

ST. JOHN'S PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

2023/2024

www.stjohnspreschoolonline.com
Email: preschool@stjohnslutheranchurch.com
412/364-3306



ST. JOHN'S PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

For over 40 years, St. John's Preschool has provided a nurturing environment for preschoolers in the North Hills area. Our experienced teachers will help your child develop social, listening, and academic skills to prepare them for the outside world.

Please read the following information about our preschool and use this handbook as a guide throughout the school year.

ENROLLMENT

St. John's Preschool is a non-profit mission located in St. John's Lutheran Church of Highland in McCandless. It offers classes for two, three, four year olds and Pre-Kindergarten (5 year olds). Classes are open to all children regardless of race, religion or national origin. Enrollment registration forms must be submitted each year. Current students will have the opportunity to enroll before registration forms are made available to the general public. After this time period, classes are filled on a first come, first serve basis. The registration fee of \$65.00 is non-refundable.

TUITION

Tuition for St. John's Preschool is a yearly fee broken into nine months (September – May). Tuition will be billed monthly for the 2023-2024 school year. You will receive a tuition invoice via e-mail on the 15th of each month. All tuition payments are **due by the 1st of each month (Sept. – May)**. Any payments received after this date will be subject to a \$15.00 late fee. Failure to pay tuition for **two consecutive months** will result in removal from the preschool until the balance is paid in full. If you would like to pay in advance, or if you prefer to receive a paper copy of your tuition invoice, please contact the Financial Secretary (Laura Coombs) at stjohnspreschoolbilling@gmail.com. Payments can be made via check. **There is a \$35 bank charge for any returned check.** Please DO NOT give payments to your child's teacher. Payments can be mailed to the school or dropped off in the Preschool mailbox (inside the vestibule at the rear entrance by the church office or in the lower level of the building outside of the preschool office). We offer automatic withdrawals from either your checking or savings account for payment of tuition invoices. You may also pay tuition using a credit card. There is a 4% service fee if you are paying with a credit card. A form to enroll in automatic withdrawals or pay by credit card, will be e-mailed to you along with your first tuition bill for September 2023.

In the event St. John's Preschool moves from an in-person status to a remote/ virtual status due to an unforeseen circumstance, tuition will continue to be billed out monthly at the regular amount, as we expect all of our St. John's Preschool families to continue the program with us (September – May).

FUNDRAISERS

St. John's Preschool will hold 2 fundraisers throughout the school year (both with Betsy Ann Chocolates). The first fundraiser will occur in the late fall and the second fundraiser will be in the spring. If you prefer to OPT out of participating in the fundraisers, some families prefer to make a flat donation to the preschool. A suggested donation would be \$50.00. Any participation in our fundraisers or donation to the preschool would be greatly appreciated. This money goes towards building enhancements, playground equipment, classroom resources, and teacher wish lists in order to continue offering an excellent preschool program. Thank you in advance!

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Immunization Policy:

Enrollment of Students 24 P.S. §13-1301 – §13-1306 Issued January 22, 2009.

The present school health laws of the State of Pennsylvania and Allegheny County Health Department require that all students be immunized **BEFORE ENROLLMENT**.

The Allegheny County Health Department provides free immunizations to children. Call 412-578-8060 or check their website for more specific information. www.achd.net You may also check with local retail Health Clinics. Several do provide immunizations which are either covered by insurance or with out-of-pocket cost.

EXEMPTION TO IMMUNIZATION LAW: Medical: Student whose physical condition is such that an immunization would endanger their life or health. Such a statement must be signed by a physician. Religious: Written statement by parent/guardian of religious or moral belief opposed to such immunization.

Please provide a copy of the child's immunization record on or before the first day of school in September. This can be e-mailed, mailed, or brought to either of the preschool mailboxes (located inside the vestibule by the church office or in the lower level of the building outside of the preschool office). All immunization records must be on file with the director by Monday, September 11th.

Health and Hygiene

Please notify the director/teacher if your child has a communicable disease or contagious condition.

