



# 2021-2022

# Parent Handbook

**St. Paul Early Learning Center**

10001 57<sup>th</sup> Ave. South

Seattle, WA 98178

206-725-0780

[seattlestpaul.org](http://seattlestpaul.org)

## **Welcome!**

Welcome to all parents who have made the important decision to enroll your child in the Early Learning Center program at St. Paul Parish. This handbook will help answer questions you may have or questions that may arise during the school year. This handbook is only for your reference – we encourage parents to communicate with teachers and staff on a regular basis. We encourage family engagement through personal conversations and emails.

## **Our Purpose and Mission Statement**

Our purpose is to support and assist parents in early childhood education in a Catholic environment. We want your child's first learning experience, spiritual and academic, to be fun, exciting and inspiring in order to set the stage for further education. Our mission is to assist parents and families in fostering the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, artistic and physical development of the whole child.

## **Our Philosophy**

We build community through our belief that everyone is created in the image and likeness of God. As such, we nurture Christ by honoring our individual differences. We promote the dignity of all persons by respecting the differences and various life paths of our St. Paul families. We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children. We work with them as a support team, and we model Christ-like behavior in conjunction with the practice of our faith.

## **Admission Policy**

Enrollment is open to all children 3 years of age to 5 years. Children entering the class must be toilet trained and able to tend to their bathroom needs.

A copy of an immunization form MUST be submitted by all new students before school begins. All new students are accepted on a 6 week probationary basis. We reserve the right to terminate any child's attendance if it is determined that the child is not benefiting from our program. Registration fee for new families is \$200.00 per child. All registration fees are non-refundable.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

We do not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, religion or disability. Students possessing physical or emotional disabilities will not be denied admission solely by reason of the disability; however, we must be able to meet the needs of the individual child.

## **Preschool Readiness**

Before a child can learn, they must feel confident to discover and explore their environment. Children learn best through play and opportunities to explore, create, build and problem solve.

It is important in a child's development to be able to listen to instructions and carry out tasks. Children will develop the skills to complete a project when given opportunities to do so. This develops healthy attention spans and gives students a greater ability to stay focused when surrounded by the distractions of a group setting.

Empathy is a huge factor in how children build relationships. Children who are empathetic can get along respectfully with adults and peers. All children need to be potty trained and working towards an easy separation from their parents before the beginning of school.

\*All children MUST be potty trained. Potty training is defined as: wearing underwear and not pull-ups; verbally identifying the need to use the bathroom; pulling down clothing to get to the toilet; wiping him/herself; independently replacing articles of clothing moved for toileting; able to wash and dry hands. We acknowledge that accidents do occasionally happen and that is part of the learning process, however students should be able to use restroom facilities independently most of the time.

### **Behavioral Expectations**

Establishing a daily routine with healthy communication directly affects behavior and a child's ability to learn. In the preschool classrooms we use positive reinforcement and gently redirect inappropriate behavior to support the developmental needs of the children. The teachers will communicate with parents regularly. We have scheduled Parent-Teacher conferences multiple times a year, which are an excellent opportunity to learn about the progress and behavior of your child/ren. Regular communication with the teachers is encouraged.

*Involved parents = successful students.*

### **Hours of Operation**

The Early Learning Center will be open from 7:00 AM until 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. The center will be closed on all non-school days. A yearly calendar will be provided at the time of registration.

### **Tuition**

**Plan A:** 7:00a.m. - 6:00p.m. -\$1,500.00 per month

**Plan B:** 8:00a.m. – 3:00 p.m. -\$ 1,050.00 per month

Contracts are signed and tuition is collected through our SchoolAdmin portal. Your tuition payment schedule can be set up within your account.

## **Arrival and Departure**

All children must be dropped off and picked up at the Southside door where your child must be signed in and out daily. An authorized adult is required to sign in and then sign out your child daily. Please notify your child's teacher if someone different will be picking up your child or if they will be picked up at a different time.

