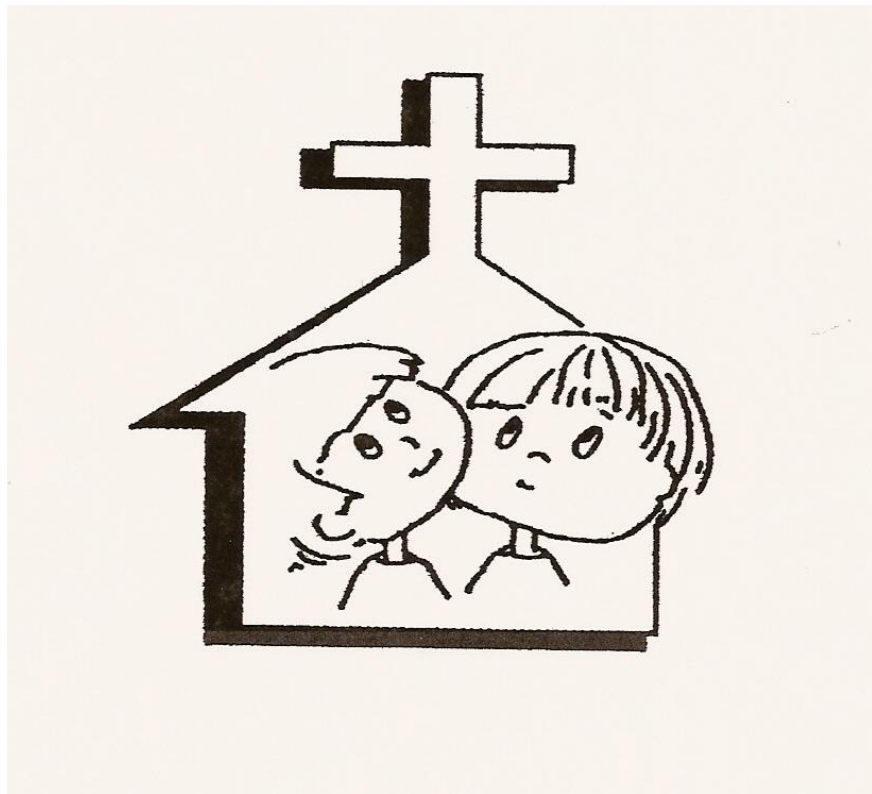


St. Paul Lutheran Preschool



Parent Handbook
2023-2024

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Thank you for taking time to read all of the policies set forth in this handbook. All policies were written with safety and caring in mind. Please feel free to ask questions if there is something you do not understand. If you require any assistance to read or translate this handbook, let us know as we have resources available to assist you.

INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

Love the children, teach God's wonders and discover the love of learning.

Program Philosophy

St. Paul Lutheran Church is dedicated to "Knowing Jesus, Telling about Jesus, and Loving as Jesus Loves". Reflecting that mission, St. Paul Lutheran Preschool seeks to instill within each child an assurance that he/she is a lovable and capable child of God. This is accomplished through a loving and caring Christian environment, which invites independent and group learning through exploration, interactive play and developmentally appropriate practices.

Quality Rating System (QRS) ★★★★★

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool has been awarded a *5-star rating* in the Quality Rating System (QRS). This initiative was created in 2006 to raise the quality of childcare in Iowa, to increase the number of children in high-quality childcare settings, and to educate parents about quality in childcare. QRS uses a rating scale system of one to five stars assignment depending on how many best practices categories are considered high quality. St. Paul is proud to share that the Preschool received high marks in the required number of areas.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool will prove to be a valuable asset to the needs of our members as well as to the community. St. Paul Lutheran believes in Christ's great commission by reaching out to all people to bring them to faith in Christ. Therefore, St. Paul Lutheran Preschool will welcome all into the community of faith and will reach out in hospitality and service to assist and embrace any race, color, national/ethnic origin and religious affiliation.

Inclusion Policy

Each child who is enrolled at St. Paul Lutheran Preschool is welcomed as a child of God and will be provided with a respectful, caring and safe environment. St. Paul's staff will meet the daily needs of each individual child to the best of their ability by assessing milestones, checking progress, making classroom modifications if needed, attending trainings, researching best practice and contacting consultants or specialist for assistance. All children will be included in all activities.

By having all children involved, every child and each family gains from the experience. Children with special needs develop social skills and build self-esteem, while the family gains social support; children and families without a special needs child become accepting and understanding, and the staff sees the need for individualizing care for all children.

Children with special needs include any child with a physical disability, a behavioral need, a language barrier or a health diagnosis. Since all children attending St. Paul are included in all activities, there are situations where modifications to the environment are necessary, or the situation requires an additional staff member to assist with accommodations.

The Preschool will make reasonable accommodation for a special needs child upon a formal request to the Director. Several facility accommodations are in place to assist physical needs. Those include grab bars in the restrooms, ramp for easy access to the entrance, wider hallways and lower sinks for wheelchair accessibility. Simple adjustments to the classroom arrangement will be made to help with ease in mobility.

St. Paul has access to several resource organization that can be contacted to assist with the special needs of a child and for training staff. These organization can provide physical equipment, assistance for behavior challenges, medical trainings for staff and/or language interpreters/trainings. These resource organizations include Green Hills Area Education Agency; Children’s Hospital and Medical Care; Boys Town Pediatrics; Iowa School for the Deaf; Family, Inc.; Treynor Optimist to name a few. For example, the Preschool in the past has used Children’s Hospital for staff to attend trainings for an enrolled diabetic child.

Any child with a special need will have an individualized care plan that will cover steps to implement and support his/her participation in Preschool activities. Medical emergency plans will contain doctor’s diagnosis, symptoms and emergency treatments. These are located in five places—in each classroom, in the medication storage cabinet, in each of the classroom backpacks and also in the child’s enrollment file.

For any child with a special need, the Preschool will meet with each family before the child attends the Preschool and discuss an individual care plan for the child. At that time, a communication plan of action can be designed for sharing progress and discussing any new issue or concern. If need be the Preschool staff, parents and any specialist can meet to make further plans to ensure the child’s progress.

OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

Address

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool
12 ½ Park Street, Box O
Treynor, Iowa 51575

Phone and Fax Numbers

Preschool Office: (712) 796-1177
Church Office: (888) 487-3880

Website, Email Address

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool Website: www.treynorpreschool.com
St. Paul Lutheran Preschool Email: admin@treynorpreschool.com

Operating Hours

- Preschool morning classes will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. with afternoon classes from 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Extended Preschool operates from 7:00-8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.-5:45 p.m.

School Closings

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool will follow the decision of the Treynor School. In the event of bad weather, school closings will be announced on radio stations KMA (960 am), KFAB (1110 am) as well as the websites of these television stations: KMTV3, KETV7 and WOWT6.

Weather-related Late Starts

For weather-related late starts by the Treynor School, morning Preschool will not be conducted. However, the afternoon Preschool will be in session at its regular time. Extended Preschool will open ½ hour before the start of the Treynor School day. Lunches must be ordered at that time. (i.e., If Treynor begins at 10:30; Extended Preschool will start at 10:00. If a child is to have a lunch at Extended Preschool, staff must be notified by the 10:00 start time.) If the student does not attend Extended Preschool on late start days and is contracted for that day, the charges will still apply as indicated on the contracted agreement.

Weather-related Early Outs

If the inclement weather causes Treynor School to close early, a Preschool staff member will notify parents of all remaining students about Treynor School's early closure and discuss a plan for an approximate time for their child's pick up. Staff would appreciate if parents could pick up their child as early as possible to allow staff to travel safely home.