A child who has the following illnesses/conditions should remain at home until there has been appropriate medical care:

- Contagious or infectious disease or symptoms of disease
- Diarrhea (with or without a fever)
- Feverish and persistent cough
- Thick drainage from nose or eyes, or has symptoms of throat or ear pain
- Vomiting that has occurred within the past 48 hours
- Abnormal temperature for 24 hours without medication
- Unusual rash

As a courtesy to our teachers, we would appreciate that you call and leave a message with your child's teacher, letting them know if your child will not be attending school: 412-364-3306.

- For the safety of all students, **any child with a temperature of 100.4 or higher will not be permitted to attend school that day.** Please check your child's temperature at home BEFORE coming to preschool. The teachers will not be checking every child's temperature upon their arrival to St. John's Preschool; however, if we suspect any child is not feeling well, their temperature will be taken by us.

- All families are encouraged to keep their child home from school if they are not feeling well. **This is the best way to keep our preschool community healthy.**
- The CDC recommends that staff and students with health concerns should consult their physician regarding the risks of participating in a preschool program.
- If a child or staff member becomes ill at school, they will be sent home immediately.
- If a child has a fever of 100.4 or higher that is diagnosed (strep throat, etc.), they may return to school after 24 hours of being fever free. **If the child has a fever of 100.4 or higher with an unknown cause, they should stay home from school and consult with their physician.**
- St. John's Preschool follows the CDC guidance for COVID related illnesses.
- A student or staff member who is exposed to a positive case of COVID-19 through close contact will be required to follow the guidelines from a licensed medical professional.

MEDICATIONS

Teachers are not permitted to give prescriptions or over-the-counter medications. Please administer at home. If such medication needs to be administered, the child's parents/ guardians will be notified immediately and it is their responsibility to administer the medication.

*Teachers do not apply sunscreen on the children. If you wish for your child to wear sunscreen, you need to put it on them BEFORE they come to school.

MEDICAL EMERGENCY

In the event of a medical emergency, all staff will use their first aid/ CPR/ AED training. 9-1-1 will be called first, followed by a phone call to the child's parents/ guardians.

ILLNESS DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

If your child becomes ill at school and we cannot reach you by phone, we will then contact those you have listed on your Emergency Contact Form.

POTTY TRAINING

A child in the process of potty training is required to wear pull-ups. It is **required** that children in the three-year-old class are potty trained. Please keep in mind that the activity level here can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home.

All children are encouraged to wear clothing that helps support independent bathroom skills.

****ALL CHILDREN SHOULD USE THE BATHROOM PRIOR TO ATTENDING PRESCHOOL EACH DAY****

CLOTHING

Children should wear comfortable, washable clothing. All classes are required to bring in one set of extra clothing in their backpacks. **Please label all clothing, coats, and backpacks.**

GUIDANCE AND REDIRECTION

Our teachers relate to your child in a positive way and help them to do the same with one another. Teachers strive to create a peaceful classroom and encourage appropriate behavior. If we cannot redirect a child's behavior after several attempts, we will communicate this to a parent. At this time, we would appreciate the parent working closely with the teacher and if needed, the director to change the behavior. After several attempts of working with the child and parent, St. John's Preschool reserves the right to remove the child from the school.

We have the right to move a child into a different classroom if they are not a good age or appropriate fit.

PARENT – TEACHER COMMUNICATION

At St. John's Preschool we strongly encourage parent/teacher communication through conferences, e-mail, and phone calls. If you would like to discuss the progress of your child, please contact the teacher to set up a conference outside of class time.

