

Please see our 2024-2025 Parent Handbook below;

Printed copies are available at the  
Preschool Welcome Desk.

*Revised 02/09/2024*

# St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool with Extended Care




National Lutheran  
School Accreditation

## Parent Handbook 2024-2025

*a ministry of*

**St. Paul's Lutheran Church**

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## **St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool with Extended Care**

Since 1991, St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool has offered early childhood education with Jesus at the center of every activity.

### **Church Mission Statement**

St. Paul's Lutheran Church glorifies God by connecting people to Jesus through teaching, serving, caring, and telling!

### **Preschool Mission Statement**

St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool with Extended Care provides a quality early childhood education program guided by Christian philosophy and doctrine and acts as a mission outreach of this congregation to the community.

### **Statement of Philosophy**

The Preschool at St. Paul's Lutheran Church will teach and make disciples of the children God has entrusted to us. We believe children are valuable gifts whom God has forgiven through the death and resurrection of His Son. Children learn best when taught in a Christ-centered environment that includes interaction with others, various learning experiences, and a variety of educational methods.

### **Goals**

The goals of St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool are to:

- Provide a safe and nurturing Christian environment where children experience the love of Jesus.
- Offer each child the opportunity to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, physically, intellectually, and creatively through age-appropriate instruction.
- Prepare children for kindergarten.
- Support parents and families.

### **Non-Discriminatory Policy Statement**

St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities accorded our students or our school.

### **Policy Authority – Preschool Advisory Board**

The St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool with Extended Care Advisory Board, reporting to the Board of Parish Education, sets and/or approves all policies regarding the Preschool.



### **Personnel**

The Director is an employee of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and is responsible to the Preschool Advisory Board. The Director meets regularly with the Preschool Advisory Board and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Preschool. Together with the teachers, the Director plans a curriculum that is age-appropriate, Christ-centered, and faith-integrated and meets the stated mission of the Preschool program. The Director does not determine policy but ensures that procedures are being followed. Qualifications of the Director include a college degree with prior experience and on-going training in early childhood education programs as well as certification in infant/child CPR.

Teachers are employees of St. Paul's Lutheran Church and are responsible to the Director. Under the direction and supervision of the Director, the teachers plan, implement, and evaluate the curriculum in accordance with the mission and philosophy of the Preschool program. Teacher qualifications include prior experience and on-going training in early childhood education programs as well as certification in infant/child CPR.

### Curriculum

The Preschool uses the *Core Knowledge Curriculum* and incorporates aspects of the *High Reach Curriculum* and the *Creative Curriculum* recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the State of Alabama. All teachers have the Alabama Standards for children birth through age 5.

This combination of curricula incorporates:

- Spiritual / Social Living      - Fine/Gross motor skills
  - Language Development      - Expressive Arts
  - School Readiness      - Discovery about the World
- Planning for the year includes Bible themes, unit studies and concepts, interest centers, music, field trips and special celebrations.
  - The program offers an exciting and stimulating curriculum that is appropriate for each child at his or her own level of understanding.
  - Teachers create weekly lesson plans and communicate learning and schedules to parents on a regular basis through our monthly calendar and the Brightwheel app.
  - The children participate in weekly Chapel time in the Sanctuary with the Pastor and/or DCE and attend weekly music classes.
  - Extracurricular classes such as art, karate, and soccer are available to PreK3 and PreK4 children who are potty-trained.
  - Each child takes home a yearly portfolio.

### Class Sessions and Composition

- Toddler Program (Ages 15 through 23 months)  
Class size is limited to 5 children per adult; Children attend a minimum of 2 days per week.
- Two-year-old Program  
Class size is limited to 6 children per adult; Children attend a minimum of 2 days per week.
- PreK3 Program  
Class size limited to 8 children per adult; Children attend a minimum of 4 days per week.  
Children are encouraged to be potty-trained.
- PreK4 Program  
Class size is limited to 12 children per adult; Children attend a minimum of 4 days per week
- Children are placed according to their age as of September 1st.
- Core Preschool classes meet from 8:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.
- Children attending Core Preschool classes without Extended Care must attend Monday-Thursdays when Core Preschool meets; *Fridays may be added with 5-day Extended Care.*
- Full and part-time Extended Care is available Monday – Friday from 7:00 am – 5:30 pm; see page 4 for days, hours, and rates.