## **Curriculum**

Our curriculum, World of Wonders, is a comprehensive program that covers the following domains of child development: Personal and Social Development, Language and Literacy, Mathematical Thinking, Scientific Thinking, Social Studies, The Arts and Physical Development and Health. It provides differentiated instructional pathways for children ages 3 to 5, including English language learners and children with special needs.

It supports Kindergarten readiness and introduces children to instruction that builds strong foundational skills for success in kindergarten with: a focus on letters, oral language, listening comprehension, social-emotional skills, and math content that is recursive, introduction of science and social studies and music in every unit. Our focus in the three year old class is to introduce them to letters, numbers, shapes and colors while helping them learn the social skills that are important for success in school.

We believe in the parent's role as the primary educators of their children. With input from parents as well as observation, and individual and group work, our teachers identify how children learn best. Teachers provide children with various opportunities to expand their thinking skills, language development, small and large motor skills and problem solving abilities through a variety of learning experiences. Children participate in learning centers including: pre-reading, pre-math, games, writing, art, music, science, dramatic play and more. Through individual, small group and large group activities children learn self-direction and independence, building positive relationships with those around them.

We also believe each child is a unique individual created in the image of God. As teachers connect with students in a safe and nurturing environment, they are able to guide them in exploration and discovery of their own value, as well as of the people and the world around them.

**Religion:** Children will attend and participate in religious and cultural activities throughout the school year.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **Typical Daily Schedule** (Child to Staff ratio – 10:1)

7:00-8:00	Arrival Time, Center Activities
8:00-8:35	Clean Up/Morning Work/Books
8:35-9:00	Large Group Language Lesson, Small Group Practice
9:00-10:00	Snack/Outdoor Time, Outdoor Activities
10:00-11:00	Age Specific Learning Centers
11:00-11:30	Faith Time/Wash Up/Prepare for Lunch
11:30-12:30	Lunch and Outdoor Time
12:30-2:00	Rest Time
1:30-2:30	Quiet Centers
2:30-3:30	Snack/Outdoor Play
3:30-4:30	Enrichment Centers
4:30-5:00	Snack Time/Books
5:00-6:00	Self-Directed Centers

Our "Rest Time Policy" - We will give all children 1 hour to fall asleep with encouragement, peaceful music and help from the teacher. If at that time, they are still awake and restless, we will give them a book or a quiet activity.

### **Meals and Snacks**

Children who eat a well-balanced lunch are healthy and more likely to learn in the classroom. At St. Paul Early Learning Center we support increased emphasis on nutrition as well as physical activity to enhance the well-being of our students. Breakfast will be served to those students who arrive before 8:00a.m. Parents will provide two snacks and a lunch for their child each day. Meals and snacks must include the required nutritional components listed below:

Snack must contain 2 of the components listed below.

Lunch must contain 4 of the components listed below.

- \*fruit, vegetable, or 100 percent fruit/vegetable juice
- \*dairy; such as milk, cheese, yogurt, or cottage cheese
- \*grain; such as bread, cereal, rice cake or bagel

\*Meat or meat alternative, such as beef, fish, poultry, legumes, Tofu or beans \*liquid to drink - water or milk, fruit or vegetable juice.

### **School Closures**

In the event of snowstorms, windstorms, earthquakes or other emergencies, we may need to cancel school. Information may be obtained by listening/watching the local radio and television stations. As a general rule, St. Paul Early Learning Center follows the Seattle School District. If the Seattle School District has a two hour delay there will be no morning classes. Please be sure to check your email because the Director will email you directly if school is canceled or delayed followed by a phone call from your child's teacher. This is an effective way to stay informed during emergency and non-emergency situations.

### **Parental Involvement and Family Engagement**

Parents are always welcome to help in our classrooms. We also encourage families who want to share specific skills, careers or cultural traditions to communicate with their child's teacher to plan a visit. Family members interested in volunteering in the classroom and/or with students, must take part in our Safe Environment program and have a current background check as required by the Archdiocese of Seattle.

