

Saint Paul School



Preschool Handbook 2017-2018

Dear Families,

Welcome to Preschool at Saint Paul School! We are very excited that you have chosen us for your child's early childhood education. We look forward to providing your child with a fun-filled and positive learning experience that will prepare him/her for successful elementary school career!

Please read through the pages of this packet thoroughly, as it will provide you with an understanding of our classroom policies, procedures, information going home, and the best way to communicate with your child's teacher(s)!

Thank you for entrusting Saint Paul School with your child's first experiences in school and learning. We look forward to helping your child grow socially, emotionally, physically, academically, and spiritually. We look forward to getting to know you and your child.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Diane Oppel
Pre-K 4 Teacher
Preschool Director

Mrs. Karen Lavoie
Pre-K 4 Teacher

Ms. Marykay Welch
Pre-K 3 Teacher

IMPORTANT POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Program Hours

Half-day students 8:00 am- 12:30 pm

Full-day students 8:00 am-3:00 pm

ARRIVAL & PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Pre-K 3 Morning Arrival

Students should be walked down and dropped off between 8:00- 8:25 am in the Pre-K 3 classroom. You may park in the back parking lot and enter through the back "Gymnasium Entrance" doors. After 8:10 am you **MUST** use the main (front) entrance of the school on Alling Street. After 8:25 you must obtain a "late pass" in the office before walking your child down to the classroom. Please know that Specials may start at 8:25am. If you are arriving late, please be aware that learning will be in progress.

Pre-K 4 Morning Arrival

Students can be dropped off in the gymnasium beginning at 7:50 am. You may park in the back parking lot and enter through the back "Gymnasium Entrance" doors. Pre-K 4 meets on the far side of the gym in front of the bleachers, near the scoreboard for Morning Prayer starting at 8:10am, sharp. Parents are welcome to stay for Morning Prayer. However, we ask that you say good-bye to your child in the gym after prayer before we move to the classroom. This makes for smoother transitions and allows your child to gain a sense of independence in school.

After 8:10 am you **MUST** use the main (front) entrance of the school on Alling Street and obtain a "late pass." If a Pre-K 4 student arrives after 8:10 am, we ask that you wait with your child in the foyer if the gym door is closed. Your child will join us as we leave Morning Prayer from the Gym. If it is after Morning Prayer, please walk your child down to their classroom. Please know that Specials may start at 8:25am. If you are arriving late, please be aware that learning will be in progress.

Pre-K 3 & Pre-K 4 Dismissal

Half-day (12:30 pm): Students will be dismissed in front of the school, on Alling Street. The children will be walked out by a teacher. If you are running more than 10 minutes late, your child will be brought to the office to wait for his/her ride to arrive. If needed, parents will be contacted to arrange pick-up.

Full-day: Students will be dismissed from the Pre-K back door. For the safety of all our children, your car must be parked in a parking spot with your car turned off. Please do not park in the driveways or the dismissal area. This area is usually blocked off. Students will wait in the room until his or her name is called, they will then go to the door to greet their pick-up person. Dismissal will begin between 2:45-2:50pm. Students will be brought to

aftercare at 3:10pm and parents will be called to arrange pick-up. ****Exception: Early Release Days****

No School Days

Please be aware that Preschool also follows the school calendar. There will be no school on major holidays, professional development days, etc. Please refer to the school calendar on the school website.

Early Release Days (12:30 pm)

On early release days ALL STUDENTS will be dismissed at 12:30 pm at the Pre-K back door. Please provide a PEANUT/NUT FREE lunch from home on half days. Lunch will be served in all preschool classrooms on early release days at the regularly scheduled time. ****NO hot lunch will be available from the lunch program****

Inclement Weather

We follow Berlin Public Schools with regard to closing school due to inclement weather. *If Berlin Public Schools announce a*

→ **Cancellation: There will be No School;**

→ **Delay: There will *always* be a 2 hour delay.**

In the event of a cancellation or early closing, you will receive a message from Saint Paul School via phone, text and email through *School Messenger*. The School Messenger program is interfaced with EduConnect and populates its phone number and email lists from these files. It is important that your contact information in EduConnect is always current. Please take a moment to sign in to your Parent Portal account to ensure that your information is accurate. Remember to update this information during the school year if your phone numbers, email addresses or any other information changes. ** Parents: Please make sure you have filled out emergency cards and an authorized pick-up form for your children. This allows us to determine who is allowed to pick up your child in the event we cannot get in touch with you in an emergency situation.**

ILLNESSES

Colds, flu and other contagious diseases occur frequently and spread easily among preschool children. To help protect your own child's health and to minimize the possibility of spreading illness at school, please keep your child at home if you observe any of the following symptoms:

*fever

*nasal discharge that is green or yellow

*complaints of ear or throat pain

*productive cough

*eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge

*diarrhea or vomiting

If these or other symptoms of potentially contagious conditions are observed in your child during the day, you will be called to come and pick up your child. When your child has a fever, please keep him/her at home until his/her temperature returns to normal without medication for a full 24 hours. Children should also be free of diarrhea and vomiting for at least 24 hours before returning to school. If there are any lingering signs of illness, i.e. glassy/watery eyes, listless, and/or drowsiness, etc., please keep your child home for an additional day. This will help to ensure that the illness has fully passed and that your child will be well enough to resume in all school activities. **Please contact the school office and email your child's teacher if your child will be out of school. Good attendance is crucial to learning - it is important that your children attend school on their scheduled days when they are in good health.

ACTIVITY FEE

There is an **\$85.00** activity fee for each child to cover the cost of field trips, cooking projects, special craft activities, auctions projects, and other activities we will be doing throughout the year. Please have the check made out to Saint Paul School. In addition, this money will cover the cost of supplies needed by your child such as a pencil box (Pre-K 4) crayons, pencils, eraser, glue sticks and home/school folder. These supplies will be handed out on the first day of school.

SNACKS & LUNCH

We do have children at Saint Paul School with life-threatening food allergies. All preschool classrooms are **100% Peanut- and Nut-FREE**. Please be sure that labels are checked to assure that food is not processed in a Peanut/Nut-tree facility. We want to provide all our students a safe environment. The school cafeteria has peanut/ tree nut free tables.

Snack: Families are responsible for providing a mid-morning snack for their children daily. This should contain one or two healthy food items and a drink. A reusable water bottle is strongly encouraged. Please be sure to include any necessary utensils your child may need (i.e. fork, spoon, napkin or straw). Children have about 20 minutes for snack and when given too much food it is overwhelming for them. Again, snacks must be NUT-FREE! Preschool will usually eat snack between 9:00-9:30am. *Pre-K 4 will not have snack on Mass days, please be sure your child has a good breakfast on these days. Also, there will be NO SNACK on LATE OPENINGS.

Pre-K 3 Lunch will be eaten in the classroom. Families are responsible for packing a NUT-FREE lunch and drink for their child or may pre-order a hot lunch through the school. Lunch menus are available on the school's web page on a month-by-month basis. Hot Lunch will need to be ordered three days before.

Pre-K 4 Lunch will be eaten in the cafeteria with grades K-2. Families are responsible for packing a lunch and drink for their child or may pre-order a hot lunch through the

school lunch program. Lunch menus are available on the school's web page on a month-by-month basis. Hot Lunch will need to be ordered three days before.

A few notes about lunch for all preschoolers:

- * Ice packs are a necessity. Your child's lunch is not refrigerated throughout the morning.
- * Please send all necessary items that your child will need to eat his/her lunch in the lunch bag.
- * If your child would like a hot meal from home, try a thermos, we **do not** "heat-up" lunches.
- * Please prepare your child's lunch the way they like it and ready to eat. I.e. fruit and veggies are cut and peeled, food is cut up etc.
- * Please be sure your child's lunch bag and containers are labeled with your child's full name.
- * If you would like your child to purchase a popsicle or cookie from the school cafeteria on **Fridays**, please put one dollar in an envelope and mark your child's name and popsicle or cookie on the front. Please place the envelope in the home/school folder. More information will be on the school website when bake sales are available.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

It is necessary that children learn to develop self-discipline skills in order to further their learning. We ask that you discuss with your child the importance of and need for making good choices. Good communication between home and school is crucial for a successful year. We recognize that preschool children are young and are learning social skills. For the safety of all our preschool students and staff, unkind and unsafe acts that occur at a preschool level will be handled by the child's teacher(s). Positive behaviors are recognized. If needed, a child may need to be redirected or sit out their age if unsafe or unkind behaviors occur. The teacher(s) will work with the student, family, director and principal (as needed) to address situations. If needed, parents will be contacted.

COMMUNICATION WITH TEACHER AND SCHOOL

Home and School Communication Folder

You will receive a folder with your child's name on it during orientation. Please be sure this folder is emptied and returned to school everyday. We will use this folder to send information, work, notes etc. home to you. If there is something that you would like to send to school such as lunch payment, pick-up changes, Friday treat money or other notes, please be sure to put it in your child's folder. Please label envelopes with your child's name and where it should be sent - to the teacher, to the office, lunch money etc.

