

# PARENT HANDBOOK



ST. JOHN'S CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL  
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"Play is the work of the child"

Maria Montessori

Mission: "To shepherd growing and developing children in a Christian environment.

*St. John's Christian Preschool admits students of any race, religion, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies and athletic and other school administered programs.*

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# **WELCOME**

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSES**

In 1966 a group of concerned parents at St. John's felt a need to provide an educational experience for their preschool age children in a Christian environment. To fulfill this need, they organized St. John's Lutheran Preschool, a non-profit organization to be operated by St. John's Lutheran Church. The preschool was established for the purpose of promoting the mental, physical, emotional, social and spiritual growth of children under professional supervision and guidance through a comprehensive program of instruction with a daily emphasis on Christian attitudes.

In the summer of 1994 the school became incorporated under the name of St. John's Lutheran Preschool, Inc. This is the corporate entity that operates and governs the school.

Through the years the program has continued to expand and serve the Rockville / Aspen Hill community.

In May of 2000 the school's name was changed to St. John's Christian Preschool to reflect the significance of our mission statement - "To shepherd growing and developing children in a Christian environment."

The preschool is staffed by a director, dedicated teachers and assistants and a treasurer. The entire staff is constantly striving to instill in the children a positive self-image, realizing that a child with self-esteem is more likely to develop into a loving and caring adult. Our pastor makes his contributions to the program with the weekly chapel service.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

The Board of Directors consists of members of St. John's Lutheran Church and the Director. The Pastor and Treasurer are ex-officio members. The Board of Directors determines school policies, hires staff and sets the budget. Members currently meeting monthly include:

Margaret Jackson (Director)  
Chris Howard  
Tom Hickman  
Janine Speakman  
Kendra Wells  
Yolanda Wilson (Treasurer)

## **PRESCHOOL STAFF**

All teachers have earned a four-year college degree. All assistants are experienced in working with young children.

### **Director**

Margaret Jackson

### **Teachers**

Samudra Ekanayake  
Regina Hines  
Betty Mott  
Jihyun Shin  
Lou Taylor

# SCHOOL REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

## ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSION

1. Applicants for St. John's Christian Preschool **should** be at least 2, 3 or 4 years old by **September 1st** of the year they enter for the 2, 3 and 4-year-old classes, respectively. School policy requires children to be toilet trained before entering the three or four year old classroom. Students entering the two-year old classroom are not required to be potty-trained.
2. A non-refundable registration fee and non refundable one month's tuition (May's tuition) are payable for each child with the application for admission.
3. Parents will receive written confirmation of acceptance within one week of the school's receiving completed registration papers and the deposit.
4. **MEDICAL FORMS FURNISHED BY THE SCHOOL MUST BE SIGNED BY A PHYSICIAN AND FILED AT SCHOOL IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT.** Immunizations must be current unless a contradiction exists.
5. Registration begins in January for the following school year. The priority rating system is as follows:
  - a. Children presently enrolled in St. John's Christian Preschool.
  - b. Children of confirmed members of St. John's Lutheran Church at time of registration.
  - c. Siblings of children presently enrolled in St. John's Christian Preschool.
  - d. Siblings of children who have attended St. John's Christian Preschool in the past 5 years, but not currently.
  - e. Children in the community-at-large.
6. The school maintains a waiting list for all classes to cover any openings that might occur throughout the year.

## TUITION AND REFUNDS

1. Monthly tuition payment shall be paid on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month and is considered delinquent if not received by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. Parents may be asked to withdraw a child if tuition is more than one month delinquent.
2. All tuition shall be payable by check, money order or via online pay option located on website. Any check returned by the bank will result in the charge of \$30.00; after a 2nd returned check, only a money order will be accepted as payment.
3. Mail tuition to: St. John's Christian Preschool, 4629 Aspen Hill Road, Rockville, MD 20853. Teachers will not accept payments; you may hand deliver your payment to the preschool office mailbox marked "tuition". The preschool office is located in the preschool hall.
4. No adjustment of fees can be made by the school for absences, withdrawals or dismissals.
5. Tuition rates for 2023-2024 are as follows:
  - 3-day (2's) class \$ 395.00 per month
  - 3-day (3's) class \$ 495.00 per month
  - 3-day (4's) class \$ 495.00 per month
  - 5 -day (3s or 4s) class \$670.00 per month

## WITHDRAWAL

1. The school reserves the right to request the withdrawal of any child for good and just cause.
2. A parent may withdraw a child at any time during the school year, but written notice must be given 30 days prior to departure.

