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## 2023-24 Preschool Handbook

Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. John Lutheran Preschool. This handbook should answer your basic questions. Please do not hesitate to ask questions about anything covered or that you do not understand.

It is our belief that children flourish when we work closely with parents in order to provide a safe, secure, warm, healthy, challenging, and Christian environment for children to grow.

A strong goal of our program is to assist and support parents and the church in bringing children up in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord.” We create an environment where each child can grow spiritually, physically, emotionally, cognitively, and socially.

Children are motivated to learn by their own desire to make sense of their world. We guide children with well-trained teachers, who make an environment that is child-initiated and child-directed. Our program is based on the philosophy that children grow to their fullest potential if given the opportunity to explore, create, and problem solve with materials appropriate to their development. The staff is committed to providing a secure, consistent, stimulating, and loving environment for each child.

Each day children of all ages are provided with time for free play with a variety of materials and space. Each day there are activities that are teacher-planned and guided.

We look forward to a safe, enjoyable, and stimulating year with you and your family.

If you have any questions about any of the information in this handbook, please contact us.

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**St. John Lutheran School is a place “Where Faith and Family Soar.”**



## Mission Statement

The mission of St. John Lutheran School is to serve God by leading His children to experience and know their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Our school motto is “Where Faith and Family Soar”.

## Admission & Withdrawal

In order to enroll at St. John Lutheran Preschool, the following must be completed:

- ✓ Child must be completely potty trained and at least 2.5 years (PS3) before September 1st or 3.5 years (PS4) by September 1st of that school year.
- ✓ Child Information Card
- ✓ Written Information Packet Documentation
- ✓ Child Health Appraisal Form –This form must be completed by a licensed physician, before a student can attend class. The form must be updated every two years for children over 30 months.
- ✓ At the time of initial attendance, immunization records or a waiver must be on file in the school office.
- ✓ Driver Verification Sheet
- ✓ A copy of the child’s birth certificate must be on file.
- ✓ \$40.00 registration fee must be paid on registration day.
- ✓ Parent Volunteer Form
- ✓ Thirty days notification is preferred before a child is withdrawn. You will be expected to pay for that calendar month regardless of day of disenrollment.

## Fees

Fees are based on a per month fee of \$14 per half day for both 3 year olds and 4 year olds. You will be responsible for paying each month, even for those days your child may be absent. Tuition is paid in full or automatically withdrawn every month. More information can be found in the Finance and Volunteer Packet.

## Notice of Non-Discriminatory Policy

St. John Lutheran Preschool admits students of any race, 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, color, educational policies, admission policies, or any other administered programs.

## Preschool Yearly Schedule

Preschool will be from 8:00-11:30am and 11:30am-3:00pm Monday through Friday following the St. John Lutheran School calendar. Holiday vacations and cancellations of school because of inclement weather will be automatic when the Rogers City Area Schools are cancelled. Sessions may be cancelled in an emergency by the school principal after consultation with the teacher.

## Items from Home

All ages:

- ✓ School supplies – list provided by teacher at registration
- ✓ Snack
- ✓ Any item that may help in transition from home to school like a picture of your family, favorite object or toy, something from dad or mom, etc. (These items are to be kept in his/her lockers and can be looked at any time with the help of a teacher.)
- ✓ Extra set of clothes in case they get wet for any reason
- ✓ Proper clothes for the current season, including hat, mittens, snow pants or suit, and boots.

## Preschool Food Policy

Your child's snacks are part of his/her daily nutritional intake. We encourage you to keep that in mind in selecting the snack you send with your child. Strive to make the snack of good nutritional quality. Foods with high sugar should be used sparingly. Please bring something that does not need to be warmed or chilled while at school. Your child's snack will be kept in their locker until snack time. The children have about 20 minutes to eat.

Snack time can be a learning experience. Through snacks, we can teach our children to enjoy a variety of foods. We can introduce new foods and teach new ways to vary common food items.

If the snack you bring requires some home preparations, let your child have an active role in assisting you. It promotes self-confidence and he/she learns more about preparing food.

You are also welcome to utilize our breakfast and/or lunch program. Information about our programs, including fees and an application for reduced price meals can be found in the provided Family Packet.

## Arrival & Departure

It is helpful for the start of the day for all children to have gone to the bathroom before they enter the classroom. Please help your child put their belongings into his/her locker and bring the child into the classroom. It is helpful for children to have a morning transition routine. Assure your child that you will be back; kiss or hug goodbye and leave. During adjustment periods, this time can be difficult, especially if you have to leave a crying, upset child. Usually the child is fine within five to ten minutes. We will let you know if this is a continuing problem. **Your child must be signed in and out each day.**

Children may be released to other adults only if that person's name is on the authorized pick-up list or permission has been given by the parent. A driver's license or other picture ID may be requested by staff.