Treynor School's Professional/in-service Days

Treynor School has many early-outs and no school due to Professional Development/Teacher In-service days. St. Paul Lutheran Preschool and Extended Preschool will be in session on those days.

Facility and Grounds Policy—A Tobacco, Nicotine, Alcohol-free Property

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool makes every effort to prevent children from exposure to additional risks in the air they breathe, especially for those children already with respiratory problems. Young children vulnerable to secondhand smoke are at risk of severe asthma and respiratory infections. Therefore, it is the policy of the Preschool and St. Paul Lutheran Church facilities that any use of tobacco, vaping, nicotine, and drugs including alcohol is forbidden in all facilities and/or on church premises. (Tobacco use includes but not limited to cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, pipes, snus, electronic cigarettes and nicotine products that are not Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved for tobacco cessation). Persons failing to abide by this policy are required to dispose of those previously mentioned products and/or asked to leave the Preschool/Church premises immediately. It is the responsibility of the administration/upper management to enforce this policy.

This requirement extends to students, employees and visitors and is applicable at all times, including St. Paul Preschool sponsored and non-St. Paul Preschool sponsored events. Employees are prohibited from engaging in any of previously named activities inside the facility and/or outside on the Church area. Staff will not wear clothing that smells of smoke when working, nor will they smoke in their vehicles while at work. The Preschool does not provide any student transportation. Therefore, no staff is allowed to transport students nor will students be exposed to smoke in any vehicles.

TUITION INFORMATION

Registration Fee

The amount of the registration fee is noted on the application and is due upon receipt of said application. Student enrollment is not complete until the registration fee is paid

in full. St. Paul Lutheran Church members having an active status membership may deduct \$25, per child, from the first month's tuition.

Enrollment Tuition

Our Preschool tuition is based on the whole school year from September to May, not on a daily fee. We even it out for monthly installments. There will be no reduction in tuition for scheduled holidays, conference days, snow days or absences. No monthly statement is sent for Preschool; statements are sent for Extended Preschool contracted service.

Three- & Four-Year-Old Preschool (Tuesday/Thursday)

Payable in 9 monthly installments of \$125.00/month beginning in September and concluding in May.

Four- & Five-Year-Old Preschool (Monday/Wednesday/Friday)

Payable in 9 monthly installments of \$175.00/month beginning in September and concluding in May.

Four- & Five-Year-Old Preschool

(Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday)

Payable in 9 monthly installments of \$285/month beginning in September and concluding in May.

Extended Preschool Program

Rate varies according to service provided. Cost details can be found in the enrollment packet. Contracts will be issued each month.

Occasional use (i.e., drop in with no contract): \$30 per day/\$12 morning due the day of the use.

Payment Policy

Charges for Preschool tuition are specified on the financial agreement in the enrollment packet. It is the parent's responsibility to make payment in a timely manner as no monthly statements will be sent out for the Preschool tuition.

Charges for the Extended Preschool program are specified on a separate financial agreement. Monthly statements WILL be sent at the beginning of each month.

We will accept cash, check, money order or electronic transfer for payment. All charges for the month are due the first week of that month payable to: St. Paul Lutheran Preschool. If you need a receipt, one may be requested from the Administrative Assistant or Director. Families will be notified in writing of any fee changes at least 30 days in advance.

Financial Assistance Program

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool Financial Assistance Program was established to provide a sliding-scale tuition assistance for children of Preschool families. The assistance is for Preschool tuition only, and does not cover Extended Preschool cost. The sliding-scale is based on the year's poverty guidelines established by the

Department of Health and Human Services. The amount of assistance is based upon two factors: the need of the family and the available funds for the year. Applicants will need to provide their gross monthly income and the first two pages of the most current income tax return with W-2. Please ask the Administrative Assistant or the Director for details.

Late Fees

If the tuition fee has not been paid by the 15th of the month, the Administrative Assistant will send a letter assessing a \$10.00 late fee and requesting payment by the 30th of the month.

If the fees are not paid by the end of the month, tuition is considered delinquent. If you experience unusual circumstances, please visit with the Director to explain the situation. When fees are not paid within an agreeable timeframe, the Preschool will provide information and resources to apply for the Preschool's Financial Assistance or for Department of Health and Human Services' Child Care Assistance program.

In the event a check is returned by the bank, an additional fee of \$25.00 will be assessed. After a second occurrence, tuition will be accepted only in cash.

Late Pick Up

Please call in regard to picking up a child later than the end of class time. If the Preschool is not informed of a late pick up, there will be a charge of \$1.00 per minute past the child's program time. This also applies to the Extended Preschool. Please notify the Preschool if your arrival time will be past the 5:45 closing. The charge will be \$1.00 per minute if we do not receive prior notification. Thank you for your cooperation.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Required Immunizations/Annual Physical

State law requires that each child enrolled shall have an annual physical check-up. A report of this examination and an up-to-date immunization record must be completed by a health care provider and returned prior to the first day of class. The signed current immunization record and physical form must be on file **before** the child attends the center. This is in accordance with the State of Iowa licensing regulations.

Sick Policy

The staff will do a daily health check upon arrival of each child before the accompanying adult leaves. This is merely a quick visual observation detecting any possible signs or symptoms of illnesses. The Director, attending staff and the accompanying adult will mutually discuss any possible illness. The Director and the attending staff reserve the right to have the final determination to allow a child to remain at the Preschool or to be sent home with the accompanying adult. The following symptoms could require evaluation by a primary care provider:

- Fever, lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficult breathing, or other manifestations of possible severe illness
- Rash with fever and behavioral change
- Tuberculosis that has not been evaluated
- Scabies
- Persistent cough with inability to practice respiratory etiquette

Please call the Preschool office to notify us if your child is ill and if his/her illness is contagious. They should not be sent to Preschool if any of the following symptoms are present:

- Temperature of 100 degrees or more within 24 hours before Preschool (assessed without taking a medication to bring down the fever)
- Vomiting within 24 hours before Preschool
- Diarrhea within 24 hours before Preschool (without taking medication)
- Rashes
- Head lice or nits (must be treated and excluded for one day and the Preschool must be notified)
- Any contagious disease

If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, please report it to us immediately (within 24 hours). This is for the safety of all children. The diagnosis of the communicable disease will be posted on the doors to the facility and through email/written notification. Only the illness will be disclosed not the name of the infected child.

If a child is sent home three (3) times within a ten (10) day time-frame due to reoccurring symptoms of an illness, the parent is required to present a doctor's note indicating admittance back into the classroom.

If children become ill at Preschool, we will isolate them and make them as comfortable as possible until the parent or an authorized person can come for them. Parents are asked to have their child picked up as soon as possible after they have been alerted to the signs of the illness. We are unable to care for children when they are ill, so we encourage you to have a back-up contact. Please make sure that St. Paul Lutheran Preschool has current phone numbers and emergency contacts in case your child should get sick at school.

Allergies/Dietary Needs

Please let the Preschool staff know if your child has allergies, special dietary needs, or has other triggers that may upset their system. We keep a secure yet accessible list posted in our classroom and in the kitchen. Our desire is to meet the needs of every child.

Allergy Policy

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool has recognized the seriousness of how food allergies can cause severe and even life-threatening conditions for some children. Having this policy in place will help us reduce the risk to children and adults who may suffer an

anaphylactic reaction if exposed to a particular allergen. Anaphylactic Reaction is a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction. It can occur within seconds or minutes of exposure to an allergen (i.e., peanuts or bee venom). Anaphylaxis requires an immediate trip to the emergency department and an injection of epinephrine. If anaphylaxis isn't treated right away, it can lead to unconsciousness or even death.