To contact the preschool or director, please call 412-364-3306 and leave a message or email at preschool@stjohnslutheranchurch.com. **Email is the fastest (preferred) way to reach the director.**

All preschool staff have a phone in their classroom; however, it does not ring in the room as we do not want to disturb the learning taking place. You may leave a message for your child's teacher at any time. To leave a message, call the school at 412-364-3306, when the voice message clicks on, press # and then the teacher's extension. Here are the extensions:

Mrs. Bolinda (Preschool Office) – **109**

Mrs. Bolinda & Mrs. Claypool (4's classroom) – **107**

Mrs. Liptak & Mrs. Sundgren (Pre-K classroom) – **108**

Mrs. Roberts & Mrs. Ross (3's classroom) – **110**

Mrs. Bolinda & Mrs. Ross (2's classroom) - **110**

Mrs. Walkauskas & Mrs. Christian (4's classroom) - **111**

**** In an EMERGENCY ONLY, you may call the church office at 412-364-1606 and they will get in touch with the preschool.**

PERSONAL AND SECURITY ITEMS

Please do not send in toys from home. St. John's Preschool has a great selection of toys from which to choose and we would not want to lose a "favorite" from home.

SNACKS

Snacks will be provided during the preschool day. Each child will be assigned a day to bring in snack to share with their class. Please don't send in a drink with the snack (exception holiday parties). Water will be available. Water bottles are not necessary as we use disposable cups for the children.

Nut Allergies: Please do not send in any snacks containing nuts. Although the preschool makes an effort not to serve snacks or food items with nuts, we do not represent that the preschool or any area of the church is a nut free environment.

FOOD ALLERGY POLICY

Any child with a food allergy must notify the director and teacher before the school year begins. During snack time, that child must bring in an individual "safe" snack from home to eat. It is not the responsibility of the teachers to read food labels and determine if the snack is safe. We want to keep all of the children safe and healthy during their time with us.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

KEY PAD SYSTEM

St. John's Preschool is a secured building during the preschool day. You will need to use the key pad located outside of both preschool entrances to enter the building. The key pad for the front entrance is located to the right of the preschool doors. The key pad by the church office entrance (the back of the building) is located inside the vestibule before you enter through the second set of doors. You may enter the building during arrival and dismissal times during the preschool day using your assigned 4 – digit code.

If someone other than yourself will be dropping off or picking your child up from preschool, it is your responsibility to share the code with them. If you do not have a code to get in, you must enter in through the back of the building and press the intercom button for the church secretary to buzz you in.

ARRIVAL (3's, 4's, and Pre-K)

You will be able to access the building using your 4-digit door code between **8:55am – 9:10am** for the arrival of the morning preschool session and **12:25pm – 12:40pm** for the arrival of the afternoon preschool session. When you arrive at St. John's Preschool, please park in the parking lot and walk your child into the building. You may use the doors at the front entrance or the doors at the rear entrance of the building depending on where your child's classroom is located. Once inside, please walk your child directly to their classroom. It is your responsibility to inform your child's teacher if someone other than yourself will be picking your child up from preschool that day. **DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD INTO THE BUILDING UNACCOMPANIED**, or with a younger sibling. Please try to arrive on time. Continued late arrivals, disrupts the daily routine and prevents children from learning consistency and responsibility. Once your child has entered the classroom, please say good-bye promptly. Prolonging goodbyes can sometimes be unsettling for the child. We are also eager to start our fun filled day of learning with them.

DISMISSAL (3's and 4's)

Please be prompt when picking up your child for the day. You may access the building using your 4-digit door code between **11:25am – 11:35am** for the dismissal of the morning preschool session and **2:55pm – 3:05pm** for the dismissal of the afternoon preschool session. Please park in the parking lot and enter the building. Once inside, go directly to your child's classroom to pick them up from school. Our normal procedure is to release the child only to his/her parents or regular childcare provider. If someone other than the parent will be picking up your child, please notify us ahead of time. A verbal notice is fine on the particular day if this person is on the list of people who are authorized to pick up your child. If the person is NOT on the list, we must have written permission to release your child. They also may be required to show photo identification. **If there is someone NOT permitted to pick your child up from school, please notify the director and classroom teacher with a written note signed by you.** Just a reminder that the preschool morning session ends at 11:30am and the afternoon session ends at 3:00pm. The teachers have to clean and close up their classrooms. Thank you in advance for picking your child up on time.

