put all children's safety first and provide appropriate first aid as well as comfort and guidance to any child who is hurt.
 - Keep accurate records and accident reports.
 - Keep your child's identity confidential if he or she bites or is bitten or hurt. (This helps avoid labeling or confrontations that will slow the process of learning to control the behavior. The director may use her discretion and choose to share confidentiality with a parent).
 - Provide appropriate planning for toddlers to help prevent hitting, biting or any inappropriate behavior.
 - Help children in our program who are biting or hitting learn to control the urge to bite or hit and learn new appropriate behaviors.
- Have current information and resources for families.

- Provide teachers with adequate knowledge and training to deal appropriately and effectively with inappropriate behaviors.
- Take families' concerns seriously and treat them with understanding and respect. Communicate regularly.
- Provide information of what specific steps are being taken to address the behavior and explain the reasoning behind those steps, while protecting any confidentiality.
- Respond quickly to any questions, concerns, and suggestions, share your ideas with director and other teachers.

Steps we may follow as a means of countering biting, hitting, or any inappropriate behavior will include:

- Environmental assessment of the classroom followed up with a conference with teachers to suggest changes that may encourage acceptable behaviors.
- Close observation and documentation by the teachers (and director) of the classroom activities, particularly transition times, to determine frequency of and probable causes of behavior.
- Documentation (a running record) to be discussed with the staff in the classroom in order to determine any patterns in behavior and to develop a written plan of strategies all staff will implement and follow.
- Conference with the parents of the child to discuss these strategies and offer ideas on how parents can help at home.
- Conference with the parents of the child being bitten or hit to discuss strategies being utilized to alleviate the behavior.
- Shadowing the child quickly and effectively address the behavior.
- When a situation warrants, observation and intervention by child behavioral specialist, who will come to our preschool.
- Conference with behavioral specialist, parents, teachers and director to confirm strategies, assessments, note any improvements and follow up.

We wish we could guarantee that biting, hitting or any inappropriate behavior will never happen in our program, but we know there are no guarantees. We will support your child whether he/she has the inappropriate behavior, or whether he/she is the child that has been affected. We want the very best for the children in our program. Staff and parent communication, mutual respect and support are key to the family/school relationship.

St. John's Preschool wants its students to develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities and self-discipline. We believe this happens when adults and others, model and communicate with them in a positive, non-threatening, and understanding manner.

Each case is unique. All situations will be reviewed individually.

Emergency Response and Safety Protocols

We have developed general operating guidelines and procedures for critical events and emergencies. *St. John's Preschool Emergency Response Handbook* is available in the Preschool Office for review and comment.

The doors to St. John's Church and Preschool remain locked during normal hours. Preschool families may access the building by entering an assigned code on the keypad lock located next to the exterior door by the preschool office or by the door with the drive-through portico. If you forget your assigned code, please use the door with the drive-through portico to call the church office for entry.

Emergency Communications

If inclement weather or an emergency occurs during the preschool hours:

- Tune to local news media for emergency instructions.
- St. John's Preschool follows the New Hanover County School Board decisions on school closings.

In times of emergency, information about the status of schools is communicated through a variety of media. Circumstances may prevent parents from picking up their children or may require that children be picked up at a location other than the preschool facility. The safety of children and staff is our first priority. Our second priority is the reunification of parents with their children.

Students will only be released to parents or additional authorized pick-ups on file in the ProCare app. Please keep your child's information up to date.