In an effort to help keep all our children safe, St. Paul Lutheran Preschool will strive to eliminate foods that have been determined to cause allergic reactions in children. We realized that any compromise to this policy would present an increased safety risk. Therefore, we are asking for everyone's cooperation and effort in making the Preschool environment as allergy safe as possible. It should be noted that whenever providing any treats for a classroom, we ask you to please contact the classroom teacher for information about allergies. Together each student, teacher and parent can join the Preschool in striving to make it a safe place for children and adults who have food allergies. We thank you for your cooperation and compliance.

Even though we cannot guarantee a completely allergy-free environment, St. Paul will aim to manage such an environment to the best of our ability. Staff will monitor environmental concerns (i.e., bee stings, grain dust) that would produce a known allergic reaction.

Please read the following plans to the allergy policy:

Health Plans:

St. Paul Preschool will have individual health plans indicating allergy triggers and necessary medication for each child with allergies. Medication will be stored, administered and documented in accordance with our Dispensing of Medication Policy (page 16). In addition quick reference emergency cards containing allergy and contact information are available for staff in classroom emergency bags.

Staff:

All employees will maintain anaphylaxis training as a part of the required CPR/First Aid training. We will keep an epinephrine auto injector (provided by the allergic child's family and a proper prescription) in a safe and easily accessible location in the classroom. Arrangements have also been made in the event the child is away from the classroom (i.e., outdoor play, walks, field trips). The Preschool will also strive to instruct staff to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction and to respond appropriately and promptly. If necessary, they will also monitor and inspect food items brought into the Preschool.

Note: When all of the registration information has been returned and all information about allergies are known, we will be sending home a letter indicating information and guidelines on how parents and staff can work together to assist in managing an allergy-safe environment for those having a life-threatening allergy.

Snacks/Extended Preschool Breakfast and Lunches

Preschool--We will serve a nutritious snack midway through the session. Parents will receive a snack calendar in the monthly newsletter, *The Pinwheel*. We will be paying special attention to any food allergies or diabetic needs that are noted on a child's registration form.

Oral Health Policy— The Preschool considers it necessary that children have oral hygiene education as part of their learning experience. During the school year, the staff will use developmentally (age) appropriate activities in the classroom that presents information about plaque (what it is), dental decay (how it occurs) and healthy foods (influencers on teeth). The staff will promote healthy foods by serving nutritious snacks and discussing their value in building healthy bodies. When designing the snack menu, the planner will include nourishing types of food (i.e., fresh vegetables and fruits) and items cited on the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)'s creditable listing. Students have the option of bringing a lunch from home or purchasing a meal from the public school which is required to follow the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). In the classroom, promoting health through wholesome, healthy foods can be observed by the use of conversations, books, puzzles and other resources placed strategically in the classroom areas.

Staff will discuss how strong teeth are dependent on healthy foods and will make a comparison to the more risky foods that could cause tooth decay. The educational activities will include presentations by professionals in the dental field and if available, dental screenings. Other resources that have age appropriate materials that staff access are YouTube, I-Smile, Iowa Department of Public Health. Not only will the staff be promoting the habit of regular tooth brushing and the eating of nutritious foods through experiences in the classroom, but they will also provide educational dental resources to parents. This will happen through emails, take-home sheets, internet links, etc. The information will provide education on good oral hygiene practices in an effort to alert parents to the risky foods of sweetened beverages and high carbohydrate-rich foods.

Those students attending the Extended Preschool will be brushing their teeth after lunch. The Preschool will provide a size-appropriate toothbrush labeled with the student's name. The staff will show the children how to brush in a circular motion from top to bottom. After use, toothbrushes will be stored with the bristles up to air dry in such a way that the toothbrushes cannot contact or drip on other brushes, and the bristles are not in contact with any surface. The toothbrushes will be cleaned with soap and water once a week and replaced whenever worn or frayed, approximately every 3-4 months. Water rather than toothpaste will be used for the teeth brushing process. During quiet time, no food or juice is given to the students.

Parents are required to name a dentist who can be contacted in case of a dental emergency. The dentist's name and contact information needs to be listed on the emergency contact form in the enrollment packet. If the parents do not have a dentist, the Preschool will advise the parents to choose one and if asked, the Preschool will provide a listing of local dentists with contact information.

In the event that a dental emergency does occur, a call will be made to the parent and to the dentist. The following will occur for a broken tooth: Cold compress on the face to reduce swelling, parent and dentist called. The broken tooth fragment will go with the child. The following will occur for a knocked-out tooth: Call to parent and dentist. The baby tooth will not be put back into the socket. For a permanent tooth: call to parent and dentist, tooth rinsed in cool water, tooth back into socket held with clean gauze—if not put into socket, placed in clean glass with milk, saliva, or water, go to dentist immediately.

Meals/Snack for Extended Preschool—Breakfast for the morning Extended Preschool will consist of cereal, fruit, and toast. Occasionally pancakes, waffles and French toast will be added as a choice. There is no additional cost for breakfast provided by the Preschool. However for the Extended Preschool noon lunches, parents have the option of sending a cold lunch with the child or purchasing a lunch from the Treynor School. The Preschool will be getting lunches from the Treynor School cafeteria, but the cost of a child's lunch will be added to the parent's next monthly billing. The lunch menu will be distributed by the Preschool or one can be retrieved from the Treynor School website www.treynorschools.org. Snacks will be served in the afternoon which will be published on the Preschool's monthly newsletter.

DAILY ACTIVITY INFORMATION

First Day of School: What to Bring/What to Wear

A couple of items your child will need each day: 1. a regular-sized book bag. Please clearly mark the backpack with his or her name. For safety purposes, please write your child's name on the inside of the bag. We have many papers, notes and projects that go home daily. Backpacks help your child to be organized and they also ensure important papers get home. Please check the backpack daily for these items. Go over notes and projects with your child to help them recall the daily activities. It is helpful to keep important notes in an accessible/visible place.

2. A second item is a water bottle. Please place your child's name somewhere on the bottle. It has been documented that having easy access to drinking water enhances a student's learning and focus when well hydrated. Having each child have their own personal water bottle, they are more likely to utilize it.

What should the child wear? Preschool is a time for messy activities: painting, cooking and playing outside. Please dress your child in clothes they can get dirty! Children should wear comfortable, washable play clothes and tennis shoes with socks. In the interest of safety, we ask that your child NOT wear flip flops or sandals.

Sometimes students need to change their clothing due to a spill or an accident. It would be helpful if you would pack an extra set of clothes and underwear for your child to leave at the Preschool. We do have clothing available for a student to utilize as well. If a student wears the Preschool's clothing home, we simply ask that you wash and return them as soon as possible.

Arrivals/Departures/Sign in Sign out Procedure

Arrival time is strictly at 8:30 for morning sessions and 12:00 for afternoon session. Please adhere to these start times to allow staff to attend a morning group prayer and make daily classroom preparations.

Preschool Arrival/Departure: Each classroom will have a specific area for arrivals and departures. Students' classroom assignments will be determined before the start of the school year and information in regard to arrival/departure for each child will be included in the Parent Night material. Basically, two parking lots will be utilized— the school parking lot adjacent to the school athletic field and the church parking lot. There will be signs to direct the flow of the traffic in each areas.

Sign-in/Sign-out procedures: The student needs to remain in the car until directed by the staff member who will escort the child from the car at arrival or to the car at departure. During arrival, a staff member will greet the driver and the child and visit a moment concerning any communication that would assist the happenings of the day. A sign in/sign out checklist will accompany the staff member. The parent or designated adult will need to sign-in or sign-out the child. The staff will also note the time of arrival, and if the child will be staying for extended. If the child is staying, she will then ask about lunch and the approximate time of pick up from the Preschool. The child will then be escorted into the Preschool facility by the staff member. For departure, your child will be escorted to the car at the end of the session and asked to sign the child out on the checklist.