### Enrollment

- An Application for Admission to St Paul's Preschool and the accompanying Registration Fee is required for consideration.
- Enrollment is accepted on a first-come, first-served basis except during Pre-Registration in the spring. At that time, priority is given in the following order:
  1. Children already in the program
  2. Children of congregation members
  3. Children on the waiting list
- Children may be enrolled at any time during the year, provided there is space in their age group.

### Safety

The safety of our children is of utmost priority.

- Arrival and Dismissal procedures with sign-in and sign-out by parent/representatives and the release of children only to authorized persons is strictly enforced.
- Security cameras are installed and monitored throughout the campus.

- Emergency drills are conducted monthly.
- Immediate communication for weather and emergency situations through the Brightwheel app will detail appropriate instructions.
- All staff are certified in infant/child CPR.

### Accreditation



**National Lutheran  
School Accreditation**

National Lutheran School Accreditation (NLSA) awarded St. Paul's Preschool accreditation on July 31, 2009 with continued accreditation granted in 2019.

Accreditation assures parents that the school complies with national standards. It indicates the school's commitment to on-going improvement. Parents can be certain that when a school is accredited by NLSA, it has been observed by a team of qualified educators, evaluated, and recognized.

### Professional Affiliation

St. Paul's Lutheran Preschool is a member of the Lutheran Education Association (LEA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

### Tuition and Fees

Tuition Billing Plans for each child detail the plan rates and fees below. The Registration Fee collected includes a \$50 non-refundable fee for Preschool children and a \$100 non-refundable fee for children enrolled in Extended Care. This fee will be applied toward the Supply Fee for the school year which is due in full by July 15.

**SUMMER PROGRAM – 2 months June-July** is offered at the same Tuition plans as below. A \$20 Supply Fee is assessed.

#### **PRESCHOOL CORE HOURS ONLY PLAN - 10 months Aug-May**

		<u>Tuition</u>	<u>Supply Fee</u>	
2 days	8:45a-12:45p	\$230/month	\$100	<i>Toddlers &amp; 2's only</i>
4 days	8:45a-12:45p	\$305/month	\$125	<i>All Ages</i>

#### **PRESCHOOL WITH EXTENDED CARE PLAN - 44 weeks Aug-May**

	<u>Tuition</u>	<u>Supply Fee</u>	<i>Please see the</i>
5 days 7:00a-1:00p	\$128/week	\$125	<i>Application for</i>
5 days 8:45a-5:30p	\$160/week	\$150	<i>Admission for</i>
5 days 7:00a-5:30p	\$181/week	\$150	<i>more EC options</i>

#### **Discounts available:**

- Families with multiple children: The first child's tuition will be 100%, with a 10% discount offered on the tuition of any additional siblings.
- Member (or joining) Preschool Families will receive a 25% tuition discount according to the Preschool Tuition Covenant (*see below*).

### **St. Paul's Preschool Tuition Covenant**

*"The Lord bless you and keep you" (Numbers 6:24)*

#### **General Covenant Agreement**

- Member (or joining) Preschool Families that attend Sunday School and Worship Services twice a month will be

given a 25% percent discount on their next month's tuition at St. Paul's Preschool.

**Covenant Specifics**

- Please tell the Preschool Director about your interest in participating in the tuition covenant.
- A conference will be scheduled with Pastor for specifics on becoming a member of St. Paul's.
- Families are to sign in on the Friendship Register in Worship and on the Sunday School class sheets each week to record attendance.

As a congregation we are blessed in blessing you!  
Bless us as part of our church family!

