



Saint Paul School
Preschool Handbook

2020-2021

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

This handbook outlines preschool classroom policies, procedures, information going home, and the best way to communicate with your child's teacher.

Please take extra note of any additional procedures or policies in red from the PLAN FOR REOPENING OF SCHOOL CONTINUUM OF INSTRUCTION for Saint Paul School. These procedures and policies are to keep your child and school staff safe and healthy. All families have received a copy of the plan via email and are asked to review it before returning to school.

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

Mrs. Diane Oppel
Pre-K 4 Teacher
Preschool Director

Mrs. Alison Julius
Pre-K 4 Teacher

Ms. Marykay Welch
Pre-K 3 Teacher

IMPORTANT POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Program Hours

Half-day students 7:50 am-12:30 pm

Full-day students 7:50 am-2:45 pm

ARRIVAL & PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Arrival

Preschool students may be dropped off at 7:50 am at the North Entrance, at the red double doors of our school or Mrs. Oppel's door. After 8:10 am, you **MUST** use the main (front) entrance of the school on Alling Street. Please know that Specials (art, library, music, gym) may start at 8:25 am. If you are arriving late, please be aware that learning will be in progress. **Please be sure to bring your children to school on time. You will need to remain outside when you drop off your child and leave promptly when your child enters the building. Students who are tardy to school must be signed in at the front lobby entrance. You will not be allowed to bring your child to the classroom. Bins will be placed outside of the front door for parents to drop off any items that are absolutely needed by the student and were forgotten at home.**

Dismissal

Half-day (12:30 pm): Preschool students will be dismissed in front of the school, on Alling Street. The children will be walked out by a preschool staff member. 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: Preschool students will be dismissed via the exterior back door of Mrs. Oppel's classroom or the North exit (near Mrs. Oppel's 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 until their name is called, they will then go to the door to greet their pick-up person. Dismissal will be at **2:45 pm**.

Early Release Days (12:15 pm)

On early release days ALL PRESCHOOL STUDENTS will be dismissed at 12:15 pm via the exterior back door of Mrs. Oppel's classroom or the North Entrance. Lunch will be at the regular time in the classroom. **Lunch on half-days, must be PEANUT/NUT FREE from home. ***NO hot lunch will be available from the lunch program on early release days*****

TEMPERATURE CHECKS

All parents are required to check their children's temperatures daily before bringing them to school. A temperature reading of 100°F or higher requires that the student must stay home until a normal temperature without any medication is recorded for 24 hours. If other symptoms of illness exist, the child's pediatrician must be contacted to provide a note before return to school.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The ultimate success of all of our hard work and planning will depend on your responsibility as a parent to keep your children home from school if they are not feeling well. If they show any symptoms of illness, they need to stay home. In addition, if you or a family member is sick or showing symptoms of illness, the children need to stay home until a diagnosis is made.

Colds, flu and other contagious diseases or viruses can occur frequently and spread easily among preschool children. To help protect your 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
- headache
- 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
- loss of taste or smell
- body aches/muscle pain
- unexplained rashes
- chills

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. You must contact your child's pediatrician and obtain a note before your child may return to school. If your child has a fever and no other symptoms, please keep him/her at home until his/her temperature returns to normal **without medication for a full 24 hours.**

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.

In the case of a confirmed case of COVID-19 of a student or family member, a quarantine of fourteen days will be required for the student and siblings. CDC and local health official guidelines will be followed. Parents and all staff members will be promptly notified by the school administration in the event of a confirmed Covid case in accordance with HIPAA and FERPA guidelines. Information on classroom and/or school closure will be provided to you promptly. Please refer to the PLAN FOR REOPENING OF SCHOOL CONTINUUM OF INSTRUCTION for Saint Paul School for additional information, guidelines and procedures.

Travel

If you are traveling to a pandemic "hotspot", you must follow the State of CT protocols and quarantine for 14 days before returning your child to school.

Handwashing Practice

Students will be required to wash their hands with soap and water or use sanitizer when entering and before leaving the classroom. **Please take the time to teach and reinforce proper hand washing routines. Singing "Happy Birthday" twice and scrubbing palms and in between fingers is most important. Please help your children to establish hand washing routines throughout the day, after playing outside and before and after meals. Teachers will be reinforcing this at school as well.** Hand sanitizer will be used when soap and water is not available.

Social Distancing

As you know social distancing in a preschool setting may be challenging. **Please discuss and reinforce with your children that some behaviors at school will need to change, including hugging their friends. Air hugs and smiles are welcome! There are many ways for them to show friendship to their friends (and teachers) that do not require touching.**

Masks

Requirements for wearing masks according to grade levels are explained in detail in the Reopening Plan. **Masks are not required in preschool. Please do not wait until the day before school starts to introduce a mask if you would like your child to wear one. Practice wearing them with your children.** If you would like your child to wear a mask at school please be sure your child's mask is clearly labeled with his or her name. Please provide one mask to be kept in your child's locker/cubby in a plastic bag labeled with your child's name.

NO SCHOOL DAYS

Please be aware that preschool follows the Saint Paul School calendar. There will be no school on major holidays, professional development days, etc. Please refer to the school calendar on the school website.

Inclement Weather

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

Cancellation = NO school

Delay = two (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 SchoolMessenger. SchoolMessenger interfaces 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 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. These will be provided during student orientation.

