



Parent Handbook

2025 – 2026

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Please read the following information:

- ♥ Each year the information in this handbook changes. Please thoroughly read all of the information contained in this document. Included at the end of this handbook is the Parent Contract page which you will need to print; sign and return to the school office along with your other required forms. For your convenience this contract page is also included in the 'Forms' section on the web site.
- ♥ If after reading the material you have any questions contact the school office for additional information.

Thank You!

St. Paul's Episcopal Church Preschool Board

"The purpose of the preschool is to offer preschool age children an educational environment and an opportunity outside the home to develop a creative, constructive attitude toward themselves, others, and the world. The preschool shall be open for enrollment to all creed, religion, color, sex, or place of birth."

St. Paul's Preschool is a program of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The buildings are the property of the Episcopal Bishop of Los Angeles. The Preschool Director is hired by and reports to the Rector of the Parish. The Vestry of the Parish is responsible for all finances and matters concerning buildings and grounds. The Vestry, retaining rights of review and veto, established the Preschool Board for the oversight of the Preschool Program and finances. The Preschool Board is also a venue for reviewing parental concerns and ideas.

HISTORY OF ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH PRESCHOOL

St. Paul's Preschool was established in 1971 by the church as a community outreach program. Its founding director was, Ida Middlesworth. St. Paul's became one of the first preschools in Orange County to be accredited by N.A.E.Y.C. (National Association for the Education of Young Children). The preschool is licensed by the State of California's Community Care Licensing Department as well as the Fire Department. Many changes and improvements continue to take place maintaining the standards of N.A.E.Y.C., E.C.E.R.S. (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale). We also maintain accreditation by National Association of Episcopal Schools. (Please see 'Philosophy')

2025 - 2026 BOARD MEMBERS

Megan Barcelo - Preschool Chair

Jenna Thomson -Preschool Chair

Mark Simonian - Treasurer

Pastor Kay Sylvester - Rector St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Chery Hyon - Church Vestry Representative

Catherine Aranda

Krystal Bennett

Sarah Cuomo

Megan Froemke

Michella Gaspar

Andrew Mehr

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Parents:

Welcome to St. Paul's Preschool. We are very pleased to work with you in the growth and development of your child. The care and nurturing of your child is very important to the staff. Our goals for your child are:

1. That each child is provided opportunities and a voice to construct and negotiate their own knowledge by thoughtfully investigating, exploring and problem solving within large and small group settings. We strive to 'un-time' our scheduling as much as possible to provide for these experiences.
2. That each child is viewed as competent, capable, resourceful and inventive and where each child is respected and held in high regard.
3. To provide an environment that supports and encourages communication, relationships, autonomy and organization thus enabling self help skills. To encourage each child to express their feelings and to become accountable for their actions.
4. To support family values and build relationships where parents are partners within the school setting.
5. To provide a safe, warm, accepting environment in a Christian setting.

A strong emphasis is placed on the family - school relationship. If you have any questions or challenges, please contact us immediately. If your family has any needs with which we can help, please feel free to rely on our staff to act as a resource to direct your family to the best possible services available.

Again, we thank you for choosing St. Paul's as the roots for your child's education.

Gail Forbes, Director

SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

We are a community of children, parents and teachers committed to supporting one another in raising competent and caring children while respecting and nurturing their unique gifts and potential. We believe that children are curious and capable learners. Our goal is to provide a warm, safe and nurturing environment for children in a developmentally appropriate program. The experiences that we offer are in an anti-bias, multi-cultural setting.

Our program is unique in that it focuses on helping children mature in five developmental domains or areas. These include (1) cognitive (includes creativity); (2) social / emotional, (3) fine and (4) gross motor, as well as (5) spiritual growth.

We are influenced by the social constructivist practice put in place by theorists, Piaget, Vygotsky, Malaguzzi, Erikson, Dewey and Gardner. We continue to be influenced and learn from the Reggio School philosophy from Reggio Emilia, Italy.

(School Philosophy Cont'd.)