## **PAYING TUITION**

- Tuition and Fees are billed and paid through the Brightwheel App.
  - Recurring Online EFT payments set up to pay on the due date is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.
  - Credit Cards may be used for payment; however, there will be a 2.95% charge to the payer.
  - Checks/money orders will also be accepted but are subject to late fees if not paid on time;
  - No cash will be taken as form of payment.
- Tuition for Core Preschool Only students is due on the first of the month, late after the 10th of the month, subject to a \$5.00 late fee.
- Tuition for Extended Care students is due on Monday each week, late after Thursday of that week, subject to a \$5.00 late fee. Extended Care Tuition may be paid monthly at 4.4 times the weekly rate (there are 44 weeks in the 10-month school year), and it is due by the first of the month, late after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, subject to the \$5.00 late fee.
- There are no tuition reductions for holidays, school breaks, vacations, illnesses, or other absences or inclement weather closings; Tuition is the same regardless of days missed or holidays. Our staffing and other operational expenses are based on fixed enrollment levels for 44 weeks in the school year and must be met on a continuing basis. No refunds or credits will be granted for days missed.
- New Core Preschool Only students shall pay the total month's charge if the child is enrolled prior to the 15th of the month and one-half of the month's charge if the child enters on or after the 15th of the month; the Director must be given a two-week written notice if a child is to withdraw from the program. If a child withdraws after the month begins, the parent is responsible for tuition for the entire month in which the child withdraws.

## **INCURRING FEES**

A \$5.00 late fee will be charged if tuition is not paid by the monthly or weekly schedule set above.

- A child may be suspended from St. Paul's Preschool for non-payment of tuition for more than 2 weeks; Tuition to hold the child's spot will still be charged during the time of suspension. The student may be re-instated when the tuition owed has been paid.
- A \$5.00 late fee will be charged for each five minutes a child is not picked up after normal departure time. PS-1:00pm; ExtCare-5:30pm.
- A \$35.00 Insufficient Funds Fee per check will be charged for each incident. The fee, as well as the amount of the original payment, must be paid in full within 4 working days of the request.
- Additional fees may be charged for field trips, special projects, etc. as deemed necessary.

## **Health Policies**

- The Preschool can only accept well children to prevent the spread of germs and illnesses within the center.
- A child is to be kept home if, within the preceding 24 hours, shows any of the following symptoms:

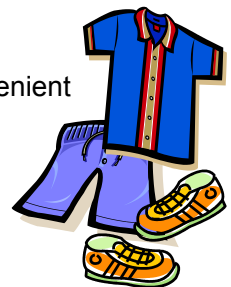
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

- Undiagnosed rash
- Red eyes and/or drainage
- Nose with colored discharge that requires constant wiping

- A child can return to school once he/she is symptom-free for 24 hours or as determined by your physician.
- Prescription or over-the-counter medications will not be administered under any circumstance.
- Emergency medication such as inhalers and EpiPens will be kept in the Preschool Office and must be accompanied by the doctor's orders and explicit procedures.
- If your child is exposed to a communicable disease, the parent should notify the Director via the Brightwheel app. Parents will, in turn, receive notice of any possible exposure at the Preschool via the Brightwheel app.
- If a child is injured at school, the parent or guardian will be notified via the Brightwheel app; for more serious injuries the parent or guardian will be called immediately as well. The Preschool will take all necessary steps to see that the child is assured proper medical attention.

## **Dress**

- Each child should be dressed for active play in simple, washable, practical play clothes with convenient fasteners for self-help. Girls should wear shorts or leggings under skirts/dresses.
- For safety reasons children must wear closed-toe shoes; sneakers or tennis shoes are preferred.
- The children play outdoors when the weather permits; each child should be dressed accordingly with an appropriate coat or jacket.
- Loose articles of clothing (jackets, sweaters, raincoats, etc.) should have the child's name marked



in the label.



## What to Bring

All children are to bring:

- a small backpack
- a lunch and drink in an insulated lunch bag ready to eat; food cannot be refrigerated nor heated by the staff. Children with a food allergy or strong dislike should have this noted on the Health Record and in the Brightwheel app.
  - Pizza Day will be on the last Thursday of the month to celebrate the month's birthdays; pizza, drink, and dessert will be provided.
  - A snack will be provided before Core Preschool and after rest time for children in Extended Care.
- A change of clothes (including socks) in a zip lock or plastic bag labeled with the child's name; *soiled or wet clothing will be returned home in the bag in case of mishaps.*
- Toys should not be brought to school.



Extended Care children should also bring:

- a small blanket or beach towel for rest time; it will be returned weekly to be cleaned at home.
- a small stuffed animal that will fit in the backpack for naptime if desired.