Let us know of any changes that will occur for individuals dropping off and picking up your child. In the interest of safety, we might ask for a picture ID identifying the individual dropping or retrieving your child. We appreciate your cooperation in this effort.

Extended Preschool Sign-in/Sign-out: Those families using the early morning and the afternoon Extended Preschool program will use the church parking lot. Depending on the Extended Classroom designation, the parent will escort the child into that designated classroom to be greeted by a staff member. She will use a checklist to mark arrival time, lunch selection, and approximate departure time. She will also ask for a signature both at arrival and departure.

Absent notification: Please call the Preschool office (712) 796-1177 before 9:00 a.m. if your child is going to be absent for the day. It helps us plan for staffing and food availability. Parents will be called within the hour of the expected arrival time if no communication is received. The Preschool also needs to know if the child has a contagious illness so as to alert parents to be aware of symptoms.

Visitor Sign-in/Sign-out process: Anyone visiting the Preschool facility must enter the office to provide their time of arrival, name, contact information and the reason for visit on a prepared visitor list. The purpose is to maintain a secure facility, to furnish information in case of emergency or to have contact information for any notifications

of contagious illnesses. When leaving the facility, the departure time must be recorded.

Release of Children

Children will be released only to parents/guardians and to those persons who have written permission to pick up a child. Be sure this information is kept up-to-date. Parents may add or subtract people from the list as the year progresses, as long as the intentions are in writing.

In the case of separated or divorced parents, we must release the child to either parent regardless of which parent enrolled the child. However, in the event the custodial parent has a court order stating otherwise, a copy of the court order and a photograph of the non-custodial parent need to be on file at the Preschool.

Parent Visits/Phone Calls

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool maintains an open door policy for families. You are welcome to visit the classroom at any time. We ask only that you consider your child's temperament and stage of development before visiting him/her. Parents can call or inquire about their child at any time. However, it is paramount that staff be attentive to the students and the classroom needs at all times. Therefore, please call the Preschool's office phone (712) 796-1177 not the teacher's phone. Any messages will be given to the staff member. Their phones are for emergencies only.

Policy/Procedures of Exclusionary Discipline Practices

The Preschool makes every effort to work with families to prevent any exclusions or suspensions while their child is attending the Preschool program. This also involves any removal short-term from classroom activities that includes other classmates. It is vitally important for families and Preschool staff to work together and collaborate in an attempt to meet the developmental and educational needs of each child.

Strong relationships between families and staff start at the beginning of the year with completed enrollment packets. Within those packets there are important questions to give information concerning the child's needs, interests, preferences for routines, behavior concerns and expectations. This information gives a snapshot of the physical, social, emotional, and behavioral state of the child so staff can begin to develop a relationship with each child right from the start. In September/October, the parents are asked to complete the Ages & Stages Screening Questionnaire (A&Q). This will pinpoint any milestones that are areas of concern.

Initial supports by staff and director involve an evaluation concerning the classroom environment (i.e., student-staff ratio, room arrangements, room surroundings, personalities). Additional supports for the teachers can include confidential brainstorming conversations with staff members (i.e., director, lead teachers, associates). They will discuss instructional strategies, establish consistent routines and make a decision whether there is need for further evaluation using the Ages and Stages Social-Emotional screening tool.

Addressing these concerns requires communication face-to-face or by phone between teachers and parents in order to develop goals and practices that promote the child's social, emotional and behavioral health. Together they will design a communication plan for sharing information about the progress relating to the issue. The teacher will continue to record progress through observation documentation, checklists, personalized and behavior-specific recording forms (i.e., recognizing frequencies, antecedents, behaviors, and consequences).

There are various means that staff can find assistance and resources within and outside the Preschool. All staff members have access to in-service trainings that suggest strategies and/or resources to be proactive and responsive to behavior/challenging issues. Teaching strategies and aids include emotion discussions/inquiries, problem-solving pictures/techniques, calming/quiet spots, changes to room arrangement, equipment modifications, teaching coping skills, class transition notifications, etc. The Preschool also has the Social Emotional Ages & Stages Questionnaire available for teachers and parents to gain more information about the state of the child's social-emotional development.

If both parents and teachers come to the agreement that more support from specialists, consultants or behavior coaches, they will discuss and decide on a doable process. Several agencies are available to access—the Area Education Agency, Child Care Resource and Referral, Family, Inc. Other consultant agencies could include Lutheran Social Services, Boys Town Common Sense Parenting.

However, even though measures have been put in place, there are several reasons for suspension or expulsion:

- Found that the child or family presents a danger to staff and/or other children in the program (i.e., immediate discharge will be in effect until the situation is resolved).
- If family refuses to consent to outside intervention resources, dismissal will be considered. A team of staff and Governing Board members will make the determination.
- If continued placement in the Preschool fails to meet the social-emotional needs of the child and both family and staff agree that a different program will better service the child's needs.

After both staff and parents agree that measures have been exhausted and it is not possible for the child to remain at the Preschool, a transition plan will be established. The transition plan consists of gathering all documentation from staff and the professional agency. This will assist in selecting a more appropriate setting that would better serve the child and address the child's behavior challenges (i.e., mental health, social-emotional development, etc.). Suggestions or recommendations for an appropriate setting for the families to pursue might include therapeutic preschool programs, Head Starts, special education preschool programs or any other suggested programs made by the professional agencies engaged with the family during this process.

DISPENSING OF MEDICATION

Prescription Drugs

Preschool personnel will administer medication ONLY when a doctor's order is provided in writing. The initial dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction. If prescription drugs must be administered at Preschool or Extended Preschool, the following procedures will be used: a) the prescription must be currently dated with specific dosages ordered, b) the prescription must be labeled for the specific child, c) the medication must be in the original container and, d) the medication authorization must be signed by the parent or guardian. All medications will be kept in a locked location. Please ask a staff member to retrieve your medication at the end of the day when you pick up your child.

Sunscreen and Other Personal Products

Preschool - We ask that parents apply any sunscreen, lip balm, or other lotions/creams on their children before they arrive at Preschool. Due to the length of the Preschool session and the need for written approval, it is in the child's best interest that the parents administer any of these products at home prior to the school day.

Extended Preschool - We recognize that attendance in Extended Preschool may require one of the staff to administer an item of this kind. The parents must provide the item in its original container with the child's name. It also requires that the Preschool have written permission from parents along with any additional instructions beyond what the container's directions state.

Minor Accidents

In case of minor accidents, the child will receive basic emergency care by staff members who are first aid certified. The parents will be notified of the accident in writing and will be asked to sign the report. A copy of the accident report is filed in the child's record folder.

Medical Emergency, More Critical Accidents

If the injury is critical 9-1-1 will be notified immediately and every effort will be made to contact the parents/guardian or emergency contact person.

In the case of a more serious medical or dental accident, the child will receive emergency care according to the abilities of the staff. An attempt will be made to contact the parents or guardian immediately. In the event that the parent/guardian cannot be reached, the emergency contact will be notified. Preschool staff cannot transport children to the hospital; only ambulance service can. If a child is to be transported by ambulance and neither parent nor emergency contact is available, a staff member with whom the child is comfortable will accompany him/her. Parents or emergency contact will be notified to meet the ambulance at the designated hospital. **The parents/guardians will be responsible for payment of all related medical expenses for the care of their child.**

EVACUATION PROCEDURES

In case of **Fire** or **Tornado** the children will be taken to the designated safe areas. They will be supervised at all times by the staff. Fire and tornado drills are conducted monthly in accordance with licensing regulations.

