

**ST. PAUL
EARLY LEARNING CENTER**

Parent Handbook

2024

MISSION

The Mission of the St. Paul Early Learning Center is to provide the highest quality childcare in a nurturing supportive environment by addressing each child as a unique creation of God. We will support their development by providing rich learning experiences to address their social, emotional, cognitive, and motor skills. This will be accomplished by adhering to the Louisiana Department of Education Standards for Early Childhood with the goal of developing teachers with specialized training according to Louisiana Pathways Child Care Career Development System, thereby providing a measurable standard of quality.

CONNECTION

The St. Paul Early Learning Center is a mission of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church and is wholly owned by it. The mission has been created to serve the larger community with no expectations of active congregational membership by the families who attend the ELC. The congregation and its pastor provide spiritual leadership for the center.

COMMUNITY STANDARDS

The St. Paul Early Learning Center is a community based upon principles of Christian love expressed using the provisions of Bulletin 37 of the Educational Code of Louisiana for Child Care Centers and Title 51 of the Louisiana Public Health – Sanitary Code, Part XXI, Day Care Centers, and Residential Facilities. This means that while we serve our students and families with grace, we abide by the law of the land, in fact we must. We are always aware that we are serving a community of some of our most vulnerable individuals, children. Everything we do is meant to keep them safe, healthy and, hopefully, happy. The processes we have put in place which run throughout our day, make it possible to keep multiple children safe from accidents and illnesses as they learn and play. These State of Louisiana codes allow us to serve the community through some very strict requirements which we do our best, daily, to maintain as graciously as possible.

To further the safety of the St. Paul ELC community, we have set certain procedures and made certain requests reflecting parental participation in this process. Some of those requests stem directly from Bulletin 37 and Title 51 and some simply allow us to manage a room full of children to the best advantage of everyone without leaving any one individual out.

Both codes are kept on file in the center's office for frequent reference and are available upon request.

GOALS

Our primary goal is for the children to succeed at the next academic level when they have completed the preschool program. We strive to provide an environment that will encourage children to become lifelong learners with positive academic attitudes. At the St. Paul Early Learning Center each child will:

- Develop his or her unique gifts
- Have an opportunity to participate in a faith-based and developmentally appropriate learning environment
- Be prepared for the next level of education
- Experience the joy of learning
- Grow in understanding and practice of respect for the dignity of every human being

POLICIES

ADMISSION

Admission of children shall include a Center tour and an interview with the parent or guardian to secure necessary information about the child. This information shall include but is not limited to; immunization record, emergency information, a list of people approved to pick up the child, and any court documents establishing custody and/or parental rights. Upon acceptance to the Early Learning Center, the parent or guardian must pay a nonrefundable registration fee of \$200.00, and complete required forms.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

The St. Paul Early Learning Center welcomes any child without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicapping condition, or ancestry.

DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

The St. Paul Early Learning Center respects the confidentiality of the families it serves. St. Paul ELC employees will keep information confidential *as long as no one's life, health, or safety are at stake*. Parents will be notified promptly of concerns relating to students' life, health, or safety. All St. Paul employees are mandated reporters as required by state law.

CHILD ABUSE

Any suspected abuse and/or neglect of a child will be reported in accordance with Louisiana Revised Statute 14:403. Children's Protective Services (PCS) number is 1-855-452-5437

PARENT TEACHER RELATIONS

We respect that you have trusted us with your child's care. If you have any problems or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us. We do ask that you make an appointment if you feel the issue cannot be discussed briefly. Drop off time can be hectic, but we do the best we can. A Complaint Procedure is below.

We also expect parents to treat the teachers and staff with the respect due the work they are doing to keep your children in a safe and caring learning environment. We do our best to keep the building clean and sanitized. If we ask you to remove or cover your shoes, for the health of the babies, please do so. Cabinets are locked to prevent little fingers from getting into things. Please leave them closed. Teachers and staff do their best to be polite and positive when we meet you and work with your children. We appreciate it when you are polite and positive as well.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

In the event a parent or guardian has concerns about the school or their child, we recommend the following steps for solving problems:

1. Make an appointment to speak with the child's teacher or supervisor about the issue. Many issues can be resolved at this level and are often the result of miscommunication or misunderstanding.
2. If this conference fails to resolve an issue, then the parent needs to speak with the director about the complaint.