## Field Trips

Field trips are an exciting way to expose your child to different activities, occupations, and way of life. They are fun, too! We will have field trips within forty-five minutes of the preschool; some within walking distance. With our downtown location, we have a wide range of opportunities. We invite parents to join us whenever your schedule allows. Field trips are a special time for you and your child. If you have young children, please arrange for care for them on that particular day. Field trips requiring transportation need to be done with the help of a few parents. You will need to sign a field trip permission slip for your child to attend as well as a separate sheet for each driver each field trip. The teacher will also need a copy of your driver license, proof of insurance, and vehicle registration. Because our preschool does not provide transportation, I, as the teacher/director, am not allowed to drive on field trips. Volunteers of our preschool are also not allowed to drive on field trips.

## Volunteers

If you are able to volunteer for a morning activity or go on a field trip, please let a teacher know and sign up on the volunteer sheet at registration. There will be additional forms to be filled out.

We have a volunteer screening procedure required by the State of Michigan. It is a form asking about any history of substantiated child abuse or neglect and criminal history. This policy helps protect your children. The forms will be given to the principal for approval. They will ask for you to do a security clearance check. In the event you wish not to be screened, are denied request for security clearance, or you have past abuse records, the Board of Education will ask you not to participate on a volunteer basis.

Each day of the week I have a volunteer that will come and help out in the classroom. Having a constant person helping allows the children to feel more comfortable. These volunteers are dedicated to furthering the education of the students in the room. Each daily volunteer has passed all background checks.

## Notification of Accidents

In the event that an accident happens while a child is at St. John Lutheran Preschool, an accident report is filled out and the parent is called based on the severity of the accident. The parent will receive a copy of the report and one will remain at school.

The teacher/volunteer is in constant contact with the adult that picks up the child each day to report any minor incidents that occurred during the morning. This is a time to also converse about the child's behavior.

## Illnesses

If you decide that your child is not well enough to attend school and participate in the regularly scheduled events of the day, please keep them home. Please be sure to call the school office at 734-3580 by 8:00am to inform us that your child will be absent and to report the illness your child is experiencing or text the child's teacher.

## Health Policy

Our communicable disease policies, as required by our licensing rule, are designed to keep to a minimum the spread of illness at our preschool. We take a “common sense” approach in that we exclude those children with signs of high contagion, but not a child with a runny nose.

We fully understand the problems parents face when a child cannot come to preschool due to illness, but also know that parents do not want their children exposed to another child who has come to preschool ill.

Therefore, we ask the support of each parent in following our guidelines and new CDC COVID guidelines. We are put in a difficult position when a child comes to the center with symptoms masked by Tylenol, cough syrup, etc., or when a parent does not tell us about other signs of illness or contagion.

### **Your child may not attend preschool if there is:**

- Fever over 100.4 degrees
- Sore throat accompanied by white spots or fever
- Rash
- Persistent Hacking cough
- Persistent Stomach Ache
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Earache
- Ringworm
- Conjunctivitis (red, watery, gummy eyes)
- Any draining sores
- Infestation such as lice or scabies
- Communicable disease such as measles or chickenpox

### **A child absent due to a contagious condition may return if:**

- The child is symptom free, without a fever for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or other fever reducing medication.
- The child has used the prescribed medicine as required by the doctor for the length of time to be non-contagious, usually 24-48 hours.
- A written statement from the physician verifies non-contagion.

Your child should stay home if he/she does not feel well enough to participate with the group. If you are in a situation where it is difficult to leave work when your child is ill, please make sure your alternate emergency person is available to call should your child become ill at preschool.

- A child may be sent home if their health worsens while at school.
- A child may be sent home if 2 or more bathroom accidents occur.

## Exclusion for Illness

Children can come to school feeling well, but illness can creep up on them at anytime. When a child is acting different from their normal behavior (extremely tired, emotionally sensitive, pale complexion, complaining of a certain type of pain), the following steps are taken.

**Step 1:** Talk to the child and have them try and describe what is going on.

**Step 2:** Feel forehead to unofficially check for a temperature. If the child feels warmer than normal, their temperature will be taken.

**Step 3:** If the child has a temperature, parents are called to pick up their child or arrange for an approved person to come pick them up.

If no temperature, the child is watched to see how they are. If the teacher/volunteer thinks it is best for the child to go home, their parents are called.

**Step 4:** While the child waits for their parent to pick them up, he/she will sit with the volunteer in the classroom or in the school office away from the other children and will not participate in any of the activities while waiting.

**Step 5:** When the parent arrives, the child is signed out, he/she gathers their items, and they go home.

## Curriculum

**Spiritually:** “Voyages” from Concordia Publishing House are utilized for both the three and four year old classes on a rotational basis. Through these are Bible stories from both the Old and New Testament. The children will learn about our awesome God and His great love for us. A felt board, dramatic interaction, books, and puppets are used to help tell the stories. The children will learn many lively action songs to help them remember parts of the stories.