## Arrival

- Children will be received for Extended Care beginning at 7:00 am; children enrolled only in Core Preschool will be received beginning at 8:45 am.
- An adult must accompany the child to check in on the Brightwheel app at the Welcome Desk and escort the child to the gym to start the day; children will be escorted to their classrooms by 9:00 am.
- Those arriving after 9:00 a.m. will be met at the Welcome Desk where they check in on the Brightwheel app; staff will escort the child to the classroom.



## Departure

- Children attending Core Preschool are to be picked up between 12:45 and 1:00 pm; Extended Care children must be picked up by 5:30 pm and signed out on the Brightwheel app; late fees apply.
- The Preschool will only release a child to his parent or guardian and those previously authorized on the Brightwheel app. If someone not authorized is to pick up a child, the parent is to make the change on the Brightwheel app before pickup is attempted. For the safety and protection of your child, the person picking up a child should always be prepared to show picture identification.

## Attendance

Children learn best in an environment of consistency and routine. Significant absences or repeated late arrival will result in a conference between the parents, teacher, and director to assess the appropriateness of the child's enrollment.

## Discipline

- Reasonable, age-appropriate behavior limits will be set:
- "Time out" or restriction of play privileges may be used for unacceptable behavior (biting, hitting, fighting, etc.).
- Corporal punishment will not be administered under any circumstance.
- If a child exhibits disruptive behavior, a conference with his/her parents and teacher will be arranged.
- If the conflict remains unresolved, further steps will be taken up to and including expulsion from the Preschool.

## Parent Involvement

Parent participation in special classroom activities, parties, and field trips is encouraged.

- If a parent wishes to bring something from home to share, the teacher should be notified in advance to adjust the day's schedule.
- Special Events will be planned throughout the year for the children including Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and End-of-the-Year. There will also be special "Open House" dates. Parents are encouraged to volunteer during special activities.
- Field Trips will require a parent or adult representative to accompany and transport his or her child; those children without an accompanying adult will remain at the Preschool and not attend the field trip; a field trip permission form found on the Brightwheel app must be submitted.
- Birthdays are celebrated very simply at Preschool. If desired, a special treat (preferably mini cupcakes or cookies) may be brought for the children for dessert. Summer birthdays will be celebrated in the month of May.
- Due to confidentiality concerns, special events are not the appropriate times to approach a teacher about a child's progress or specific issues concerning your child. Please see the "Communication" section in this handbook.

### **Fellowship Opportunities**

Events such as Muffins & Moms, Donuts & Dads, and Grandparents Day offer opportunity to fellowship with each other. Our DCE also hosts a Parent Appreciation Breakfast-To-Go on the first Monday of each month. Other church-sponsored children's events such as our Trunk-or-Treat, Thanksgiving program and Feast, Christmas program, Easter Egg Hunt, and Family Fun Nights, as well as Bible classes and parent workshops, are held at various times throughout the year. Parents and families are encouraged to attend and join in the fellowship. Of course, all families are always welcome to join us for worship on Sunday mornings and special worship times throughout the year.

### **Communication**

Preschool information will be sent through the Brightwheel App which is utilized for communicating daily as appropriate; it is imperative for parents to be attentive to the Brightwheel App. Our Facebook and Instagram pages provide descriptions and pictures of ongoing activities and events.

Conferences are available with teachers or the Director at the parent's request at any time. It is encouraged that parents participate in conferences with the child's teacher during the year. The teacher will be able to give you information about your child's progress at these meetings as well as suggestions that might be beneficial to your child's overall achievement.

Communication between parents and teacher is a vital part of a successful educational program. If a problem arises, the parents and teacher will meet privately to seek a resolution. If the conflict is not resolved, the concerned parties will meet with the Director privately to seek a resolution. If the conflict is still not resolved, the concerned parties will meet with the Preschool Advisory Board and/or the Pastor.

### **Inclement Weather Policy**

We will send notification through the Brightwheel App regarding St. Paul's Lutheran Church and Preschool's decision concerning delayed opening, early dismissal, or closure as soon as it is possible.

### **Preschool Calendar**

Core Preschool children will not attend when Decatur City Schools are closed for holidays; our Extended Care closes for 8 holidays each year and at noon on Good Friday. Please refer to the Calendar published on the Brightwheel App and the website.