The designated safe area for a tornado is the north room of the basement area. The immediate safe area for a fire is the grassy area north of the Preschool adjacent to the east side of the Church. In the event of a fire or tornado situation, staff will remain with the children and will be responsible for contacting families the location in which they can be united with their child.

Safe Zone Locations:

In the event that students need to be evacuated for their safety, the Preschool has identified three (3) safe locations away from the Preschool. They will be evacuated to one of following areas:

*Church-St. Paul Lutheran *Tom/Linda Eitmann *Terry/Sharon Clausen

Parents will be contacted as to where students are located for parents to reunite and pick up their child.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Emergency Procedures for a Missing Child

Several measures are established in an effort to prevent a child from going missing while in the Preschool's care. Those measures include the following: proper staff ratio, teacher supervision, student face-to name accounting during transitions, readily available listings of neighbor and parent phone numbers (contacts in emergency bags), and staff training on procedures. In addition, lead teachers will incorporate a student lesson focusing on teaching what a child could do if they become separated from parents or from the other Preschool students.

However in the event that one of the students goes missing during their time at Preschool, the Director or On Site Supervisor will immediately search the premises inside as well as outside of both the Preschool and the Church area. In the interest of student safety, the teacher associate will supervise the other students and question them for any helpful information in regard to the missing child. The lead teacher will call neighbors and inquire about the lost student's whereabouts. If there are no results from these procedures, the Director will call 911, the child's parent/guardian and Health and Human Services (HHS) giving the location of where the child was last seen. The Director will describe the student and the child's clothing to the authorized personnel and follow any of their directives. A Child Care Injury/Incident Report will be completed by the Director and submitted to the Health and Human Services within 24 hours.

Note that all field trips are to local locales and within walking distance. In an effort to keep all students safe, the staff will utilize one or more of the following options.

1. Assign student partners 2. Utilize a safety walking rope. 3. Increase staff (Director or On Site Supervisor) and ask for parent participation. 4. Suggest all students wear a red shirt on the day of the field trip.

In the event that a child goes missing on the field trip, staffing responsibilities will be similar to the above, except the Director or On-Site Supervisor will visually and physically make a door to door search along the field trip route, while the lead teacher calls neighbors. Phone numbers of neighbors along the route will be obtained before the field trip occurs. The remaining staff member(s) will supervise and question the students.

It is the policy of St. Paul Lutheran Preschool to instruct staff of the above responsibilities during orientation and two follow-up staff meetings. Both instruction times—staff orientation and staff meetings—will include a role-play type of scenario and conclude as a drill walk through.

Strangulation

St. Paul Preschool wants to ensure parents that the staff is vigilant in looking for any potential strangulation hazard. In an effort to eliminate the potential, the Preschool uses self-closing pleated blinds or Velcro material as window covers rather than the standard window draperies with looped cords.

In addition before placement into the classroom, all toys, dress up outfits and accessories (i.e., purse handles, hat strings, ties, etc.) are inspected for strings or cords that could encircle a student's neck causing strangulation. If any cord is deemed as a strangulation threat, the items are not used and will not be accessible to the students. When scarves and/or ribbons are used in music and movement, close supervision by a staff member is employed.

Hooded sweatshirts, jackets and coats come out when weather becomes cooler. The Preschool asks parents to remove clothing drawstrings from their child's apparel to alleviate the potential for strangulation. If a student comes to the Preschool with clothing that could prove to be a strangulation hazard, the clothing will be replaced with a Preschool item that has been checked for a strangulation hazard. Clothing items with strings or drawstrings in the Preschool's inventory has had such strings removed.

The staff uses retractable badge holders or break-away lanyards as a measure to prevent student entrapment. Lanyards with keys for outside buildings are kept out of reach of children and utilized only by staff. No pacifiers are used at the Preschool.

Blizzard: In the case of a blizzard, all students would remain at the center until parents are able to get them.

Power Failure: If St. Paul Lutheran Preschool has a power failure due to weather or other

unforeseen situation, we will contact parents of all students and they will be required to pick up their child within one hour of contact. If a parent cannot be reached, we will call one of the emergency contacts in the child's file.

Impaired Parent: Although we cannot physically stop a parent from taking their child, we will take certain measures to ensure the safety of the child. St. Paul Lutheran Preschool staff members are mandatory child abuse reporters and are required to report abusive situations that would endanger the safety of children. We will try to talk the parent into staying and arranging suitable transportation. If the person does leave with the child, we will call the police.

Bomb Threat or Chemical Spill: If St Paul Lutheran Preschool has a bomb threat or chemical spill, we will evacuate the Preschool facility to a secure place and contact parents as to the location.

Earthquake: If there happened to be an earthquake, we would keep the students at the center until we are able to contact parents.

Flood: Depending on the situation, we would keep the students at the highest level possible until we can safely transport them to a safe area. We will call emergency numbers and contact parents immediately to let them know where the children will be until safe pick up can take place.

Intruder: Students would be evacuated to safest location away from the intruder while a staff member detains the intruder. We will call emergency numbers and contact parents.

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

Teacher Qualifications

Staff members are Christians dedicated to working with young children and fulfilling the mission established at the Preschool. They are committed to providing developmentally appropriate instruction and guidance to the children God has sent. The Preschool is truly blessed with staff who are conscientious of children's safety while providing a nurturing and warm environment. Several staff have either bachelors or associate degrees and they all have a desire to embrace early childhood's best practices in their respective classrooms.

The staff looks forward to fulfilling the requirement of participating in continuing education in the areas of child development, developmentally appropriate practices, first aid, child abuse, CPR and other trainings that research has deemed as best practices for early childhood. They also attend facility trainings and meetings in order to be aware of specific details for the daily workings of the center's activities. The staff is proficient in conducting monthly drills as required by the Department of Human Services.

The Preschool is proud of the staff's accomplishments in the Quality Rating System (QRS), and they continue to review and practice the QRS components in preparation for renewal every 2 years.

Supervision/Student-Staff Ratios

Safety is St. Paul's top priority. Therefore, the number one consideration is to ensure that children are visually supervised using the proper staff-to-child ratio and class size. The early childhood professional organization, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommends a ratio of one teacher to ten students. St. Paul requires two staff members in each session at all times (i.e., inside, quiet time, snack, etc.) making the ratio never higher than one teacher to eight students, thus below the NAEYC's recommendation. St. Paul's ratio is maintained at all times even during the last 30 minutes of outside time. However in the event that a staff needs to attend to a student inside the facility, the ratio still remains within the NAEYC guidelines.

A staff member's supervisory role begins when a student is retrieved from an authorized adult's car and escorted into the classroom. It ends when the appropriate individual has signed the student out for the day. No student leaves the facility unless in the presence of an authorized adult. Having a fence around the outside play area is instrumental in keeping students in a secure location.

During the session, staff will supervise every aspect of the day's activities. To assist with the supervision, a name to face checklist has been designed. Teachers regularly use the checklist to account for students during check in, during indoor/outdoor transitions and again at sign out dismissal. When the students and staff leave the premises for a walk or a field trip, this checklist will accompany the staff and a name to face recognition will be completed periodically (i.e., every 20 minutes). The purpose is a check for the safe whereabouts of every child at all times. Also this serves as an accounting in emergency situations.