**Academically:** Creative Curriculum is utilized in both levels of preschool. A letter of the week is learned through a story character and a box of items that begin with that specific letter sound. The teacher also uses the curriculum from Foundations to incorporate early phonemic awareness and pre-reading skills. Age appropriate pre-math (utilizing Moby Max and IXL) and science activities are incorporated into each thematic lesson presented.

**Physically:** Through Physical Education (PE) class, the children will work on gross motor skills that included the following: running, jumping, hopping, skipping, tumbling, throwing, catching, and bouncing a ball. Our preschool program has 16 tricycles to allow the children to work on coordination. These are used during indoor recesses. Each child is required to wear a helmet while on a tricycle. When the weather permits us to, we go outside for our recess time.

## Medication Policy

Prescription medication can only be administered if it is in the original container, has the pharmacy label indicating the physician's name and strength of the medication and shall be given in accordance with those instructions. Written permission from the parent on the medication permission form is required. Medications will be kept with the teacher on a high shelf. Other "over the counter" medications cannot be administered.

When a prescription is ordered by the physician, it is helpful to ask if doses can be doubled, or must be given in equal intervals. If a dose can be doubled, the medicine may not have to be brought to preschool.

## Discipline Policy

Our philosophy on discipline is that positive behavior should be reinforced and negative behavior should be redirected whenever possible. First, we make the rules and expectations clear to the children. For young children, this is an ongoing and repetitive process. When a rule is broken, we explain again how it can be corrected. The child is given another chance. If a child needs time to "cool off," he/she may be asked to play in another area of the room until the child's ready to return to the group and work out the problem. If a negative behavior continues with no signs of progress, we consult the parents for suggestions. We do not use corporal punishment or any other type of demeaning punishment.

## Our Professional Teachers

- ✓ Have four year degrees in early childhood education or a related field or a nationally accepted Child Development Credential, and teaching experience.
- ✓ Participate in ongoing teacher training throughout the year.
- ✓ Have current first aid and CPR certificates, TB tested, AED trained, Bloodborne Pathogen training.
- ✓ Develop a partnership with parents in caring for and teaching their child.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are an important celebration in a child's life. Your teacher will help celebrate by making a birthday crown or other birthday ideas and having the children sing at snack time. You may provide a treat if you prefer. This can be homemade or store bought. Please check with the teacher about any food allergies in the room.



## Parent Communication

Our teachers send home a monthly newsletter and as needed place notes in students' cubbies. Please check your child's cubby every day. Other information will be posted outside the classroom next to the hallway bulletin board. Parents will also meet with their child's teacher at least twice a year for a more in-depth discussion of their child's progress.

Please let the teacher know your preferred mode of communication: emails, extra notes home, phone calls or texts at specific times of the day.

## Daily Schedule (Subject to Small Changes)

- 7:45-7:55--- Arrival**
- 8:00 ----- Free Play Time/Gym**
- 8:30 ----- Jesus Time**
- 8:40 ----- Calendar/Weather**
- 8:55 ----- Letter Focus/Numbers/Shapes**
- 9:15 ----- P.E.**
- 9:45 ----- Snack – Stories/Puzzles**
- 10:15 ----- Recess**
- 10:30 ----- Brush Teeth / Thematic Unit Time**
- 11:20 ----- Story Time/Show-N-Tell**
- 11:30 ----- Dismissal (Half-Day Students)**
- 11:35 ----- Lunch**
- 12:00 ----- Recess**
- 12:45 ----- Bathroom**
- 1:00 ----- Rest time**
- 2:00 ----- Free Time**
- 2:30 ----- Recap**
- 2:45 ----- Pack up, Last Story, After Care Children May Go to Gym**
- 3:00 ----- Dismissal (Full-Day Students)**

## Clothing (Name Labels Are Appreciated)

Please dress your child in clothes that are comfortable for them. Pants with holes in the knees, thin strapped tank tops, and flip flops are not allowed. Clothing should reflect a good nature. Having your child pick out their clothes the night before can aid in a smoother morning! Please have girls wear tights, leggings, or shorts underneath dresses or skirts.

## Outdoor Play

An important part of our day includes playing outside. In addition to the health benefits of getting fresh air and exercise, children develop muscle skills by climbing, sliding, running, etc.

We ask that you send appropriate outdoor clothing each day. This includes coats, hats, scarves, mittens, boots, and snow pants in the winter. Please mark items with your child's name or initials.

Learning to dress oneself is an important self-help skill. Outdoor clothing provides an opportunity for children to practice and learn zipping, buttoning, etc. Please keep this in mind as you buy and bring in clothing.

Generally speaking, if a child is too ill to play outside he/she is too ill to be at preschool. If there is a medical exception, please bring a doctor's note of explanation.

## Licensing Notebook Notification

A three-ring binder is available for reviewing that contains all licensing inspections reports, special investigation reports, and all related corrective action plans. Please talk to the teacher if you would like to look through this at any time during school hours.