3. If the issue still is not resolved to the parent/guardian's satisfaction then the parent/guardian shall be advised of the licensing authority of the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and shall be given then current telephone number and address of the LDOE and advised that they may call or write the LDOE should they have significant, unresolved licensing complaints.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

St. Paul Early Learning Center follows the "redirection" method for minor discipline problems. If the behavior is not corrected by this method, we will use "Time Out". "Time Out" means a child is placed away from the other children for 2 to 10 minutes, but still under direct supervision, depending on the age of the child. This gives the child time to think about their behavior. Time out will be followed up with a discussion between the child and the teacher to reassure acceptance, love, and clarity of what was done that was not appropriate. Most children are ready to return to their regular routine after a "Time Out". No child under 2 will be placed in "Time Out."

A behavior modification program will be developed for children with continuous or repetitive incidents, such as hitting, biting or being disrespectful to staff members.

Cruel, severe, unusual, or unnecessary punishment shall not be inflicted on children.

Derogatory remarks shall not be made in the presence of children about family members or children or about the children themselves.

No child or group of children shall be allowed to discipline another child.

No child or group of children shall be permitted to bully another child.

No child shall be deprived of snacks or meals for discipline reasons.

No child will be restrained by devices such as highchairs or feeding chairs for discipline reasons.

Outside gross motor time will not be withheld from a child for discipline reasons.

Children will never be left alone or out of sight of staff for discipline reasons.

No corporal punishment shall be used by teachers on St. Paul Early Learning Center premises.

BITING

Biting happens for a lot of reasons, the most common is stress combined with the inability of children to express their needs. It is our job to solve this problem for the child! The director will be informed of every biting incident. Every time a child bites, the teacher will evaluate the circumstances and address the child's needs. After the 3rd bite, the director will schedule a meeting with the parents and the teacher to develop an agreed upon plan of action that will include a follow up meeting to check for progress or adjustment.

TOYS, MONEY, ETC.

Children should not bring toys, money, and/or other valuables to school except on days when we are having a special theme, such as National Teddy Bear Day. Other children like to play with their friend's toys and sometimes this becomes a problem. We cannot be responsible for articles that are brought to school. The **St. Paul Early Learning Center reserves the right to confiscate any toys or other items** that are brought to school.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Each day, pending active precipitation or weather alerts, each classroom will be given 30 minutes-1 hour of outdoor free play in the morning and again in the afternoon. If weather conditions are not favorable, the class will have "active play time" (dancing, exercising, yoga, etc.) in the classroom or church fellowship hall. If a child is too sick to go outside, they are too sick to attend school.

DRESS

We encourage you to dress your child in comfortable clothing which is easy to move around in and easy to refasten after diaper changes and potty visits. **Your child will get dirty.** We play outside everyday possible. **Rain boots are encouraged on wet days!** We also paint, glue, color, use markers, sand, and water. Please keep this in mind when dressing your child. Tennis shoes or soft-soled shoes are our choice for school shoes. Hard-soled boots or flip-flops will not be worn at school. **You will be asked to pick your child up or bring them a different pair of shoes if inappropriate shoes are worn.**

MEALS

Morning snack (typical breakfast items) and lunch along with an afternoon snack will be served daily according to the federal food guidelines starting at 12 months (or earlier if parent and Director think the child is ready). Milk shall be served to the children at least twice a day. If your child is allergic to any foods, be sure to inform the teacher and director. If you would like to bring your child's food, please speak to the director.

WHAT YOUR CHILD NEEDS

There are several items you will need to supply for your child while they are here at school. A general list follows. A detailed list is available in the Welcome Folder and in the office by request. The important thing is that everything you bring for your child ***must be clearly labeled with your child's full name***. All parts of an item need to be labeled, including the top and bottom to a bottle or food container. (See Title 51, Part XXI Louisiana State Public Health Code Chapter 4, Paragraph H.) The center is not responsible for the return of unlabeled items.

For all children: Diapers; Diaper Cream labeled by the manufacturer specifically for baby care; Extra Clothes; Pacifier; Crib sheets or Nap Mat

For infants: A copy of your child's schedule, which we will attempt to maintain as much as is reasonably possible, Wipes; Pre-filled bottles; Food; Snacks; Sippy Cup (after consultation with the director)

For Wobblers, Toddlers and Pre-School: Shoes, Snacks (after consultation with the director)

In addition to these things listed above, we are required to maintain **vaccination records** for all children. Please bring a copy with you when your child enters our program and then keep us updated over time.