Staff are to be engaged when children are present. Therefore, staff are required to eliminate as many distractions as possible. For example, they are not permitted to have cell phones while working with students. Two exceptions are medical reasons and when an activity occurs off site (i.e., a walk, field trip or play outside). Ratio must be maintained for activities outside of the classroom, and one cellphone must be taken in case of any emergency situations.

The Preschool is truly blessed with staff hired who are conscientious about children's safety. Each year the staff will attend a staff orientation in August that provide information about their role as supervisors of students. Time is allotted for a walk through of each classroom where a discussion occurs covering the proper placement of furniture so as to hear and visually have view of students at all times. An outside tour is also required to visually section off the play area to establish the best line of sight for staff members supervising outside.

During this training time, other supervision safeguards are in the conversation. These include having consistent safety rules, knowing potential hazards and what might

require a teachable moment. The water tables need extra special supervision and requires being within an arm's length reach to prevent any drowning occurrences. The children will never have access to any bodies of water (lakes, streams or ponds) while attending the Preschool.

Curriculum

Students attending a preschool begin a lifetime of learning. St. Paul Lutheran Preschool recognizes that a loving and stimulating environment contributes to how each student will respond to his/her lifetime of learning. Therefore, it is the desire of St. Paul Lutheran Preschool to enhance students' development and learning spiritually, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and physically.

Goals of the Program

The goals and learning activities will focus on the following areas of development:

- **Faith Development**-Through Bible stories, students learn how God generously cares for them, how Jesus is our Savior and how we are to love one another. During daily prayer and songs, the students will praise and revere God.
- **Discovery of God's World**-Students participate in local/walking field trips, discussions, scientific exploration, and personal observations to help them become more aware of God's presence in their world. This discovery process also fuels the joy of learning and promotes the development of learning skills.
- **Kindergarten Readiness**-Staff members work with students to develop visual, verbal and listening skills. Students will be introduced to letters, numbers, shapes, colors, and other concepts appropriate for kindergarten preparation.
- **Social Development**-Students are taught to respond to others with Christ-like behavior, to accept directions from adults, and to share with others. Staff and volunteers also will work with students to help them develop a healthy self-image and understand that they are made in the likeness of Christ.
- **Creative Experiences**-Staff members will help foster students' God-given creativity and imagination through drawing, singing, drama, rhythm activities, and a variety of experiences with sand, water, play dough, blocks, paint, and other creative types of medium.
- **Physical Development**-Students will participate in group play, outdoor play, and small and large motor skill activities. They will learn to value the bodies that God gave them and how to keep them healthy and safe.

Curriculum areas that will be incorporated into the daily routine will include content areas of language arts, math, social studies, music, movement, science, art, and field trips. The curriculum will not only center on the goals of the program but also will center on the students' interest, daily experiences and developmental needs.

Learning Centers

Children of preschool age learn best through play and hands-on experiences. Learning centers will be designed to contribute to this program type. The classroom environment will have a variety of open-ended learning centers, which include but are not limited to the following:

- Dramatic play (varies—housekeeping, Dr. office, grocery store, puppets, dress up clothing)

- Manipulatives (puzzles, Lego, felt board, games, magnatiles)
- Creation station (painting, drawing, coloring, crafts, art work)
- Science/math/nature (magnifying glasses/magnets/counting objects/cooking)
- Sensory (play dough, water, corn or sand table, bubbles)
- Cognitive (learning games and activities)
- Reading zone—library and story reading
- Blocks—unit blocks, building roads/train tracks
- Music/Listening (CDs, musical instruments)

Each student will use the centers at his/her own level, gaining enjoyment and success from the learning experiences. To contribute to the learning center's effectiveness, the staff will serve as a guide to encourage individual students to use materials in such a way as to further their development.

Developmental Screening/Monitoring Tool

The yearlong goal of the Preschool is to provide the most effective activities and experiences to help your child grow in all areas of development not only academically but physically, emotionally and socially. The Preschool uses a questionnaire called *Ages and Stages (ASQ)*. The ASQ has been used nationwide for more than 20 years and measures how children are progressing along a developmental continuum. It provides a look at how children are doing in important areas such as communication, physical ability, social skills, and problem solving. Simply, it will reveal what your child's strengths are, uncover any areas of concern and identifies if additional evaluation and/or intervention strategies are needed.

As your child's parent/guardian, you are an active partner in your child's learning and development. Therefore, you are the best source for information. For that reason, the staff will ask you to complete this questionnaire with your child at the beginning of the school year (approximately mid-October—not more than 60 days into the school year) and again at the end of the year (approximately end of April). This gives a snapshot of the milestones achieved along the developmental continuum.

Results from the Getting Ready to Read screening tool is another source that staff rely on when selecting activities and experiences for your child. It measures key early literacy skills: print knowledge, linguistic awareness and emergent writing. The individual results are used to decide whether or not to take specific actions such as introduce new skills, offer enrichment/remedial instruction, or consider more targeted screening or assessment.

The staff completes this screening around the same time as the ASQ screening tool—at the beginning of the school year (approximately mid-October—not more than 60 days into the school year) and again at the end of the year (approximately end of April).

Other screenings that are conducted during the school year include vision by the Lion's Club, hearing by the Area Education Agency and dental screenings depending on availability.

Guidance Approach

St. Paul is committed to ensuring that all children are well-cared for, safe and guided in a way that each child is working toward socially acceptable behaviors when interacting with peers and adults. Our belief is that children can participate in activities with respect for one another's personal space and can follow age appropriate classroom expectations depending on each individual's level. Any directive by staff is done with the intention of guiding a child to a better understanding toward an appropriate and acceptable behavior. Any corporal punishment and/or physical discipline by staff is prohibited.

A proactive approach is meant to guide children toward appropriate behavior. The following approaches include:

1. Staff training: discussions on behavior issues—positive and negative; staff meeting learning ways that encourage acceptable behaviors; professional development focusing on positive behavior supports in the classroom
2. Staff strategies: present alternative options or choices; redirecting to another activity; use of logical reasoning, problem solving techniques and positive reinforcements; modeling appropriate behavior; promoting schedules, simple rules and transitions children understand; use of clear, direct commands with appropriate language; give guidance with encouragement and descriptive praise; be aware of personal limitations and personal expectations
3. Classroom design: take into account differences in each student's needs, interests, development, capabilities and culture; flexibility in satisfying the daily schedule and willing to implement a change as needed for benefit to children's interest
4. Curriculum expectations: age-appropriate activities that are engaging and encouraging positive behavior through exploration, investigation and creativity at the child's age level
5. Use of time-outs as last resorts and limited to one minute for each year of the child's age. An alternative to child's time out is a "toy" time out.

Each staff member is expected to work thoughtfully and kindly with the children in a Christian atmosphere. Guidance should revolve around building a child's self-esteem and healthy self-concept while teaching skills for self-control and socially acceptable coping skills. Staff have spent time in discussions and trainings with a focus on the use of positive reinforcements and guiding students on their behavior journey.

Promoting positive relationships between children, their peers and staff encourages appropriate behavior. Simply, children having a relationship with their peers and staff members are more likely to follow directives in a positive and acceptable manner.

This policy will be shared with parents in several ways which will include Parent Handbook, enrollment paperwork and also at the Parent Night event in the fall. Periodically, communications about general behavior ideas will be sent to parents by various means. The program's monthly newsletter the "Pinwheel", teacher-created newsletters, take-homes and/or emails will give some thoughts on behavior issues. They might include but not limited to best practices, current research or internet links

concerning age-appropriate behavior. Other individual student behaviors—both positive and concerning—will be communicated by phone or email to the appropriate families when necessary.

