



St. Patrick's
E P I S C O P A L C H U R C H

PRESCHOOL

Parent Handbook

Tips for Success

First day jitters, tears, separation anxiety; these are all very normal and natural tendencies of any young child starting a new school year. Many children fear new experiences and sometimes saying good-bye is difficult.

It is important for children to feel at ease and comfortable at St. Patrick's Preschool, so we have devised a list of things that parents and teachers can do to make a child's first morning (and every morning) as easy as possible:

Lots of rest (preschoolers need 11-13 hours of sleep) and a good breakfast in a relaxed atmosphere gives your child the best start for the day. This is a good time to help your child look forward to preschool as a place to have fun, meet new friends and explore new things.

We encourage you to talk cheerfully about the drop off procedure so your child can anticipate what will happen when you arrive at school.

Experience shows it is best to let the teachers come to the car rather than have parents come into the classroom to say good-bye.

Be matter-of-fact and decisive when ready to leave the car line. Being tentative only increases separation difficulties.

Both teacher and parent need to convey their own sense of security, which can be very reassuring to a child.

Be aware that not every child will have a difficult transition. You know your child best and if he or she is content with the situation, you can feel comfortable in allowing your child the opportunity to begin building a sense of autonomy, which is a building block of self-esteem.

The actual developments of a first day are almost always a learning experience for both parent and teacher. The most important things we can do for our children during this time is to be as confident and calm as possible, comfort them without pleading or being overly apologetic and distract them from grief as quickly as possible.

If your child is crying when you leave, know that they will likely settle down as soon as their teacher engages them in an activity. If your child is inconsolable after a period of time, however, we will call you to come and pick them up. We believe it is better to try again the next time than to have a negative experience at school.

Drop Off and Pick Up Policy

St. Patrick's Preschool begins at 9 a.m. Teachers will be outside between 8:50 and 9:00 a.m. to greet the children and take them from the car to the classrooms. Please pull up with the passenger side of the car toward the sidewalk. Please pull all the way forward and refrain from driving around or cutting in front of unloading cars. The staff will direct you when it is time to pull forward. Teachers need to be in classrooms promptly at 9:00 a.m., so if you arrive after that time, please park your car and walk your child to the door. You will be greeted at the door by staff and your child will be escorted to the classroom.

The preschool day ends at 12 noon. We ask that you park and walk in to pickup your child. We will be using Brightwheel to securely check children out at the end of the school day. Please have the Brightwheel app loaded on your phone and your child's 4 digit check-out code available.

Please be courteous and pick up your child ON TIME. The staff needs their time after school to prepare for the next day and to attend meetings and conferences.

A \$1.00 per minute late fee will be imposed for late pick up past 12:10. Understanding that emergencies do occur, a late fee will not be imposed the first time you arrive late.

No child will be released to anyone other than parents and those designated on the student's Brightwheel profile. When added to Brightwheel the approved individual will have their own 4 digit checkout code for the student. Please note that anyone picking up your child may be asked to show photo identification (including parents, if they are not known to the teacher).

General Classroom Policy

Candy, gum, toys or other personal possessions that might be misplaced, damaged or represent a safety hazard are not allowed at St. Patrick's Preschool unless specifically requested by the teacher for Show'n'Tell or other special occasions.

Comfortable play clothes should be worn, easily on/off for those potty training, and soft-soled shoes are recommended for playing outside. Open toe shoes and sandals are not safe on the playground. Please leave a complete change of clothing (all items labeled with your child's name) in a gallon-size zip lock bag in your child's backpack at all times. Please be sure to label all jackets and other outer wear.

Discipline Policy

With commitment to the ideal that *all* children can succeed at St. Patrick's Preschool, the following policy shall be set forth to guide teachers, assistants and volunteers in the discipline of children under their care. Staff will:

- Provide a safe and positive environment in which social, intellectual and physical competencies can be developed, and where there is minimal opportunity for unacceptable behavior.
- Provide an environment which encourages self-respect, respect for others and for property. Set limits and rules which reflect realistic expectations for the age and development of the children.
- Be fair and consistent in their guidance of the behavior of children.
- Use positive reinforcement of acceptable behavior.

The teachers, with input from the Director, will establish appropriate discipline strategies for dealing with unacceptable behaviors on an individual basis.

Distraction and removing a young child from a difficult situation is appropriate in a two-year-old class. Giving a three or four-year-old words to say to a friend that made them angry is also appropriate. Children who are having an extremely unsuccessful day at preschool may, as a last resort, have parents called to remove the child for the rest of the school day and have the child start fresh the next day.

Should your child be involved in an altercation with another student, whether as the aggressor or recipient, you will be advised by the teacher at dismissal. Please keep in mind that all children are learning how to interact with peers and there will inevitably be some conflicts.

Health and Illness Policy

In striving for a healthy preschool, we ask that you keep your child at home if they have any of the following:

- Any contagious disease (Covid-19, flu, chicken pox, strep throat, etc.)
- Green or yellow nasal discharge
- Conjunctivitis (Pinkeye)
- Impetigo
- Diarrhea or vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Fever within the past 24 hours

We ask that you keep your child home while awaiting confirmation of any contagious illness (i.e., Covid-19, strep throat, pinworm, chicken pox) or upon detection of head lice. Please inform your child's teacher of any diagnosis of contagious illness. **Please refer to the forms on page 8 of this handbook to be signed and turned in to the preschool office.**

If a child becomes ill during school hours, he/she will be separated from other students and parents will be called to pick up their child immediately.