## **HEALTH MATTERS**

### **Illness and Injury**

Please do not send your child to school if he/she has a fever or is vomiting, has diarrhea, fifth disease, lice/nits or a bad cough. When children come to school with these conditions, other students are exposed. If a child comes to school and, in the opinion of the teacher, is sick, we will call you to come and pick up your child. If your child is sent home due to illness, he/she cannot return to school until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours. This allows ample time to recover and stops the spread of illness to other children. If a child is injured while in our care parents will be notified immediately. If the parents are not able to be contacted, the people listed as emergency contacts will be called. If they are unable to be reached, the child will remain in the Director's care.

### **Medication**

No medication can be administered by school personnel without the written permission of the prescribing physician or dentist. The students' physician must complete a Medication Authorization form which will be kept on file. This includes all medication whether prescription or over the counter drugs. Medications are kept out of the reach of children.

## **Immunizations**

Prior to entry students must present proof of having had the immunizations as required by Washington State law. Every student enrolled in a Catholic School in the Archdiocese of Seattle shall be immunized against vaccine preventable diseases caused by infectious agents in accordance with the immunization schedule adopted by the Washington State Department of Health Services. The only exception to the foregoing requirements for students in our Catholic schools is a medical exemption signed by a licensed professional (M.D., N.D., D.O., ARNP, or PA), authorized to practice in the State of Washington, including the physicians license number.

## **Child Abuse/Neglect**

Staff members are LEGALLY OBLIGATED to report any suspected child abuse or neglect cases. In all cases, the facts, discussions, and meetings will be kept confidential between the family in question and the involved staff members. Once a report has been called into the Child Protective Services, the agency has 24 hours to begin an investigation. The Dept. of Children & Families will make a determination of abuse or neglect. If a parent suspects child abuse/neglect at school, she/he should IMMEDIATELY notify the Director.

## **UNIFORM POLICY**

At St. Paul we wear uniforms because:

- They represent our Catholic school image.
- They promote a sense of equality.
- They are less costly to families and more easily maintained.
- They promote an attitude of moderation and modesty.
- Children need to have shoes with Velcro fasteners. **No lace ups.**
- We go outside rain or shine so always send a coat with your child to school. Please make sure it has a **hood** on rainy days!
- Label any clothing your child may remove at school (coats, sweaters, etc.)

**\*Please have a complete change of clothes in your child's cubby.**

A change of clothing should always be in your child's cubby in case of a spill or accident. This can be embarrassing for children and having their own change of clothing (including underwear) allows a change to go unnoticed. Please place extra clothing in a large plastic bag marked with your child's name. Soiled clothing will be repacked into the plastic bag and placed back in the student backpack and returned home to be laundered.

### Shirts

Boys: White polo (long or short-sleeved), white long-sleeved turtleneck. All shirts should be tucked into the waistband. No crests or logos are allowed on shirts.

### Pants

Students wear navy blue cotton twill pants (Uniform Store style). (Uniform Store style & color) cotton twill, ankle length, and straight-legged pants, with no cargo pockets, adornments or stitching. Pants must be worn at the waist.

### Walking Shorts

Students may wear dark navy twill walking shorts (no shorter than 2" above the knee, no cargo shorts) are permitted throughout the school year. No sweat, jersey or corduroy shorts are allowed. The shorts must not be below the knee and must be worn at the waist.

### Socks

All students are to wear socks (knee-highs or anklets) or tights at all times. Girls may wear leggings, under uniform skirts, as long as they are in uniform colors.

### Shoes

Athletic shoes are recommended each day. Shoes must be solid uniform colors (black, white, red, blue, gray, or brown) No light up, blinking shoes or Heelys (wheeled shoes) are allowed. Shoes must Velcro closed. No flip flops or open toed shoes are allowed to be worn.

### Blouses

Girls: Short-sleeved, white blouse with Peter Pan collar, white button front polo (long or short-sleeved), white long-sleeved turtleneck pullover may be worn. All blouses and shirts should be tucked into the waistband. No crests or logos are allowed on blouses.

### Jumper

Girls wear the Fairmount Plaid jumper available at the Dennis Uniform Store. The length is to be no greater than the top of the kneecap. Please have children wear shorts under their skirts.