## ABSENCE, ILLNESS, ACCIDENTS AND TOILETING

1. Any child who shows signs of illness should not be sent to school. The health department stresses that a child with a yellow or green nasal discharge be kept at home, and we concur; this is easily overlooked as a sign of illness. If a child becomes ill at school, we will contact the parents at once.
2. **PARENTS SHOULD NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY IF A CHILD HAS BEEN DIAGNOSED AS HAVING A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE. THE PRESCHOOL WILL IN TURN NOTIFY THE ST. JOHN'S FAMILIES OF POSSIBLE CONTACT.**
3. CCA regulation requires this school not re-admit a child after an absence due to illness for 3 days or more without first receiving a written statement from the parent or physician that the child may return to a regular schedule.
4. If your child is on any medication, make sure the teacher is aware of this. Medication often causes behavioral changes.
5. If an absence is anticipated, or if your child is unable to attend for any reason, please advise the child's teacher.
6. If your child is allergic to any foods, fibers, plants, animals, etc., be sure the teacher is aware of this and notate this information on appropriate forms.
7. Every precaution for safety is taken in school situations, but should an accident occur, appropriate first aid will be administered at the school and the parent notified immediately. We will use the information on the emergency form on file to contact a relative/friend should the parent not be available. In extreme cases, a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital, should such action be necessary.
8. Any child who has a bathroom accident at school will be changed at once, by the classroom teacher or assistant. Please ensure that your child always has an extra set of clothing at school.

## SOLICITATION

The school maintains a non-solicitation policy. Class lists, for example, are not to be used for business purposes.

### **SCHOOL CALENDAR AND SNOW DAYS**

1. A calendar of school events and holidays is found on the last page of the school handbook. Please refer to this calendar for St. John's specific holidays.
2. If it is announced that the county public schools are closed due to weather conditions, St. John's will also be closed. St. John's will reopen, when county schools do. **If the county schools have a delayed opening (2 hours), the preschool will open 1 hour late (at 10am).** If the county schools close early due to inclement weather, we will close at the same time as MCPS. The Board of Directors will take into consideration the number of missed days in planning make up days, as deemed necessary.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Parents (or designated person) are required to sign their children in and out of the school daily.

### **HOLIDAY OBSERVANCES**

We observe the following holidays with the children: Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter. Specifically, Halloween involves the fun of dress-up and pretend. At Christmas we place priority on the celebration of Jesus' birthday and make family gifts, cards, learn simple carols and read biblical stories. Valentine's Day finds us emphasizing family love and friendships. The children exchange valentines and make family valentines. Easter is the story of Easter Sunday wherein we highlight the resurrection and new life through age-appropriate books. Additional holidays and celebrations may be added throughout the year.

### **CHAPEL**

1. Each week the pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church will lead the children in a devotional service in the chapel. This reinforces their learning about the Christian faith, provides an opportunity for worship on their level and includes a prayer, a song and a brief Bible or Christian attitude story.
2. The teachers may read books or plan projects around the chapel theme.

### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE TIME**

1. The preschool's classes operate on the following schedule:
  - 2s Class 9:00 – 12:00
  - 3s Class 9:00 – 1:00
  - 4s Class 9:00 – 1:00
  - 3s/4s combined class 9:00 to 1:00
2. Please be sure to arrive on time. For many children, arriving late causes uneasiness and a difficult start to the day.

### **LATE PICK-UP FEE**

**ANY CHILD NOT PICKED UP WITHIN 5 MINUTES OF DISMISSAL WILL BE TAKEN TO THE PRESCHOOL OFFICE TO WAIT, WITH A STAFF MEMBER, UNTIL THE CAREGIVER ARRIVES. A LATE FEE OF \$1.00 PER MINUTE WILL BE ASSESSED AFTER THAT TIME, AND THE PAYMENT SO RECORDED.**

### **VISITORS**

Parents of enrolled children are welcome to visit the classroom and chapel. Please schedule your visit with the teacher/ office in advance. If consultation with the teacher is desired, please arrange an appointment in order that class instruction not be interrupted.

### **TELEPHONE CALLS**

Telephone messages may be made to the staff and the Director during school hours at 301-946-4977. If you have a concern about your child, leave a message and the Director or your child's teacher will return your call promptly.



### **CLOTHING**

1. PLEASE SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IN COMFORTABLE PLAY CLOTHES SUITABLE FOR PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES. **Please NO sandals!** SNEAKERS are recommended and are safer for playground play.
2. All removable articles of clothing must be labeled. Clothing the children wear should be as simple as possible, the right size, and in good repair, so that they can remove/put on all clothing themselves. Baggy clothes, cords and strings on clothing can become caught in playground equipment.
3. Children should be dressed according to the weather. Hats and mittens or gloves are necessary in cold weather. The children use the playground equipment during the winter. We follow MSDE rules regarding playground use and outdoor temperature.