Please remember that frequent hand washing is the key to controlling contagious illness. We promote it at school and encourage you to do the same at home. While your child is at school, frequent hand washing protocols will be followed.

Potty Training Policy

Children other than 2-year-olds should be working toward being fully potty trained. This means that children must wear appropriate clothing and be working toward self-sufficiency in their toileting needs.

Please leave a complete set of extra (labeled) clothing including underwear, pants, shirt, and socks, in a gallon-size zip lock bag in your child's backpack for use in case of accidents.

Inclement Weather Policy

There may be times when St. Patrick's Preschool must close for the day or delay the start of school due to inclement weather. The safety of our families and staff is always our primary concern. If we delay, preschool will start at 10:00 a.m.

Please be mindful of the weather during winter and tune to your local television station for closing or delay information, if Iredell Schools are closing St. Patrick's will close as well. A message will be sent through Brightwheel if school will be delayed or canceled. Days missed for inclement weather will not be made up.

Financial Policy

Tuition for St. Patrick's Preschool is divided into equal monthly installments. Billing reminders will be sent on the 15th of the prior month and tuition is due on the 1st. You can set up payments through Brightwheel, direct debit (ACH) of your checking or savings account, or pay by cash/checks. Checks can be mailed to the school at P.O. Box 295, Mt Mourne, NC 28123, or they can be brought to the office. **Please DO NOT put payments in backpacks.** A fee of \$25 will be charged for returned checks.

Tuition paid after the due date will result in a late fee. *Please contact the Director immediately if there are extenuating circumstances. Do not wait. The Director can be reached at (704) 663-5659 x205.*

In the event that a child must be removed from the preschool for any reason, the family is responsible to provide one month's written notice to the Director. The family is responsible for paying tuition for the month of notice whether or not the student attends.

If a family plans to take an extended holiday during the school-year they will need to continue to pay tuition in order to save their child's slot. We are a not-for-profit school and depend solely on tuition for teacher salary and all other expenses. If a family chooses to suspend payment during an extended absence, in order to re-enroll (if there is still space in your child's class) they will be required to pay the \$100 nonrefundable enrollment fee to reestablish the student's active status.

St. Patrick's Preschool is a not-for-profit entity whose revenue relies solely on tuition. We depend on tuition payments to operate the program and pay our expenses.

Curriculum

St. Patrick's Preschool promotes physical, social, emotional and cognitive development with age-appropriate activities.

The school uses a theme-based curriculum. Each month has a different theme on which lessons are built. Daily lessons include shape, color, letter, and number recognition; weather; calendar; etc. Math and science concepts are incorporated in class activities and projects.

Kindergarten readiness is a primary focus in the 4-year-old classroom. Work on pre-reading and writing skills, as well as simple math concepts will be woven into the weekly lesson plans.

Research shows that children who are actively involved in music (who play it or sing it regularly) do better in reading and math when they start school, are better able to focus and control their bodies, play better with others and have higher self-esteem. To foster this development, our program incorporates music daily.

Overall our program:

- Creates self-confidence
- Develops interpersonal skills
- Teaches following directions
- Develops fine and gross motor skills
- Teaches love of neighbor
- Teaches educational fundamentals

Field Trips

Field trips can be a great social outing for the children with families and friends. They give the children an opportunity to interact with teachers and classmates outside of the classroom environment, have educational value and are just plain fun. Field trips can either involve traveling to a special venue or having a special program brought to the school.

These may be scheduled in the fall and/or spring. If we opt to travel to a venue, we are not equipped to transport children so families are asked to provide transportation for their children. Entrance fees to the venue may be collected prior to the event for all those attending as directed by the venue. There is generally no limit to the number of family members who may attend and we encourage your participation. If we opt to have a special program visit us, a small fee may be charged to offset any cost and all family members are invited to participate on site.

Information on date, time, place, and fee will be communicated to families approximately four weeks before the event. Be sure to check backpacks when they come home.

Snack Information

A mid-morning snack will be provided. If your child has any food allergies or special dietary needs, please notify the school so accommodations can be made as necessary. We welcome your snack donations to share with the class. A sign up is available, just check with your child's teacher.

Fund Raising Programs

St. Patrick's Preschool is a not-for-profit program and, as such, from time to time we may supplement our revenue with fundraisers to purchase needed equipment, provide scholarship funds, and help keep our tuition rates affordable. Your participation in fundraisers is always voluntary but greatly appreciated.

We participate in the Harris Teeter Together in Education program, which helps our school raise funds without asking you to contribute any money! All you do is link your VIC card to St. Patrick's Preschool (our ID is #5340). We earn a percentage of your purchases on Harris Teeter brand products to spend however we choose. It's an easy way to support your school! Fund Raising Programs

HEALTH AND WELLNESS PLEDGE

St. Patrick's Preschool is committed to promoting the health and safety of all students, staff, and teachers. Our ability to successfully provide a meaningful child development experience depends upon each member of our community adhering to policies adopted for our collective health and safety. Each person has a responsibility to know and act in accordance with these policies.

I/we pledge to do my/our part in minimizing the spread of COVID-19 and other contagious disease in our school environment. Specifically, I/we commit and pledge to:

- Stay at home and keep my/our children at home if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, flu, strep throat, pinkeye, RSV, etc., as spelled out by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Symptoms may include:

- fever at or above 100.4 degrees
 - shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, or new cough
 - new loss of taste or smell
 - nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
 - fatigue, body aches, headaches, sore throat
 - red oozing eyes
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- Stay home and/or keep our children home if I/we/they are generally feeling unwell.

Student Name

Parent Signature

Date