### Sweaters

Red St. Paul sweaters and sweatshirts with monogram are part of the uniform and may be worn seasonally. Only uniform sweaters purchased from the Dennis Uniform Store may be worn to school. These include red V-neck vest and cardigan. Uniform sweaters and sweatshirts are to be worn during the day if a child is cold, non-uniform sweaters/sweatshirts are not allowed



## **Supplies**

Children should bring backpacks, reusable water bottle and lunch boxes. Please apply sunscreen to your child before school on sunny days. Parents will need to provide 2 cot sheets and a small blanket for the children. Blankets and cot sheets will need to be laundered by the parents weekly.

## **Volunteers**

All volunteers must have a background check through VIRTUS which you can access through our school's website. Employees and volunteers at childcare centers must provide immunization records indicating they have received the MMR vaccine or have proof of immunity.

## **Student Records**

All student records including applications, authorization forms, assessments and parent communication will be kept confidentially in a student's file. Parents must communicate any changes involving their child from health issues to a change of address to ensure records are kept current.

## **Discipline Policy**

In keeping with St. Paul's goal of creating a Christian learning environment, we guide children toward the following behavior expectations:

1. Show concern for yourself and others.
2. Show respect for those in authority: teachers, clergy, adults, volunteers.
3. Follow directions to the best of your ability.
4. Share and play with toys properly and appropriately.
5. Follow playground rules.
6. Tell the truth at all times.

However, these expectations are learned skills that require much guidance. When mistakes happen, we:

1. Repeat behavior expectations.
2. Help the child (ren) understand the conflict and discover an appropriate resolution.
3. Role-play a situation so that the child can learn and practice appropriate social behavior.
4. If a child continues to misbehave, we have the child take a time out.
5. If unsafe behavior occurs such as biting, hitting, kicking, swearing, or hurting others, an instant time-out will be applied, and parents will be notified.
6. If a child displays repeated inappropriate behaviors, a conference is called with the parents, teacher, and director to find a solution together.

**Restraint**

Physical restraint will only be used if a child's safety or the safety of others is threatened. Such restraint will be limited, gentle, and developmentally appropriate, and will be reported to parents.

**Expulsion Policy**

We know that when children are given the opportunities and support to develop (learn, practice, discuss, etc.), self-control and other social and emotional skills, it gives them the foundation needed for academic and life success.

Unfortunately, there are times we may have to ask that a child be removed from our program either on a short term or permanent basis for a variety of reasons. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors. The parents will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior. If needed, other resources or recommendations for evaluation by a professional consultation will be shared with parents. If, after remedial actions have been taken and have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's behavior warranting an expulsion.

**Screening and Assessment**

We do a Developmental Screening as well as a general knowledge screening at the beginning of the year. We do ongoing assessments every two units throughout the year in the four year old classes to help us inform instruction and establish small groups that help your child learn at a pace that is best suited to them as well as be able to individualize their learning. If there are any concerns about your child developmentally or we feel they need further evaluation we will conference with parents and help you find the best resources for your child. We may also have speech or occupational therapists come to our class to evaluate your child in a school setting if needed. We want to partner with parents to help your child be as successful as possible in a school setting.

**Kindergarten Transition**

We will send home assessments that parents can pass on to kindergarten teachers and/or our teachers can complete Kindergarten transition forms from other Kindergarten programs. We will let you know when local Catholic Schools are having their Open House each year so you can learn more about your Kindergarten options within the Archdiocese.

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICIES**

### **Field Trips** (*Policy established in correlation with Seattle Archdiocesan Guidelines*)

Field Trips for the 2021-2022 school year will be contingent upon the county's current regulations. Field trips are planned by the teacher to enrich the curriculum. Parents are asked to note carefully all arrangements for field trips. Written parental permission is necessary for any student to participate in the field trip. Students who do not have a signed permission slip will not be allowed to go on the trip. Phone calls will not be accepted in place of the written form. Only students currently enrolled at St. Paul Early Learning Center are allowed to participate on field trips. Parents who drive or volunteer for field trips must find childcare for their children not enrolled at St. Paul ELC. Safe Environment training and a background check are required for all drivers and chaperones.