Field Trips

Occasionally children will participate in local/walking field trips away from the Preschool. We will notify you in advance of each planned adventure. We encourage and welcome parents to go with us. Please note: All staff members go on field trips. Therefore, if your child is not attending the field trip, please make other arrangements for your child's care that day. The Preschool does not do any transporting by vehicles on any field trips. There is the exception of a school bus ride for students upon visiting the elementary school and possibly the last days of the school year. Permission slips signed by parents will be required before any student will be able to ride the school bus.

Pets

Please do not bring dogs or other pets to the Preschool facility without permission from the Preschool Director. Calm, tame pets have been known to bite when stressed or excited--we cannot risk bites or injuries. Please make prior arrangements with the Director if you feel bringing an animal could enhance one of the unit themes. If applicable, we ask that all household pets (i.e., dogs and cats) be current on all shots and vaccinations.

Classroom Pets: Classroom pets will be maintained in a clean and sanitary manner and not allowed in the kitchen or food preparation areas. Parents will be made aware of the presence of a pet in the center. If parents do not want their child to have access to the pet, a written statement must be submitted to the Director.

Staff and children must wash their hands after handling any and all animals.

Visitors

As a parent you have unlimited access to your child. You are always welcome at the Preschool as a visitor (see page 14 section **Parent Visits/Phone Calls** of this handbook) or as a volunteer. If you have a hobby or occupation that could be of interest to share with the class, we would love to have you share it with the children. Please let us know your interest and availability and we will schedule a time for you to come share with the students.

Birthdays/Other Celebrations

Birthdays are very special days for children. The teachers make every effort to celebrate every child's birthday and attempt to celebrate it as close to the actual birthday as possible. For children with summer birthdays, we celebrate a ½ birthday by choosing a day during the school year. The staff will inform you of the month/day and ask if you desire to provide birthday treats for the class. If you plan to provide a snack, please visit with the teacher about the type of snack at least a week prior to the scheduled birthday. This will aid in preventing any concern for food allergies or dietary needs among the students. We also request that these snacks be low

sugar/low fat pre-packaged treats or fresh produce. Some examples include cheese, crackers, yogurt, carrots, or fruit pieces.

We request that birthday party invitations NOT be distributed at Preschool. Children who are not invited feel terribly disappointed even if they don't know the child well. The classes will celebrate seasonal holidays with stories, games, art projects, food, and special guests. The celebration of traditions, both ethnic and religious, is an important aspect of human development, and the annual cycle of holidays creates a rhythm and focal point for these transitions in the lives of our children.

Sharing—Show & Tell Time

During the students' large group time, the staff will be encouraging students to verbally share experiences, express individual ideas, and develop listening skills. Periodically, we will ask students to enhance the curriculum and themes with something brought from home. It might be a toy, a picture, or a family story that will support an aspect of the monthly curriculum. These times will be indicated on the newsletter (The Pinwheel) and will provide further information for the sharing. When sharing includes something from home, we ask for your cooperation in seeing that your child brings ONE item and that the item is not a real or make-believe weapon.

Bringing Objects to School

Preschool--Children will have plenty of opportunities to utilize the wide variety of toys and equipment available at the Preschool. With this in mind, we ask that toys remain at home or remain in their backpacks.

Extended Preschool—This policy also applies during the Extended Preschool program—no toys. However, students may bring a cozy blanket and/or **ONE** soft cuddly toy for quiet rest time. Only a soft toy please--no hard-type or small, hard collectible-type toy. If a blanket and/or an appropriate toy is brought, it should remain at the Preschool. It will be sent home every other week or as needed to be laundered. Sharing toy items at other times throughout the day will NOT be allowed.

Library

We have assembled an extensive library that is filled with wonderful books for you and your child to enjoy. The children will be allowed to check out two books two times a month. Designated library days will be published on The Pinwheel newsletter. We ask that you return the books after one week. If the books are not returned within 30 days a \$5 restocking fee per book may be assessed.

PARENT INFORMATION

Expectations for Parent Involvement

Our Preschool program is for you and your whole family--not just your preschooler. As parent/guardian of a preschooler enrolled in our program, you are invited to join us in the many different activities held throughout the school year. We will go on local/walking field trips several times during the year. We invite you to join us in learning about our local community whenever your schedule allows. There will be

other family activities held at the Preschool and at St. Paul Lutheran Church. These will generally be held on various weekday evenings and weekend mornings. We encourage you to be involved in your child's Preschool experience, and we look forward to interacting with family members.

There will be notices via emails, newsletter (The Pinwheel), as well as notes sent home with your child. Please take time to read and respond to the notices as they will inform you of things that are happening at the Preschool.

Remember to check your child's backpack daily for important notes! This is the first line of communication!

If you have any suggestions for classroom activities, field trips, family nights, group discussion or other ways you could become involved in our program, please do not hesitate to tell us. We welcome your ideas!

Communication with the Preschool's Governing Body

Parent Advisory Board Information

The Preschool will have a Parent Advisory Board to serve as a liaison between parents and the Preschool's Governing Board. The purpose of this group is to represent all parents in regard to questions, comments, or suggestions that they feel should be brought directly to the attention of the Preschool Governing Board. These concerns can deal with the director, individual teachers or with the Preschool program. Parents are directed to bring their conversation to one of the members of this Advisory Board. The names of those on the Parent Advisory Board will be communicated each month on the Pinwheel newsletter.

For confidential matters—availability for direct contact to Governing Board

Any comments, suggestions or concerns can be confidentially presented to the current Governing Board president or members for review at the monthly Governing Board meeting. To retrieve contact information for the Governing Board members, call the church office at (888) 487-3880.

Newsletter—The Pinwheel

To keep you informed of class activities, upcoming events and snacks, the Preschool will publish a monthly newsletter and send it as an email attachment to each Preschool family. We encourage you to print a copy from your computer for your home use. If you are unable to have computer access, you can request a hard copy from a staff member.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Please feel free to contact the teacher at any time regarding your child's progress. Progress reports are given to all parents in November, February and May. Formal parent teacher conferences regarding your child's development and progress occur in November for all students, in February for those students planning to transition to kindergarten next year, and in May for students in the Tuesday/Thursday program. Parents and/or teachers may request a conference at any time to discuss concerns or observations about a child. In the event that you are unsure about sending your

child to kindergarten the following year, you may request a conference with the teacher before the January Preschool enrollment deadline so as not to jeopardize the child's placement at the Preschool for the next year.

Handwriting Instruction

Many children want to print their name. We ask that when you instruct your child in letter formation you use upper case (capital) for the first letter only and lower case for the remaining letters (i.e., Susie, Bill). We also ask that you work on using the correct pencil grip. The proper grip is to pinch the pencil with the thumb and index finger and let the pencil rest on the middle finger. Since the Treynor School uses the D'Nealian script, we will be instructing the children to use this handwriting method. However, if you will not be sending your child to Treynor, please inform us of what district so we can stress that district's method.

Cell Phones in Our Classrooms

The Preschool strives to create an atmosphere in the classrooms that minimizes distractions. This allows the staff to keep their full attention and focus on the children throughout the day. Therefore, the Preschool has designed a policy that staff will ONLY make and receive calls or texts of emergency-type matters. Any abuse will not be tolerated. If you as a parent have a matter that is not an emergency but need to relay a message, please call the Preschool office (712) 796-1177. The office staff would be glad to relay the message to the teacher. We request that parents abide by this policy and respect the staff and students' time as they interact with one another. Cell phones are allowed in staff possession while outside and on field trips again for emergency-type situations. Thanks for your cooperation.