TUITION AND FEES

The tuition rates for 2024 are as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Infants | \$1050 per month |
| 1 & 2 year olds | \$953 per month |
| 3 years up | \$882 per month |

Tuition will be drafted from your bank account or credit card monthly on the first day of each month through Tuition Express. If the first of the month falls on a weekend, St. Paul ELC holiday, or bank holiday, tuition will be drafted the following business day. Tuition is due for every month the child/children are enrolled regardless of whether the child/children are in attendance, (including but not limited to weather related closures, contagious illness, your child is sick, your child is on vacation, etc.). We do not offer refunds for scheduled or unscheduled closures of the Center. Other arrangements for tuition payments, checks or the ProCare App, can be made with the Director. There will be no refunds, credits or proration for holidays or child absences. All payments should be given to the director or office manager. Please make checks payable to St. Paul Early Learning Center. Alternative payment arrangements are at the discretion of the director. There is a 2.5% surcharge on all credit card transactions.

A \$10.00 late fee will be assessed if payments have not been received by 5th of the month. Children may not return to school until tuition is made current.

New students will be enrolled with a start date of the 1st of the month and tuition will be billed as of that day. If the 1st of the month is in the middle of the week, and the parents wish to start their child on the following Monday, tuition will not be prorated to reflect the missed days. In the case of a child starting in the middle of the month, the start date will be the 15th and the tuition will be prorated to reflect one-half of the rate. If the 15th is not a Monday and parents wish to start their child on the Monday following the 15th, they will not have tuition prorated to reflect the delay.

An annual **Supply Fee** is due each September in the amount of \$200. The supply fee allows the center to buy new books and supplies, as well as upgrade worn equipment and furniture. It also pays for teachers' professional development. The supply fee will be prorated for new students based on the first date of attendance as indicated below. The supply fee will be drafted with your September tuition, if you have tuition drafted. If you are not on auto draft, the supply fee will be due with your September tuition.

| Month of First Attendance | Amount Due |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| September - December | \$200 |
| January - April | \$100 |
| May - August | \$50 |

Tuition rates and fees will be evaluated and updated annually as necessary. Any rate increase will be communicated to families at least 6 weeks prior.

WITHDRAWAL NOTICE

Two weeks written notice must be given to the Director by parent/guardian prior to withdrawal of child/children from the St. Paul Early Learning Center. Parent/guardian shall be obligated to pay the agreed upon tuition until the end of the required two-week notice period.

GENERAL HEALTH

Please help us keep everyone healthy by keeping sick children at home! If your child develops a contagious illness (gastro, flu, strep, COVID-19, RSV, etc.), please let us know immediately so we can inform other parents to watch and monitor for similar symptoms in their little ones. If symptoms of contagious or infectious diseases develop while the child is in our care, he/she shall be removed from group play and placed in a supervised isolated area, away from the other children until a parent or designated person has been contacted and the child has been picked up. If contacted concerning an illness in your child, he/she will need to be picked up within 1 hours' time.

1. **Stomach specific:**

- After a child has had one diarrhea diaper change or use of the toilet, with no other symptoms the parent will be notified. If other symptoms are present, fever, vomiting, pain, the child will be moved into quarantine to wait to be picked up. After a child has had two diarrhea diapers or two uses of the toilet with diarrhea, with no other symptoms, the parent will be called to come and pick up the child to be taken home or the doctor.
- After a child has vomited once, with no other symptoms the parent will be notified. If other symptoms are present, fever, vomiting, pain, the child will be moved into quarantine to wait to be picked up. After a child has had two vomit episodes, with no other symptoms, the parent will be called to come and pick up the child to be taken home or the doctor.

2. **Fever specific:**

- Any child who has had a fever, defined as **100.4 or greater** per the CDC, within the previous 24 hours, is assumed contagious and will not be

permitted on site, until fever-free *without* fever reducing medications (i.e., Tylenol or Motrin) for a total of 24 hours.

- Should a child be found to have a temperature while in our care, defined as **100.4 or greater**, the parent will be contacted immediately to come and pick up the child within 1 hours’ time, and will need a doctor’s note in order to return to the center.

It is imperative to the health of our center, as a whole, to reiterate: a child may only return when they are healthy and deemed non-infectious/non-contagious. Meaning, they have had a normal temperature for 24 hours without fever-reducing medications, they have had normal stooling for 24 hours without medication (anti-diarrheals), and/or they have had no vomiting for 24 hours without medication (anti-nauseas); they are eating and sleeping well and overall, are acting like their “normal” self.