ACTIVITY FEE

There is an **\$85.00** activity fee for each child to cover the cost of field trips, 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 for your child such as a pencil box, "tool box" crayons, pencils, eraser, glue sticks, portfolio and home/school folder etc. These supplies will be handed out at the beginning of the school year and kept at school. Please have your activity fee paid 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/tree nut facility. We want to provide all our students a safe environment. The school cafeteria has peanut/tree nut free tables.

All Preschoolers will be eating lunch in the cafeteria.

Lunch is 30 minutes. Peanuts and tree nuts **are** allowed in the cafeteria. 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. Information about ordering lunch will be sent to you from the office at the beginning of the school year. Milk or chocolate milk may be purchased the same day for \$.50. Please be

sure the envelope is labeled with your child's name and "milk money" if you would like your child to purchase milk. Please be sure to include any necessary utensils your child may need (i.e. fork, spoon, napkin or straw)

A few notes about lunch for **all** preschoolers:

- A reusable (cloth) napkin is strongly recommended to be used as a placemat for when your child is eating their lunch from home. This is to help prevent children from eating off the table and spreading additional germs.
- 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.
- No glass containers please.
- 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 he/she likes it, and ready-to-eat, i.e., fruit and veggies are cut and peeled, food is cut up, etc.
- Many children have been successful with having a "bento box" style lunch.
- Items that your child can open independently are strongly encouraged to prevent additional spreading of germs; i.e., foods such as *Go-GURT* should be avoided since they are difficult to open and staff would be putting their hands on the part that goes in your child's mouth. Yogurt smoothies are best with a straw.
- Please be sure your child's lunch bag and containers are labeled with your child's full name.

Snack: Families of FULL DAY students are responsible for providing an afternoon snack for their child daily. This should contain one or two healthy food items. A snack pouch or container is recommended and should be labeled "snack" separately from a lunch box. A reusable water bottle is strongly encouraged instead of juice. Please be sure to include any necessary utensils your child may need (i.e. fork, spoon, napkin or straw). Children have about 15-20 minutes for snack, and when given too much food it is overwhelming for them. Again, snacks must be NUT-FREE since we will be eating in the classroom.

Reusable Water Bottles: A reusable water bottle with a covered top is strongly recommended to help keep the mouthpiece of the water bottle clean. Please be sure to label your child's water bottle with their name on it. A "water station" will be available in the classroom where water bottles will be kept for students to access. There are two touchless refill stations on the first floor to refill as needed. The water bottle will need to be washed out and filled up at home daily. *Water only* - no juice, teas, sports drinks etc. Please be sure the bottle is labeled with your child's name. Glass water bottles are prohibited.

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 every day. 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 who/what it is for (teacher, 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, classroom happenings, family homework and current learning topics and donations to the classroom. 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.

In addition, be on the look-out for a Monday Memo sent from our principal via e-mail. This weekly email will contain up-coming events, news and information about the entire school.

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. These may be in person or virtual this 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 (updated daily) 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.

PARENT IN THE CLASSROOM

At this time, **to protect our children and maintain the cleanliness of our school throughout the day, parents will no longer be able to visit school as you have in the past. ALL visitors must come to the front entrance only, and visits must be by appointment only.**

***In the future, when parents and visitors are allowed back in our school to volunteer, all classroom volunteers must participate in Virtus (Safe Environment) training and undergo criminal background checks. Please visit www.virtus.org to sign up for this one time, on-line training. Further information is available in the school office as well. 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 when it is allowed, again. 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

At this time, preschool will not have Mass buddies until further notice. This will be revisited in the future.

BIRTHDAY & HOLIDAYS

At this time, **birthday treats, class snacks, and other potentially shared items may not be brought to school.** Be assured that we will still make your child's birthday special! Some things may include having your child pick a book out to read, be a special helper, pick out a song to dance to, get a special sticker etc. Popsicles may be purchased through the school cafeteria to share with the class. More information will be made available.

FIELD TRIPS & VISITORS

Throughout the school year we may have visitors coming in to visit your child's class. This year, visitors from our community or other visitors or "in house" field trips may visit virtually only. When we have permission to do so, 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 our class field trips.

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. Please have your child wear Velcro sneakers to help facilitate independence in your child, to insure safety on the playground and during gym day and to help prevent the spread of germs when tying shoe laces. 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.

A change of shoes is needed when snow boots or rain boots are worn to school. For the safety of 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. Also in the cooler months, an extra zip-up sweatshirt or sweater may be left in your child's locker to be used when needed. Please do not allow your child to wear jewelry (stud earrings are permissible) as it is not only a safety hazard on the playground, but also a distraction in the classroom.

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, the soiled items will be sent home and will be replaced the next school day. All clothing items must be labeled with the child's name in a zip-lock bag. Clothing should be swapped throughout the year for proper size and weather via your child's backpack.

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. 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 reusable bag, 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 or the end of the week, 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. We will be taking advantage of enjoying our beautiful campus weather permitting.

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. We will be observing social distancing guidelines and limiting how many children are in each center. However, we strongly feel that center time is an important part of child development and learning and proper cleaning and sanitizing will occur after each center use during the day.

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 provide plenty of space for your child's belongings. Lockers and cubbies will be individually labeled with names.

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.

Please be sure all of your child's belongings are labeled with your child's name.

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

I/we, _____,
parent(s)/guardian(s) of _____ in
Pre-K ___ have read and understand the policies and procedures set forth in the
2020-2021 Saint Paul School Preschool Handbook.

Parent/Guardian signature(s)

Date