PRESCHOOL STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK

Pre-Kindergarten (PK 2)
Early Learners (EL 3)
Junior Kindergarten (JK 4)

2026 - 2027

ST. MATTHEW'S SCHOOL
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PRESCHOOL STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to St. Matthew's Preschool Program. Our teaching is integrated to meet the spiritual, social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of children with programs that are educational, stimulating and fun. Mrs. Gonzalez (Pre K-2), Mrs. Roberts (Early Learners 3), Mrs. Oliver (Junior Kindergarten 4A), and Mrs. Fencil (Junior Kindergarten 4B), look forward to getting to know you and your child. All of the information in this handbook will help make your transition to our school as smooth as possible.

The goal of our Preschool at St. Matthew's is to offer a safe, secure environment which encourages child growth in a truly Christian atmosphere. We stress sharing, respect for others and development of creativity. St. Matthew's School adheres to policies set forth by the Virginia Department of Social Services, the Diocesan Directives and policies in our own handbook.

SUBJECT AREAS INCLUDE:

- Theology
- Personal – Social Development
- Math readiness
- Reading readiness
- Social Studies
- Science
- Art
- Motor Skills
    - Fine motor
    - Gross motor
- Additional Activities
    - Music
    - Library
    - Physical Education/Health

<u>PROGRAM INFORMATION</u>

A. Registration Requirements – The following documents must be completed and submitted before acceptance and entry.

- State Issued Birth Certificate
- Commonwealth of Virginia Health Form
- General Information Sheet
- Emergency Form
- Release for Picture Publication Form
- Diocesan Acknowledgement Form
- Signed Financial Contract
- It is understood that the following prerequisites will be met. The child will:

- have the ability to communicate with others
- have completed toilet training and have command of personal hygiene (This does not apply to Pre K-2 program)

B. Tuition – Tuition and fees are determined by the finance committee and are subject to change. It is the parent's responsibility to make correct payments according to the schedule made by the administration.

C. Orientation – Parents are expected to attend a scheduled one on one, or small group, orientation with the classroom teacher prior to the first day of school. Parents will be notified to select a date and time.

D. Placement – State requirements are followed based on age and student/teacher ratio. Availability is determined by the number of classes and the vacancy within those classes. The school will place children in the appropriate group level based on the following:
- student's date of birth (we follow the Code of Virginia cut-off date of September 30th)
- level of maturity/socialization, to include complete toilet training for EL 3 and above

E. Probationary Period - Because children develop at different rates, we accept each child on a trial basis, which will be up to 6 weeks in length. In the case of a recurring problem, if a workable solution cannot be reached, the parent will be given two weeks to find a new facility for the child. In the event a child in the Early Learners 3 or JK 4 class is not fully toilet trained and has multiple accidents, parents may be asked to keep their child home for a period of time to work on complete toilet training, to include bowel movements and bathroom hygiene.

F. Daily Schedule – Classroom schedules are arranged by the teacher to meet the needs of the appropriate age level. Daily schedule of activities includes:
- Two nutritious snacks (am and pm) provided by the school staff. Parents of children with food allergies may provide snacks and lunch. Please coordinate this with the main office.
- Balanced hot lunch provided by the school staff
- Two half hour outdoor activities, weather permitting
- Two-hour rest period
- Classroom instruction to include:
  - gross and fine motor skills
  - cognitive skills
  - language and literacy
  - small group activities
  - center based activities
  - individual free play

G. Extracurricular Activities: Field Trips (Junior Kindergarten Pre K-4 only) – The number of trips and

destinations are determined by the classroom teachers. Transportation is provided by school bus. Fees depend on the individual field trip. Permission slips must be signed by the parents for each separate field trip.

- Class Parties – Parents may be asked to provide food/party items. Selected room ambassadors assist teachers in performing these functions.
- Musicales – Junior Kindergarten 4 students participate in the Christmas musicale each year under the direction of the music instructor.