We communicate primarily through e-mail messages and teacher pages on the SPS website. If there is an emergency situation, please contact the main office (860) 828-4343 and your child's teacher will be notified accordingly. It is very important that you check our teacher pages on a daily basis. There will be information in "Ask Me About," about upcoming events, donations to the class, classroom happenings, family homework and

current learning topics. Please do not hesitate to ask questions if you have them. Also, please be sure that your child's backpack and take home folder are cleaned out daily.

*Security Reminder: For the safety of our students, any and all changes to dismissal plans should be sent in writing to the school office.

*Please be sure to contact the school office if there are any changes in home or cell phone numbers, addresses and email addresses in your household.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences with your child's teacher are scheduled twice a year. Fall conferences are mandatory for all preschool families enrolled in the program. During this time goals will be set. During Winter Conferences, we will share your child's progress report for the first half of the school year. Spring conferences are on an as-needed basis. Conferences are a time for you to discuss your child's progress, goals and concerns with his/her teacher. If you would like to meet with your child's teacher at another time, please contact him/her to set up a time. Progress reports will be sent in January and June.

PERMISSION TO PHOTOGRAPH/VIDEO RECORD

Saint Paul School is very much "connected" and "plugged-in"! Parents are **strongly encouraged** to check the school website and teacher page frequently to stay up-to-date. Be sure to check the "Ask Me About" section for conversation starters and to learn about things that have happened in the classroom during the day. The school website is: ourschool.stpaulkensington.org. With the use of technology comes many digital photos and even videos of the fun things we do throughout the day. Please be sure that you sign a release allowing your child to have his or her picture allowed on our website and other school or press publications. You will find this form with your Back to School paperwork.

Parents in the Classroom

Parents and family play an important role in the education of children. Throughout the school year parents and family members may volunteer their time in the classroom. Volunteer opportunities may include, but are not limited to, library readers, special event helpers, field trip chaperones etc. All classroom volunteers must participate in Virtus (Safe Environment) training and undergo criminal background checks. Further information is available in the school office. If you do not have time to be in the classroom, don't worry! There are "at home" projects that are a great help to classroom teachers such as making play-dough, preparing special projects, or prepping cooking projects. We also love to see what special talents and traditions your family has. Please let us know if you would like to share one (or more) with the class. We love having parents involved in their children's learning. Please make arrangements ahead of time with your child's teacher to volunteer in the classroom. Parents must "sign in" in the office and obtain a visitors lanyard from the office if volunteering in the school.

Toys from Home

We kindly ask that children **do not** bring in personal toys and electronics from home to school. This will help to ensure that your child's belongings are kept safe. The classroom offers a wide variety of items to keep children engaged throughout the day.

Mass Buddies

Preschool students are paired up with a "Mass Buddy" when attending Mass at Saint Paul School. "Mass Buddies" help preschool students by guiding them in how to receive a blessing, when to sit, stand or kneel during Mass. Sometimes, Mass Buddies even give gentle reminders to their younger buddies that they are at Church and need to use quiet voices. 📖 When schedules allow, Mass Buddies may get together to read books, share projects, etc. Traditionally, preschoolers have grade 4 and grade 5 buddies. At times, especially with our youngest students, the teacher will use her best judgment about attending activities or Mass with her class.

Birthday & Holiday Treats

During the school year, we will celebrate many birthdays and holidays together - we love a good celebration! 📖 On your child's birthday, you are welcome to join us in the school gym during Morning Prayer. Students and teachers that are in the gym will sing "Happy Birthday" to your child. Due to food allergies we strongly discourage any baked goods (homemade or store bought) in the classroom to ensure the safety of the children. Instead, we ask that you provide a healthy snack to celebrate the occasion. Healthy snacks can include cheese & crackers, fruit salad, veggies & dip, frozen Go-Gurt yogurt, fruit popsicles, etc. You may also consider donating a book in your child's honor on his or her birthday. A special label will be placed in the book identifying it as a "Birthday Gift to the Class" from your child. Parents are welcome to come in for lunch or share a favorite story with the class. Please contact your child's teacher to make arrangements. We also understand part of a birthday is the actual party you plan. In order to prevent missing invitations and/or any hurt feelings, please send birthday party invitations directly to other families in the mail.

Field Trips & On-Site Visitors

Throughout the school year we will have many visitors coming in to visit your child's class. These visitors will include, but are not limited to the local fire department, local police officers, dentists, the local librarian, and even possibly yourself (as mentioned earlier, we'd love for you to share any traditions or talents that you possess). There may be a couple of 'true' field trips where we will travel off school grounds to experience certain curriculum topics first hand. Your activity fee covers all field trips we participate in.

IMPORTANT PARTS OF THE CLASSROOM

Learning Centers

The classroom offers many different learning centers, based on NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) standards for early learning. Your child will be able to explore these areas during planned curriculum activities and through self-guided free play exploration throughout the school day. These centers provide structured educational experiences for children while engaged in individual play, partnering in teamwork building activities, and/or participation in small groups.