### **BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAY PARTIES**

1. Birthdays will be given a simple and uniform recognition. Parents may provide a small simple treat (suggestions include small cupcakes, small muffins, cookies, donut holes).
2. We ask that parents distribute home party invitations outside of school. We provide a class directory for email and purposes.
3. Special parties are held at Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter. St. John's Christian Preschool will provide snack for the children on these special occasions.

### **SNACKS and LUNCH**

1. Parents will provide a snack (cheese and crackers, fruit, etc) and lunch daily. Please note that 2s class only needs a snack.
2. All food items should be nut free.
3. Please note we will encourage all students to eat their healthy and growing foods first before any treats. This however is not a mandatory.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

1. We may do a spring fieldtrip. They are part of the program and include parent / guardian participation.
2. It is REQUIRED that all children wear the school t-shirt on all field trips. T-shirts will be available for purchase.

### **CONFERENCES**

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES ARE HELD TWICE A YEAR. The specific dates are noted on the school calendar. The school is closed for two days at this time to permit those parent-teacher exchanges to take place. Parents should sign up with the child's teacher for an appointment several weeks in advance. Parents may request additional conferences with either the teacher or Director at any time during the year by calling the school office for an appointment. The teacher may also request a conference at any time.

### **BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE EXPECTATIONS**

Children are encouraged to exhibit positive, age-appropriate behaviors. Respect for others, consideration and cooperation are essential behavioral expectations. Staff and children work together to model and practice positive behaviors. Children who are in danger of hurting themselves or other classmates are redirected and given an opportunity to discuss and understand the ramifications of their behavior. A child's success and challenges are always communicated with parents. Good communication between home and school is what we believe in. On the rare occasion, when we are still unable to adequately meet the needs of a child (after numerous conferences with parents, interventions and changes to programming), the director may suggest withdrawal from St. John's Christian Preschool.

### **NEWSLETTER**

A newsletter will be published at the beginning of each month and will serve to keep parents informed of policies and upcoming events. ‘

### **SCHOOL FOLDER**

Every child will be given a St. John's school folder that travels from home to school and back again each school day. Parents are responsible for checking the folder for school news and art work, etc., and returning any required communications. The "We Connect" page in the folder is designed for parents or teachers to write quick notes, questions, etc. It provides another opportunity for quick and easy two-way communication.

### **EVENT BOARD**

We will use an event board, located inside to the right of the entrance doors, to keep you informed of monthly events. Such events will also be noted in the monthly newsletter.

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Our school's philosophy is to keep all children safe while in our care. As required, all staff members are trained in the correct responses. We have an emergency plan to handle shelter in place, evacuation to another site and a method to contact parents. These are reviewed yearly. Detailed written documentation is in the office and classrooms.

### **DOORBELL**

For security reasons, the outside doors leading into the preschool hall are locked when it is not arrival or dismissal time. Please ring the doorbell on the right-hand door frame if you need to enter the building during the "locked" times.

### **CONCERNS**

1. It is requested that any concerns regarding a teacher-pupil relationship be referred to the teacher in question. If it is not satisfactorily resolved during an in-person conference, it should be referred to the Director.
2. Concerns of a nature other than teacher-pupil should be referred to the Director who will, in turn, arrange a meeting with the parent at the earliest opportunity.

### **CHANGES IN SCHOOL REGULATIONS AND POLICIES**

Changes in regulations and policies may be made when action becomes necessary for the betterment of the school.

## **SCHOOL PROGRAM**

### **OBJECTIVES**

Our constitution states "St. John's Christian Preschool has been established for the purpose of promoting the mental, physical, emotional, social and spiritual growth of children under professional supervision and guidance through a comprehensive program of instruction."

These goals are carried out in a loving, caring, Christian atmosphere where development of a child's self-esteem and independence is a priority.

### **GUIDELINES**

1. Children should be involved.
2. Play is the way children learn.
3. The environment, not the child, should be structured.
4. The school and parents must work together.

We stress process, not product. Therefore, you will often see a product that represents a culmination of a weekly activity, rather than a daily product. Many of our curriculum themes cover a week or more.

### **CURRICULUM THEMES**

Our school is certified by the MSDE and therefore includes age appropriate presentation of the seven key areas that comprise the Maryland Model for School Readiness for kindergarten. These areas are physical development, language/literacy skills, social/emotional development, mathematical thinking, scientific thinking, social studies and the arts.

### ***SEPTEMBER***

- Welcome to school as a new physical, social, and learning environment
- Our Family
- Self: Feelings, Growing

### ***OCTOBER***

- Seasons (focus on fall)
- Safety: Street, Strangers
- Safety: Fire, Home

### ***NOVEMBER***

- Transportation
- Friendships and Community

### ***DECEMBER***

- Christmas: Significance, Joy
- Holidays Around the world

### ***JANUARY***

- Winter animals, weather, etc
- 5 senses

### ***FEBRUARY***

- Leadership (including presidents)
- Health and Wellness

### ***MARCH***

- Spring
- Easter Significance and Joy

### ***APRIL***

- Life cycles and metamorphosis
- Celebrating the earth

### ***MAY***

- Summer Awareness
- Moving forward, growing, maturing

### **MUSIC ENRICHMENT**

Our teachers incorporate music and movement into the daily classroom lessons. This may include singing, learning about and playing instruments, preschool yoga, dancing and various other interactive activities.