3. **Disease Specific:**

- Children with the following illnesses or symptoms shall be excluded from the center based on potential contagiousness (communicability) of the disease.
- Periods may be extended beyond this depending upon individual conditions.

| Illnesses/symptoms | Exclude Until |
|--|---|
| Influenza (seasonal flu) | 24 hours fever-free WITHOUT the use of fever reducing meds, acting like their “normal” self |
| Covid (coronavirus) | 24 hours fever-free WITHOUT the use of fever reducing meds, acting like their “normal” self |
| Meningococcal Disease (Neisseria meningitis) | Well with proof of non-carriage* |
| Hib disease | Well with proof of non-carriage* |
| Chicken Pox | No fever and skin lesions scabbed over completely |
| Hepatitis A | One week after illness started and fever gone |
| Aids (or HIV infection) | Until child’s health, neurologic development, behavior, and immune status is deemed appropriate on a case-by-case basis (by qualified persons, including the child’s physician, and the director of the center) |
| Undiagnosed generalized rash | Well or cleared by child’s physician* |

| | |
|--|--|
| Any child with a sudden onset of vomiting, irritability, or excessive sleepiness | Evaluated and cleared by child's physician* |
| Strep throat | 24 hours after beginning treatment |
| Ringworm, Parasites, Scabies | 24 hours after beginning treatment |
| Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye), Impetigo | 24 hours after beginning treatment |
| Head lice | When there isn't ANY sign of head lice which must be checked by director or Staff-in-Charge upon return to school. |

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**We will only accept a doctor's notice of fitness to return to school when written on the physician's letterhead.*

If you are unsure of your situation and which policy to follow, call the center and discuss with the Director.


REPORTS

Documentation of accident, incidents, injuries, illnesses, & unusual behavior are required by state law. Reports of each occurrence will be filled out daily and require parent's signature. Please look for these reports in your child's cubby or teacher clipboard. **Reports of a serious nature will be in the office and a parent will be contacted by phone or email.**

MEDICATION

We will not be administering prescription and/or over the counter medication to children while they are in the care of St. Paul Early Learning Center.

DAILY ATTENDANCE

All children will be checked in and out through the kiosk computer at the office. We use the Procure  Database which allow us to manage attendance, approved child relations and other information.

Infants do not have a class schedule. We ask that you provide us with your baby's schedule so that we can adhere to it as closely as possible. We ask that you let us know if your baby will be

late and if they will have already eaten or napped before arriving, in other words, how much has their daily schedule been interrupted. Please bring prepared bottles for your child which we will refrigerate until needed that day.

Starting in our Toddler class, children should arrive at school by 8:30 a.m. to eat breakfast. The **breakfast snack will not be offered after 8:45 am.** Children should arrive in their classrooms by 9 am to not interfere with classroom schedules. **Children arriving after 9 am will be considered tardy and must be admitted and approved through the front office.**

WE WILL NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO LEAVE WITH SOMEONE WHO IS NOT AUTHORIZED TO PICK THEM UP. PARENTS MUST AUTHORIZE, IN WRITING, WHO IS PERMITTED TO PICK UP A CHILD. If you need to authorize a new individual, please contact the office. These individuals may be asked for identification until we know them.

LATE PICK-UP

There will be a charge of \$1.00/minute after 5:30 pm if you are late picking your child up. Please call to let us know that you will be late.

POTTY TRAINING

TEACHER AND PARENTS SHOULD DECIDE TOGETHER WHEN A CHILD IS READY TO BEGIN TRAINING. THIS IS A JOINT EFFORT! Teachers are to encourage independence, although children can be placed on the potty and removed from the potty by the teacher.

CLASS TRANSITION

Children will be initially placed in the class of their age group; however, St. Paul Early Learning Center reserves the right to place children in the child's developmentally appropriate age class. In order to assign a child to a class based on developmental readiness, we will evaluate the children using the Ages and Stages Developmental Tool. This is a joint decision between parents, teachers, and administration. Students will begin to visit the next classroom prior to moving permanently to assess their social/emotional readiness and become familiar with the new teachers and friends. Parents will be continually updated on their child's progress and given verbal notice prior to any transition.

OPEN DOOR POLICY AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents may visit their children in our facility any time they wish. We do ask parents who plan to visit their children frequently to follow the classroom routine to avoid disturbing the classroom schedule and activities. If you wish to meet with the Director or a staff member, please make an appointment so that arrangements can be made.