Family Tree/Album

The Pre-K classroom features a family tree or family album which holds pictures and captions of each preschool family. Captions can include who is in the picture and where it was taken - a little snapshot of your memories! The pictures provide a wonderful comfort of familiarity to children while they are at school. This will be part of your first family homework.

Lockers & Cubbies

Each student will have a personal locker or cubby. The lockers and cubbies are located in the hallway, outside the classroom doors. They are used to provide plenty of space for your child's belongings. Lockers and cubbies will be individually labeled with names.

Water Stations

Each of the Pre-K classrooms will have a bin or container for your child to store his/her water bottle throughout the day. Your child will bring the water bottle to and from school daily. The water bottle will need to be cleaned out and filled up at home. We will refill if needed. Please be sure it is labeled with your child's name.

Portfolios

Your child's teacher will collect pieces of your child's work throughout the year. This may include artwork, writing samples, language samples and pictures. At the end of the school year, you will receive the work that your child has completed. We hope that you will be able to see the growth your child has made throughout the school year. Some changes you will hopefully notice may include the way your child has written his or her name, coloring and drawing skills, cutting skills, attention to detail and the growth in all areas of your child's development.

DRESS CODE

Children must be fully dressed when they arrive at school. Because play activity is such an important part of the curriculum, clothing should be practical, comfortable and weather appropriate. Students are strongly encouraged to be independent when dressing and undressing when using the bathroom. Pants with elastic waists that are easy for

preschoolers to pull up and down are best. No open-toed shoes, Crocs, flip flops, jellies or cowboy boots, please. Sandals must have a back strap and be closed-toe if worn to school. Velcro sneakers are recommended to help facilitate independence in your child and to insure safety on the playground and during gym days. A change of shoes is needed when snow boots or rain boots are worn to school. For the safety for our children, please do not leave an umbrella with your child during the school day. During the colder months, children should dress appropriately to play outside, when the weather allows us to do so. This includes a winter coat, hat and mittens. We also prefer that children do not wear jewelry (stud earrings are permissible) as it is not only a safety hazard on the playground, but also a distraction in the classroom. During school Mass days, your child may dress a little "dressier." Please be sure your child can still manage his or her outfit and shoes.

Every child must have two complete changes of (seasonal appropriate) clothing in school at all times, including socks, underwear and one pair of shoes. If your child has changed clothing during the day, please take home the soiled items and replace them the next school day. All clothing items must be labeled with the child's name. Please be sure to check the extra clothing throughout the year for proper size and weather.

BATHROOMS & "ACCIDENTS"

All students in the preschool program at Saint Paul School **MUST** be fully potty-trained before the start of the school year; pull-ups are not allowed. Pre-K students will use the bathrooms located on the first floor of the school. The girls' room is down the hall from the classroom and the boys' room is located between the second grade room and nurse's office. If a child has an accident while at school, he or she will be taken to the nurse's office to be cleaned up and changed. If needed, the school nurse will contact you.

REST TIME

Each full-day student is provided with an individual rest mat. Rest mats are cleaned after each use. Rest time is about an hour long, usually 12:30-1:30-ish. Children are not required to sleep during this time. However, we do require them to rest quietly for a portion of this time. Families are responsible for providing their child with a sheet (crib sheets are the perfect size), blanket and small pillow. **NO large *Pillow Pets*** - they are too big and bulky for the classroom and lockers. A reusable grocery bag is a good size for rest time items. On Fridays, your child will bring home his or her rest items to be washed and returned on the following school day. Please be sure your child's rest belongings are labeled with your child's name.

CLASSROOM SCHEDULE

As we all know, when dealing with preschoolers we must be flexible and patient. The daily schedules for each classroom are set up to maintain structure and routine for your child. Classroom schedules will follow a similar order each day so they become predictable

and comfortable for all students. Pre-K schedules will vary slightly on days that "Specials" occur. A Specials Schedule will be posted on the teacher web page.

Please be sure all of your child's belongings are labeled with your child's name. If needed, Lost & Found is located in the blue cubbies outside the nurse's office.

Saint Paul School Preschool 2017-2018

Please acknowledge you have read and understand the contents of this Preschool Parent Handbook and the obligation to your child's school and classroom by signing below.

Please sign and return the bottom portion to your child's teacher.

Thank you,
Saint Paul School Preschool Staff

I/we, _____,
parent(s)/guardian(s) of _____
in Pre-K___ have read and understand the policies and
procedures set forth in the Preschool Handbook for Saint Paul
School for the school year 2017-2018.

_____ (Child's Name)

_____ (Parent/Guardian Signature)

_____ (Date)