### **STAFF RATIO**

Understanding that each child is a special and unique individual, every qualified and experienced staff member implements our program in a way that allows each child to thrive and reach their fullest potential. .

Our classrooms are staffed by a teacher and an assistant (based on student numbers). Our teacher-child ratio reflects our understanding of age differences and each child's need for individual attention.

2-year-olds 10 children per one teacher and one assistant

3-year-olds 14 children per one teacher and one assistant

4-year-olds 18 children per one teacher and one assistant

### **DAILY ROUTINE**

A typical day of preschool includes the following activities: arrival time (children play with table toys), opening exercises, show-and-tell, music, finger plays, outside play, snack/lunch, story, learning/circle games, dramatics, inside play, and creative art. Working with children requires flexibility; the order and variety of activities may vary depending on circumstances and the age group. A dry erase board outside each classroom details the daily activities for parent preview.

### **ORIENTATION DAY/ MEET AND GREET**

These “get acquainted” days provide an opportunity for each child to see their school and classroom and briefly meet teachers and classmates. Parents, too, have a chance to meet the staff and other parents, ask questions and receive the handbook and other important information.

### **THANKSGIVING CHAPEL**

Parents and friends are welcome and encouraged to attend.

### **CHRISTMAS CHAPEL**

The highlight of our Christmas season is the family Christmas service. All classes sing Christmas carols for their parents and friends. The Pastor contributes the Christmas story. Refreshments are served in the Narthex after chapel.

### **SPIRIT WEEK**

An opportunity for fun, community building and school spirit.

### **EASTER CHAPEL**

The 2, 3 and 4 year-olds celebrate spring and Easter in song and the pastor tells the story of Easter Sunday.

### **TEDDY BEAR PICNIC**

Each child brings a teddy or other stuffed animal from home for the bears’ picnic.

### **GRADUATION CHAPEL**

We say good-bye to our pre-kindergarten children in a special ceremony. This family event features the children as they sing several favorite songs and the Pastor’s special presentation, too. After the sanctuary program, staff, children, parents and friends enjoy refreshments.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION**

### **VOLUNTEER QUESTIONNAIRE**

We are looking forward to having volunteers return to the classrooms this year. The opportunities are varied, but can include being a guest reader, teaching a simple craft, sharing family holiday traditions.

### **BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT**

This yearly event will provide parents the opportunity to meet Preschool Board members and Pastor. In addition, parents will hear from the school Director and have an opportunity to visit their child's classroom and hear from the teachers.

### **SHARING OF TALENTS, JOBS, AND CULTURES**

Parents are our greatest asset. So many parents have special talents or abilities, interesting jobs, or a less-known cultural heritage to share. We would love for you to share your gifts and experiences with the children and our community. If you are interested in doing so, please contact your child's teacher and or the Director.

### **OPEN HOUSE**

In February we hold our annual Open House for parents who wish to select a preschool program for the following fall. On this day, Preschool Board of Directors, parents, and the Director are on hand to give building tours, make parents welcome as they observe the program in operation, provide registration forms, and answer questions.

## 2023-2024 School Calendar

\*Dates are subject to change with notice

### August

28-Sept. 1 Teacher Prep Week

### September

1 Student Orientation Meet and Greet

6 First Day of School

20 Back to School Night 7pm

### October

9 Professional Day for Teachers - NO SCHOOL

30 Halloween Parade 9:30 am

### November

20 Thanksgiving Chapel 11:30

22-24 Thanksgiving holiday - NO SCHOOL

27 Classes Resume

### December

8 No School Parent / Teacher Conferences

20 Christmas Chapel 11:30

25 – Jan 5 Christmas Holiday NO SCHOOL

### January

1-5 Winter Break NO SCHOOL

8 Classes Resume

15 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day NO SCHOOL

### February

7 Open House for Prospective Families

19 President's Day NO SCHOOL

### March

20 Easter Chapel 11:30

22 Professional Dev for Teachers NO SCHOOL

25 – April 1 Easter break

### April

3 Classes Resume

22 Parent / Teacher Conferences NO SCHOOL

### May

22 Preschool Graduation

24 Last Day of School

27 Memorial Day

### June

3 - 14 Summer Camp

**\*Calendar dates subject to change. Please follow newsletter for any date changes.**

**The best things you can give children, next to good habits, are good memories. ~Sydney J.  
Harris**

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