Our curriculum emerges from the child's interests. Topics for study and project work come from children's experiences, conversations, questions, and ideas. They are provided with many opportunities for authentic learning, discovery, and investigation. Collaboration and small group work is supported by the staff who encourage exploration in an enriched learning environment. Children have the opportunity to express their ideas and hypotheses in a variety of ways that include art experiences (painting, sewing, wire and beadwork, woodworking and clay), writing, construction, music and gardening. The larger the variety of ways children are able to express themselves the deeper their understanding grows.

Our staff carefully listens, observes, and documents each child's work and growth. Their role is to provoke, co-construct and stimulate the children's thinking and assist him/ her in scaffolding new ideas. Our goal is to support each child in their ability to think critically, reason logically and act responsibly. As a group, teachers reflect upon the classroom activities each week and provide visible documentation of the learning taking place. They integrate basic academic skills and standards into this project work in authentic and meaningful ways.

Parents are recognized as valuable and vital partners in their child's learning experiences. We strive to provide a variety of opportunities to work together with you in our school community.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

We are a half-day preschool. Our morning session begins at 9:00 a.m. and is over at 11:30 a.m. We also offer an afternoon session which begins at 12:15 and concludes at 2:45 p.m. Children need to be on their way to being potty trained by the time they attend school in August. It is acceptable for them to start in a pull-up, but we are not licensed to change them so you will be called if your child has an accident.

Three year olds (must be 3 by December 31, 2025) are eligible to attend school on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Four year olds (must be 4 by December 31, 2025) are eligible to attend our three day program (Monday, Wednesday and Friday). Children who turn 5 years of age by December 31, 2025 have the option of attending our five day Transitional Kindergarten program. We also have a 5 afternoon Nature Class that meets out in the garden.

In addition, St. Paul's offers a Parent and Me Program for children who turn 2 years of age by December 31, 2025. An adult must accompany the child. Class is offered one day per week. Children do not need to be potty trained to participate in this program.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS

St. Paul's Preschool offers two extended day programs. Participation is determined by (1) whether your child attends either the morning or afternoon session and (2) the days they attend school. Specific details for each program are listed in the paragraphs below:

For children attending any of our afternoon programs we offer an extended day MORNING S.T.E.A.M. lab program Mondays through Fridays called the "Sonshine Club" that begins at 10:00 - 12:15 before the child's regular afternoon class begins. Space is limited to 10 children each day.

Children enrolled in our morning sessions can attend our AFTERNOON S.T.E.A.M. lab program called the "Kid's Adventure Club". This program begins immediately following dismissal from class at 11:30 and concludes at 2:00. Space is limited to 20 children per day.

Both the MORNING and AFTERNOON S.T.E.A.M. labs meet in the Rainbow Room at the end of the hallway or in the Adult Ed. Room next to POD 3. The cost for both programs is \$20.00 per day.

General rules for all programs include:

- 1. You will have the opportunity to sign up approximately every month for your appropriate program. Sign-ups are on a first come, first served basis.**
- 2. You will need to prepay for the days you desire.**
- 3. There may be some limits to the maximum number of times you can use each program.**
- 4. There are no refunds for absences. The school office must be called 24 hours in advance in order to receive a "credit" for a cancellation.**
- 5. Children need to bring their own NUTRITIOUS lunch, which should include a drink. NO PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICHES, COOKIES or other nut products please! (Please pay close attention and read package labels for foods such as granola bars, trail mix, cookies etc. as they can also be cross-contaminated). If you have given your child a sandwich that is made with sunflower butter, please label the baggie so staff will know that it is safe to have your child consume it.**
- 6. Staff will always encourage children to eat the contents of their lunch however, they cannot by the regulations set by the licensing agency force a child to eat.**
- 7. More detailed program descriptions and sign-up forms will be available at your visitation appointment.**



EARLY BIRD / LATE BIRD PROGRAM



For those who need to drop off their morning student a little early we have an 'Early Bird' club. Parents utilizing this program may bring their child to school at 8:30 a.m. and the staff will escort your child to school and sign them into their classroom when school begins at 9:00 a.m.

Our afternoon parents may take advantage of the 'Late Bird' pick up club. The classroom teacher will deliver your child to the extended day staff member at 2:45 p.m. and you may pick them up by 3:15 p.m. Both of these programs will utilize a punch card that you may purchase in the school office.