DISMISSAL (Pre-K Class ONLY)

The Pre-k class will be dismissed at 11:25am using a car pool line. The children will be dismissed at the rear entrance of the building by the church office doors. For your safety, please stay in your car while in the car pool line. We will bring your child to the car. Please work toward having your child buckle their car seat quickly and efficiently by themselves; however, if they require assistance please pull forward into an available parking space to help them.

ARRIVAL/ DISMISSAL (2 - Year Old Classes)

Please use the rear entrance of the building. Park in the rear parking lot and walk your child inside to the 2 - year old classroom. You will be able to access the building using your 4-digit door code between **8:55am – 9:10am for Class A** to arrive and **10:40am – 10:55am for Class B** to arrive. If you are running late and are after the timeframe listed above, you will need to wait inside the vestibule, press the intercom button to speak to the office administrator, and then gain access to the building.

*****For all classes, contact the teacher directly via email or phone call if you wish to discuss your child's time with us at school. Arrival and dismissal time is not when this communication should take place as we want everyone to enter and exit the building promptly and safely.**

LATE PICK UP POLICY

We understand emergencies or events can happen to delay picking up your child. Please call the church office at 412-364-1606, if you know you are going to be late. **However, after the second late pick up, you will be charged a \$25.00 late fee.** If your child is not picked up by 11:35 or 3:05 in their classroom, we will be calling the contacts on the emergency card and a late fee will be charged. Please be sure to pick your child up on time. Thank you!

If a family is arriving late to the preschool, please pull around to the rear entrance of the building. You will enter inside the vestibule, press the intercom button to speak to the office administrator, and then gain access inside the building. The parent or guardian may walk their child to their classroom door. We ask that parents do not enter inside the classroom, but say good-bye in the hallway after their child has been greeted by the teacher. **For safety and security purposes along with following the implemented procedures, it would do St. John's Preschool a great benefit if everyone could be on time.**

If you are picking your child up early from preschool, you must notify your child's teacher. Upon arriving to the school, please drive around to the rear entrance of the building. Enter inside the vestibule, press the intercom button to speak to the office administrator. She will then contact your child's teacher. The classroom teacher will walk the child to the vestibule area for their dismissal.

PARKING LOT PROCEDURES

Please do not permit your child to run unattended in the parking lots.

We do encourage comradery among families and children. However, please refrain from socializing in the parking lots or on any grounds of St. John's Church and Preschool. This is for the safety of our St. John's Preschool families.

Please use the spaces provided for you.

Please do not park on the curb (unless utilizing the Pre-K dismissal car-line system). This causes a hazard not only for walkers but also for cars trying to maneuver around an already tight space.

Please adhere to the DO NOT ENTER and the ONE WAY signs. If you wish to park around the back of the building, please drive around the left side of the building.

Follow directional arrows and DO NOT go over the speed of 15 MPH. This is for the safety of your child.

MUSIC AND GYM CLASSES

MUSIC

All students have a weekly music class with the music teacher. The students build their appreciation of music as well as develop their music and listening skills through a variety of experiences. Some of these are singing, playing various rhythm instruments and small/ gross motor skills. Through singing, speaking and chanting various songs and poems, students learn different ways that their voices can be used to express the music and poems. Adding various rhythm instruments to songs, etc., the students discover how music becomes even more interesting through layering sounds. Small and gross motor skills, such as marching, jumping, hopping, galloping, and tip toeing are developed while listening and moving to music of various tempos, dynamics, and styles. Each age level uses all these techniques appropriate for their developmental age. Some activities introduced in the 3 Year Old class are then expanded to the 4 Year Old class and so on through the Pre-K. Simple music notation is introduced in the Pre-K class.

Music classes also coordinate with the regular class activities reinforcing such skills as colors, numbers, calendar activities, weather activities, and alphabet activities. This is accomplished through various finger plays, nursery rhymes, holiday songs and patriotic songs.

GYM

All students have a weekly gym class with 2 gym teachers. They work on improving gross motor skills and coordination through varied activities including exercising to music, playing games and doing simple gymnastics. The children are introduced to teamwork and have the opportunity to use a number of different pieces of equipment including the parachute, mini balance beam, beach balls and hula hoops to name just a few.