H. Before School Program – A before-school program is offered to parents who need to drop off their children before school hours. The program runs from 6:30 am – 7:30 am for a fee. Children should be dropped off at the cafeteria entrance, and they will be taken to their classroom at 7:30. You may drop your preschoolers off at their respective classroom beginning at 7:30, free of charge, for care if needed. Class start time is 8:15am. Prices for before care $4.00/per half hour, after care $7.50/per hour.

I. Afterschool Program – Supervised personnel conduct a state licensed Afterschool program for St. Matthew's students ages preschool to 8th grade. Hours are 3:30pm – 5:30pm and fees are separate from tuition. The school emergency information card is used for Afterschool as well. Staffing is provided by qualified personnel including teachers, assistants and parents.

J. Child Abuse Reporting – In accordance with the Virginia Law, child abuse/neglect and/or suspected child abuse/neglect must be reported by persons charged with the care of those children. We accept and follow Virginia law in this matter.

K .Emergency Drills – Evacuation and other emergency preparedness drills are held monthly. Lockdown drills are held four times per year.

STUDENT POLICIES

A. Dress Code – **Sneakers/gym shoes must be worn daily to ensure safety.** Clothing should be comfortable and easily managed by the child before and after bathroom breaks. Some outfits are not conducive to a child taking care of their own bathroom needs on time. These items include:

- belts
- overalls
- one piece jumpers
- button/zipper down back

An extra set of clothing is required. These will be kept in a Ziploc bag, clearly labeled with the child's name and class, and will need to be changed according to changes in weather and seasons. It is the parents' responsibility to return clothing that has been used for emergencies. This clothing will include:

- socks
- underwear
- tops and bottoms
- **Please see last page for additional items required for Pre K-2**

B. Discipline – It is the practice of the preschool teachers to use positive reinforcement to produce behavior changes. Corporal punishment is never used.
It is our goal to treat each situation as a learning experience, providing the child with alternative learning behavior that is more appropriate. Some behavior might require other measures such as:

- A firm reminder of classroom rules

- Contacting parents
- A meeting with an administrator when necessary

Extreme Situations:

- Biting – In the case of a child in Pre K-3 or Pre K-4 biting another person, parents will be notified, and the child will be expected to immediately leave school for the remainder of the day.
- Any child deliberately inflicting harm upon another person, child or adult, may be asked to leave school for the remainder of the day.
- In the case of repeated extreme behaviors, administration shall determine the child's eligibility to remain enrolled.

C. Illness / First Aid/Emergency Treatment –

- It is important to keep your child home if he/she is ill. This helps to make them more comfortable, and prevents others from becoming ill. Our policy has always been that children not return to school until they are fever, vomit, and diarrhea free, without medication, for at least 24 hours.
- If a student has a temperature over 100 degrees, he/she may not return to school until he/she has been fever free for 24-hours without the intervention of medication (Tylenol or Motrin)
- Parents/guardians should contact the school if a student or a family member contracts a contagious disease. This is mandated by Social Services.
- Necessary information MUST be on the emergency form and updated as needed. In the event of serious injury, parents will be notified immediately and appropriate action will be determined. On site First Aid as deemed appropriate by the school nurse will be administered.

D. Food Service/Policy – While at school, each child is fed lunch and a morning and afternoon snack. The nutritional requirements for these are determined by the Virginia Department of Social Services. The children will be exposed to many foods. They may be asked to try new foods but will not be forced to eat anything. Outside food may be allowed into the classroom for special occasions (birthdays, holidays, etc.) **at the discretion of the teacher.** Enough food should be brought in for the entire class. Allergies are handled on an individual basis.

- Preschoolers' lunches are included in your tuition, and do not need to be ordered through your FACTS family portal, with one exception: Chick-Fil-A Days - If you wish to purchase Chick-Fil-A for your preschooler on these days, you must order and pay through FACTS Family Online (formerly ParentsWeb). If a preschool student does not buy Chick-Fil-A, **you do not need** to send a lunch from home as it will be provided by the cafeteria.
- Grandparent's Brunch - Preschool students attending the brunch do not need to pay, as meals are included in their tuition. If they are not attending brunch, they DO NOT need to bring a lunch from home because the cafeteria will provide their lunch that day.