Outdoor Classroom/Playground Equipment Stability and Inspection

St. Paul Preschool's "outdoor classroom" (active outside play area) is nature-based and planned as promoted by Nature Explore and the Arbor Day Foundation. Since nature is at the forefront, there is no traditional playground equipment (i.e., swings, slides, climbers). Rather areas include gardens, rain barrel, log balance beam, stump jumpers, large logs and log-type building materials. All natural resources that were purchased from Nature Explore are anchored in cement as required by the manufactured specifications. Some of the stump jumpers (not purchased) are made from very heavy and stable materials not needing anchored. None of the equipment is over 12 inches, therefore, no fall zone is actually required. Yet, an area under the balance beam and stump jumpers is mulched and flipped for maintenance purposes. Mulch covers large sections of the play area and is replenished every year. The mulch is certified ASTM as required by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The Preschool has been blessed with both shaded area and sunny spaces.

More typical equipment available to the students includes but not limited to tricycles and helmets, balls, obstacle course materials, sit and spins, bat and balls, super scooters, go wheelies, two playhouses etc. There are also centers to emphasize art, music, manipulatives and small building materials. Two areas that students find appealing are the sand and dirt digs. Those areas are covered to keep critters from venturing in whenever the dig areas are not in use.

Outside safety is an important part of quality care of children. The staff is expected daily to be alert to any potentially hazardous items that could cause injury such as broken bottles, stinging insect nests, discarded cigarettes, etc. In an effort to ensure that equipment and grounds are in safe and working condition, the Preschool uses a monthly checklist to detect any of the following defects: missing/broken parts, protrusion of nuts and bolts, rust and chipping/peeling paint, sharp edges/splinters/rough surfaces, stability of hand-railings, visible cracks, stability of non-anchored play equipment, any wear and deterioration of any kind. The Director or On Site Supervisor is responsible for completing and noting any hazard that could jeopardize safety to the students. If a hazard or deficiency is noted, the area will be closed to the students and reported to the Church's Maintenance Team or to the proper authority for repair.

Safety concerns are addressed during the staff's August Staff Orientation and throughout the year at monthly staff meetings. The meeting agenda includes a field trip out to the play area site. This often brings to light safety rules that need to be consistent and easy for the students to follow and understand. It also highlights staff positioning for good sight lines and hearing capabilities. Examining the various play areas brings to light hazardous situations that need to be addressed such as strangulation possibilities, potential physical injury, water hazards at the water tables and appealing but not safe adventures. The Preschool encourages outside training for the staff that would provide safe and learning experiences. Nature Explore, Arbor Foundation and Public Playground Safety have provided the staff with helpful trainings.

The Preschool sees the benefit of having enough staff to adequately supervise the large area. Therefore, the same staff ratio used in the classroom is employed outside—a minimum of one staff member to ten students. The fenced-in area is also an advantage to having the students contained within the area.

Weather Guidelines

Depending upon the day's weather conditions, the children will be spending a scheduled learning time in the outdoor classroom. To assist the staff in determining whether conditions are safe for outside learning and gross motor exercise, the Preschool uses the Iowa Health and Human Services Child Care Weather Watch Chart and the electronic Weather Channel report before readying the children for outside activities. (See Weather Chart page 32)

We want all children to be dressed comfortably and appropriately for the weather in order to enjoy their time outside. In the interest of safety, we ask that your child NOT wear flip flops or sandals rather wear socks and closed-typed shoes such as tennis shoes. We recommend that students have an extra pair of shoes for rainy days and for the winter months in which they can change into when coming inside. Please clearly label all winter gear and boots with the child's name on the inside of the clothing.

The following are some weather-related clothing guidelines:

- Temps 50-60 degrees—jacket or sweatshirt
- Temps 35-50 degrees—winter coat or layered clothing like sweatshirt and a jacket
- Temps 35 degrees and below—winter coat, gloves/mittens, hats/hoods
- Snow play apparel—hat/hood, winter coat, mittens/gloves, boots and snow pants

Students will not be allowed to play in the snow if ANY of the above snow play apparel is lacking. Students lacking snow play apparel will be restricted to areas that have been cleared of snow.

The following activities will be allowed with snow play apparel:

- Students can make a snowman
- Create snow angels
- Play on mounds of snow is restricted to times when adult supervision is directly present and when permission is granted by a teacher

Parent Meeting

A parent meeting will be held in August. A letter included in the enrollment packet has this information. A reminder post card will be sent as it gets closer to the assigned date.

No Babysitting Policy/Babysitting for families outside of Preschool

Staff members are not allowed to be paid caregivers for families with children enrolled in our program. If a parent insists on hiring a teacher as a babysitter, parents can choose to waive their right to hold our program liable. In that case, parents will need to complete, sign and date a *Hold Harmless* consent form. A new form must be completed each year and kept on file.

A copy is given to the family as well. Parents who sign a *Hold Harmless* agreement and hire a teacher to babysit acknowledge that they:

- a) Are aware of the program's no babysitting policy and,
- b) In choosing to bypass the policy, accept the consequences of their choice.

Preschool Enrollment Procedures & Policy for the following school year

To secure a first choice placement for following school year, we are asking that applications from those presently enrolled be received no later than January 30th of 2024. Priority will be given for those students enrolled in existing school year until January 30th. After that date enrollment will be open to the general public. Priority will also be given to presently contracted Extended Preschool students as well as those from the general public that need Extended Preschool.

The age of a child is used in determining enrollment for the year. For the 4-5-year old program they must be the age of 4 by September 15th, and for the 3-4-year old program they must be the age of 3 by August 1st. Any child enrolling in the program must be completely toilet trained (i.e., no pull ups).



Tentative Preschool Daily Schedule

This serves only as a guide--staff is flexible to meet student needs

8:30-8:40 (12:00-12:10)	Handwashing/manipulative skills
8:40-8:50 (12:10-12:20)	Welcome, Prayers, Bible verse, Pledges, Message Board, Chapel
8:50-9:00 (12:20-12:30)	Music/Movement/Exercise
9:00-9:10 (12:30-12:40)	Large group story book activity emphasizing the month's focus
9:10-9:40 (12:40-1:10)	Small Group/Snack Projects, fine motor, pre-writing experiences Kindergarten readiness activities
9:40-9:45 (1:10-1:15)	Transition to centers
9:45-10:45 (1:15-2:15)	Self-selected interest centers Students interact with classmates and with learning Resources provided in various learning areas
10:45-10:55 (2:15-2:25)	Clean up and transition to outside
10:55-11:25 (2:25-2:55)	Large motor/Outside nature time/interest centers (weather permitting) Discovery of God's earthly wonders Exercising large and fine muscles in various learning areas
11:25-11:30 (2:55-3:00)	Hand washing, Review, Prayer, Goodbye song



Tentative Extended Preschool Daily Schedule

This serves only as a guide—staff is flexible to meet student needs

7:00-8:30	Breakfast and self-selected centers
11:30-11:50	Outside Nature Time (weather permitting) /Transition/Prep for lunch
11:50-12:15	Lunch
12:15-12:45	Clean up from lunch/Brush teeth
12:45-1:00	Story time
1:00-2:00	Quiet Time—resting on mats/soft toy/books
2:00-2:20	Transition from rest/pick up mats/snack
2:20-2:45	Small Group Time Projects: group & individual/Fine motor skills/Pre-writing experiences/Kindergarten readiness activities/Table activities
2:45-3:45	Self-selected centers Children interact with classmates and with learning resources provided in various learning areas
3:45-4:05	Fine motor/Prewriting/Kindergarten Readiness Skills
4:05-4:15	Transition to outside (weather permitting)
4:15-5:15	Outdoor large motor movement—enjoying the nature around them
5:15-5:25	Transition from outside
5:25-5:45	Self-selected centers