VOLUNTEER CLEARANCES

The PA House passed Act 153 of 2014 into law on October 22, 2014. This new PA law takes effect for the 2019-2020 school year and applies to employees and unpaid volunteers who are responsible for the welfare of a child or have direct contact with children. While many community-based programs and religiously affiliated organizations have long required background checks for volunteers, this law provides a specific directive on the timing and type of background checks now required.

In accordance with the PA State Law, individuals at St. John's Preschool will not be permitted to serve as a volunteer unless they have submitted the appropriate clearances. Volunteers, including party parents, will be required to have two current valid PA Clearances (PA Criminal and PA Child Abuse) on file with the preschool in order to volunteer within the preschool.

There is a link on our website www.stjohnspreschoolonline.com under the Policies tab which will provide you with the information to obtain these clearances.

****It is highly recommended to obtain the necessary clearances in a timely matter. In order to volunteer in your child's classroom, all clearances must be turned in by October 15th.** (We will NOT be accepting clearances after October 15th.) Please turn the clearances in as soon as possible. You may drop them off in the preschool mailbox located outside of the preschool office or in the vestibule preschool mailbox located by the church office.

PHOTOGRAPHS

If you do not want your child's picture or video displayed on the internet or school's website, please give your teacher a written request.

INCLEMENT WEATHER OR EMERGENCY CLOSURE

St. John’s Preschool will be closed or delayed if the North Allegheny School District is closed or delayed due to inclement weather. Our information is on local news channels under St. John’s Preschool McCandless. In case of a delay schedule, our **morning classes will run from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** and the **afternoon classes will run from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

The delay schedule for the 2-year old classes are:

Class A: 11:00-12:00

Class B: 12:15-1:15

2023/2024 TEACHING STAFF

Director: Jennifer Bolinda – preschool@stjohnslutheranchurch.com

Financial Secretary: Laura Coombs – stjohnspreschoolbilling@gmail.com

2 Year Old Class: Jennifer Bolinda & Laurie Ross

3 Year Old Class: Cindy Roberts & Laurie Ross

4 Year Old Class A: Jennifer Bolinda & Linda Claypool

4 Year Old Class B: Janine Walkauskas & Anna-Marie Christian

Pre-K Class: Dana Liptak & Danielle Sundgren

Gym Class: Sarah Rodgers & Abbey Bucci

Music Class: Sarah Snyder & Abbey Bucci

WAIVER & RELEASE

By signing the Handbook Receipt Form below, I agree to the following:

I assume the risk and full responsibility for any and all illnesses, injuries, losses, or damages that may be incurred or suffered by me, my child or my other family members while on the premises of St. John’s Preschool (the “Preschool”) or St. John’s Lutheran Church of Highland (the “Church”) or while traveling to or participating in any off-site preschool program or activity. To the maximum extent of the law, (i) on behalf of myself, my child, my other family members, and our heirs and assigns, I waive and release any and all future claims, suits or causes of action against the Preschool, the Church, their directors, council members, officers, employees, members, volunteers or agents (the “Protected Parties”) for illness, injury, loss, death, costs or other damages suffered or incurred by me, my child, my other family members, our heirs or assigns, directly or indirectly arising in connection with my child’s participation in the Preschool, and I agree to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Protected Parties against the same, and (ii) I agree to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Protected Parties from any third party claims, suits or causes of action arising from my conduct, my child’s conduct and/or my family’s conduct in connection with my child’s participation in the Preschool.

**** Thank you for choosing St. John’s Preschool! ****

St. John's Preschool

2023/2024 Handbook Receipt Form

After reading the St. John's Preschool Handbook and reviewing all of the policies and procedures, please sign and return this form by **Monday, September 11, 2023**.

I, _____ (print your name), the parent/guardian of _____ (print child's/ children's name), hereby acknowledge receipt of the St. John's Preschool Handbook. I have read and agree to adhere to all the policies and regulations set forth in this handbook.

Parent/ Guardian Signature: _____

Relationship to Child: _____ Date: _____

Child's/ Children's Name: _____