St. Paul ELC appreciates parents' valuable input on the care of their children and encourages parent participation. Parents can visit as much or as little as their schedules (and children) will allow. We also invite grandparents to come and visit and read a story to the class. If you are going to have a grandparent visit us, please let your child's teacher know so that we can expect them.

What parents can do at the center ... (Just a Few Suggestions)

- Share your skills—play an instrument, tell a story, share your cultural traditions.
- Make an appointment to discuss your child's needs. The Center staff are happy to have these discussions, but pick-up & drop-off times are the busiest times for staff.
- Communicate with staff about any big changes in your child's life; changes in family circumstances, moving to a new house, death of grandparent etc.
- Donate and recycle materials for arts and crafts, bonus points if you come and do the project.
- Help with outings if you can—this is a good way to share experiences with your child.
- Try to attend whatever celebrations, open-evenings, fundraisers etc. that are organized throughout the year.
- Help create a parent advisory board. Get involved in developing policies and procedures for your child-care service.
- Offer to repair toys or books at home.
- Participate in larger projects organized by St. Paul Lutheran Church for the benefit of the Early Learning Center such as playground upgrades, etc.

BIRTHDAYS

You may help your child observe his or her birthday by providing a snack on the day you and your child's teacher arrange.

CURRICULUM

We use a developmentally appropriate curriculum as recommended by Early Childhood Education Specialists. Curriculum activities will be provided to the parents at least monthly for the entire center in the form of a monthly calendar posted in the entrance of the center and in weekly emails. In addition, parents will be provided with a daily record of what adventures and activities their child has participated in.

WEBSITE

Our website is updated monthly or more often. We attempt to provide interesting articles and it is where you will be able to sign up for events.

Visit our website at www.stpaulelc.com

The password to the Parent's Portal is stpaulelc. Behind the portal is where you will find photographs of your child.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Every month we have at least one special event, special guest, or holiday. The website/calendar will list that month's events. We will post reminders in the entrance and send notes when necessary. Parents are encouraged to volunteer to help with these events. Please speak to the Director if you are willing to help or have an idea for an event.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Any slanderous allegations or libelous comments made against St. Paul Early Learning Center on any type of Social Media forum will be grounds for immediate dismissal from the center.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

When put into the hands of a teacher, laptops, tablets, iPads and cell phones are tools which can be used for learning purposes and student interaction. Electronic screens are not used in the infant room. In the Wobbler, Toddler and Pre-School rooms, electronic devices are used for brief periods of time to introduce a song, show a short video or tell a story. There are times

when children need “down time.” Listening to a story told via a video or singing along with nursery rhymes acted out on a screen can be a helpful and calming exercise when supervised by a teacher.

Children do not have access to computers.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND EVACUATION PLAN

In order to evacuate, we would leave the premises with our designated Emergency Kit from the front office which includes flashlights, radio, formula, baby food, cereal for older children, cups, water, first aid kits, and batteries. All teachers would bring their emergency bags containing their emergency cards, diapers, and first aid kits. The infant teachers would load the children into the emergency cribs and take their emergency bag and the children’s bottles.

St. Paul Early Learning Center FOLLOWS THE EBR SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR ALL WEATHER-RELATED CLOSURES DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR. Some exception will be made, for example but not limited to the following:

- **Power loss**
- **A/C loss**
- **Hazardous conditions near the center**
- **Cold weather**

Dates the center will be closed.

- Birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr. 1/15
- Lundi Gras Day 2/12
- Mardi Gras Day 2/13
- Good Friday 3/29
- Easter Monday 4/1
- Easter Tuesday 4/2 (Teacher In-Service)
- Memorial Day 5/27
- Juneteenth 6/19 (Wednesday)
- Independence Day 7/4 (Thursday)
- Labor Day 9/2
- Thanksgiving Day 11/28
- Day after Thanksgiving 11/29

- Christmas and New Year 12/24/2024-1/2/2025 (Subject to change)
- St Paul will close for professional development (at least 2 days per year; actual dates may changes based on the calendar)

Please sign the Handbook agreement on the next page and return that page to the center.

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN TO OFFICE

CHILD'S NAME: _____

I have read and understand the foregoing Parent Handbook (including the discipline policy) and agree to be bound by all policies and procedures contained therein.

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____