If a private passenger vehicle is used, then the following information must be supplied, and the driver must certify this information:

- The driver must be 21 years of age or older.
- The driver must have a valid, non-probationary driver's license and no physical disability that could in any way impair his/her ability to drive the vehicle safely.
- The vehicle must have a valid and current registration and license plates.
- Students must always wear seat belts
- Children under six years old and/or sixty pounds must be seated in a regulation child's seat.
- The vehicle must be insured for the following minimum limits: \$100,000 per person/ \$300,000 per occurrence.
- A signed Driver Information Sheet on each vehicle must be submitted to the office prior to the field trip. \*Each driver/chaperone must have a background check through VIRTUS which you can access through our school's website.
- Employees and volunteers at childcare centers must provide immunization records indicating they have received the MMR vaccine or have proof of immunity.

Each driver and/or chaperone should be given a copy of the approved itinerary including the route(s) to be followed and a summary of his/her responsibilities. The following supervision requirement should also be maintained; there should be one adult for every ten students.

If parent drivers are used, all drivers will be responsible to see that all students assigned to their car leave and return, seat-belted in the same car. Each driver will carry emergency forms for students riding in her/his car.

NOTE: NO ADDITIONAL SIDE STOPS ARE ALLOWED. This includes special arrangements for lunch, treats, or at destinations not specifically included by the teacher in the field trip. Drivers must complete required insurance forms in September. These will be kept on file in the school office. The school does not carry liability insurance for injuries. Drivers must have completed the background check through VIRTUS.

All field trip chaperones are expected to follow the directions and guidelines of the teacher regarding each specific field trip and not deviate from these directions.

## **OTHER POLICIES**

### **Birthdays and Holidays**

Birthdays and holidays are special indeed and we will celebrate in the classroom. Your child's teacher will inform you of their classroom's birthday celebration agenda. Parents are allowed to send in special treats so long as they are store purchased. Party invitations may be sent through school as long as the entire class is invited. If you are not inviting everyone, they need to be delivered outside of school.

### **Communications with Parents**

At the beginning of each week, teachers post a copy of that week's curriculum plans/activities. Parent information bulletin boards are located near the front doors. A monthly calendar and newsletter will also be published, and email addresses are available for each teacher, program supervisor and director.

We value good communication between parents and staff, any time a child transitions we will ask families to meet with teachers for a conference. We encourage email communication, phone communication and respect each family's right to have a conference if at any time there is a need.

### **Photo/Video Release**

A parent-signed consent is included as part of the registration packet. Use of your child's photo will be for school use, such as portfolios, postings, and newsletters. Photos or videos may also be used in promotional materials for the school.

### **Disaster Plan**

Our Disaster Plan is discussed with parents during curriculum night. We conduct monthly fire drills and quarterly disaster drills including lockdown and earthquake protocol.

## **Supplies**

### Each child needs:

- Standard-Sized Backpack
- Complete change of school clothes (To be kept in cubby/bag)
- Water Bottle
- Roll up washable nap mat with pillow and carrying strap
- Folder with Pockets
- Mask required for all children
- Family Photo

## **Toys from Home**

Toys from home are not allowed with the exception of a special "Lovie" for rest time. No batteries, please. School wide rules: No toy weapons (guns, swords, etc.)



## Parent or Guardian Handbook Receipt Form

Please thoroughly review the Parent Handbook, which contains the policies and procedures for Preschool at St. Paul Early Learning Center. After reading the handbook, please complete this form and return it to the school via email or you may also bring in a paper copy. This form will be kept in your child's file for the duration of the school year. ***We must have a copy on file for your child to attend school.***

Thank you,

Laurie Clark  
Director  
St. Paul Early Learning Center

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I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print your name), the  
parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ (print child's name), hereby  
acknowledge receipt of St. Paul Early Learning Center Parent Handbook. I have read and agree  
to adhere to all the policies and regulations set forth in this handbook.

Parent/Guardian signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_