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

A. All art supplies are supplied by the school. There is no need for children to bring pencils, crayons, paper, etc.

B. Playthings – Bringing toys to school is discouraged unless specified by the teacher as part of the curriculum, such as for show and tell. Weapons of any kind are not permitted. The following types of toys are not allowed:

- any requiring electric power
- any of a projectile nature
- any that are excessively noisy

C. Cots/sheets are provided by the school in accordance with the Department of Social Services. Parents will be asked to launder any sheets that become soiled by a child. These must be returned the next day. The state also requires each child to have a small blanket for daily nap time, which will be sent home with their sheet on Fridays to be laundered, and returned on Mondays.
***Please see last page for additional items required for Pre K-2**

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

A. Weather - In the case of school closings or delays due to weather, you will be notified. Specifics may be found in the Parent/Student Handbook.
B. Drop off/Pick up – Preschool teachers will be in their classrooms at 7:30. Preschool doors **will not** be unlocked at any time. For drop off, please bring your child directly to his/her classroom door to be greeted by the teacher or the assistant. Pick up procedures: Preschool students will be dismissed from either the preschool playground, or their classroom, depending on the weather, beginning at 3:00. Any students not picked up by 3:30 will be signed in to the after care program.

C. School Pictures – School pictures are taken three times a year, individual photos as well as group pictures. Dates are listed on the calendar. Reminders will be sent from the school office, as well as from your child's teacher.

D. Information - Additional information is made available to the parents by way of teacher emails and newsletters (to all students) and by school bulletins (Friday Flash). Some information may require a parent signature and need to be returned on a specified due date.

Pre-K 2 Addendum

The Pre-K 2 classroom will abide by all policies outlined in the St. Matthew's Preschool Handbook. Because of the young age and development of the 2-year old's, the Pre-K 2 classroom will also follow the following policies:

A. Diarrhea- In the case that a child should have two (2) loose bowel movements in one day, it will be labeled as diarrhea. The child must go home and may return to school 24 hours after being diarrhea-free.

B. Playthings – Bringing toys to school is discouraged unless specified by the teacher as part of the curriculum, such as for show and tell. Please label those items with your child's name. Children in the 2-year-old classroom may bring a quiet toy, such as a stuffed animal or blanket, for comfort.

C. Biting- Because of the developmental stage of 2-year old's, each biting incident is taken on a case-by-case basis. In all instances, both parties will be notified of the bite. After, the child may need to leave for school for the day if biting is a frequently used behavior for communication.

D. Nap time - Cots and sheets are provided by the school in accordance with the Department of Social Services. Parents will be asked to launder any sheets that become soiled by a child. These must be returned the next day. The state also requires each child to have a small blanket for daily nap time. If children in the 2-year-old classroom require a pacifier to sleep, they may bring it to use only for

nap time.

E. Diapering - Because most students will still be in the middle of toilet training, children in Pre-K 2 must provide the following for everyday use:
    - Diapers
    - Pull-Ups when your child is ready to start toilet training. The Pull-Ups should have side tabs with fasteners.
    - Wipes
    - Diaper ointment—over the counter (applied only with written permission from a parent)

Diaper ointment must be labeled with the child's first and last name. All other supplies can have the child's first name written on the outside of the package. The teacher will communicate when supplies are getting low at school through a daily communication sheet.

Authorization Form for Diaper Ointment or Cream
Modeled from the VA DSS

A staff member of St. Matthew's School has my permission to apply the non-prescription diaper ointment listed below to my child, _____.
(Child's name)

Product Name:

_____

Known Adverse Reactions (if any):

_____

_____

All OTC products must:

- Be in the original container and, if provided by the parent, labeled with the child's name
- Be used according to manufacturer's recommendation and instructions for application
- Not be used beyond the expiration date of the product

Diaper ointment/cream:

- Shall be kept inaccessible to children
- Record of use shall be kept that includes child's name, date, frequency of application, and any adverse reactions

This authorization is effective from: _____ until: _____
(Start date) (End date)

Parent's Signature: _____ Date: _____

THIS PAGE MUST BE SIGNED AND RETURNED TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

I have read and understand the preschool handbook.

Parent's Name (print)_____

Parent's Signature_____Date_____