FEES

Our preschool has an annual (not monthly) tuition which we divide into ten equal payments, due August through May. Accordingly, the August tuition is not for the 2-½ weeks of August, but rather for 1/10 of the school year. When you registered your child, you paid one tuition payment along with a registration fee. This tuition has been credited to your August fee. Therefore, we will be asking you to make your September payment by the 10th of the month. Thank you!

The tuition for the two-day program is \$3,200.00 per year, or \$320.00 per month. Program fees for the three-day M/W/F program are \$4,700.00 per year, or \$470.00 per month. Fees for the five-day program are \$6,700.00 per year, or \$670.00 per month. A registration fee of \$140.00 is payable upon registration; this fee is non-refundable. The Parent and Me program fees are \$1,450.00 per year, or \$145.00 per month with a \$70.00 non-refundable registration fee.

If your child is to be withdrawn during the school year, you need to give the Director thirty day's written notice. You will be responsible for the tuition payment through the entire last month that your child attends. **No refunds will be given after APRIL 1ST 2025 AND YOU WILL BE FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TUITION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.** This policy has been put in place because (1) the likelihood of filling the vacated spot is marginal so late in the school year and (2) we are obligated to meet payroll for our staff for the entire year. Staff salaries are generated solely by your tuition payments. This will be especially important for you to note when planning any early vacation, as you will remain responsible for the month(s) you do not attend.

The tuition should be paid directly to the school office. Checks should be made out to "St. Paul's Preschool." Tuition is due on the first of each month and is delinquent on the 10th. A late fee of \$20.00 will be charged for payments made after the 10th. Failure to pay the late fee will result in your losing your priority registration number for the following school year. Statements are NOT sent out. You may also hand deliver your payment to either the Director or the Preschool Office Manager. Please do not give your check to your child's teacher. **We also suggest that you consider setting up an automatic payment through your banking institute or paying through Zelle or brightwheel. Brightwheel does charge a usage fee for credit cards and bank accounts.**

S.T.E.A.M. lab fees are \$20.00 per day for each day your child attends (Please see 'Extended Day Program' page 6 in this handbook for more information). Please pay only with a check, cash or Zelle not through Brightwheel.

Refunds will not be available for illness, vacations or holidays that fall on regular school days (please consult the current school year calendar).

REQUIRED REGISTRATION FORMS

Each child must have completed Physician's Report form on file, filled out by their physician which states that they have been immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus (D.P.T.), polio, measles, mumps and rubella (M.M.R.), Chicken pox, 3 HEP B and Varicella. Your physician may also recommend a T.B. test. The state also requires the following forms: 1. Identification and Emergency Information; 2. Consent for Medical Treatment; 3. Parent's Personal Rights and 4. Health History.

These forms are required the day you register. Your child is not officially considered enrolled until all of your paperwork is complete and submitted to the school office. One month's tuition payment is also required at the same time.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

As stated above, school hours are from 9:00 - 11:30 for the morning classes; afternoon hours are from 12:15 - 2:45. Please do not bring your child early, as staff is busy preparing for the day's activities. Please be prompt! We want to insure each child has a smooth transition into the school day. Remember, the pattern you set now will follow a child throughout his/ her school career.

ALL OF OUR GATES ARE ALARMED except the main gate located right outside the school office. **Everyone is required to use the main gates to enter and exit.** We ask that you make sure the main gate is properly latched if you are the last person to use it.

When you arrive, please wait by the gate until a staff member rings the bell. Sign your child in by scanning the QR code via the brightwheel app on your smartphone. Be sure that the teacher acknowledges your child's presence before you leave. Plan to be at school a little earlier than the official closing time to pick your child up. Children get anxious when their friends have gone home and no one has come for them. If you find you will be late, please call to notify the school office immediately (714) 832-8201 or message through brightwheel so that we can assure your child that everything is okay. If you are chronically late in picking up your child we will require you to purchase a LATE BIRD card (please refer to "Extended Day Program" information on page 6).

No child will be released to a person that is not authorized on your Emergency Information Form; therefore it is crucial to fill this form out completely. Please keep this information accurate. Adults other than the parents (grandparents, neighbors, friends etc.) **must** be listed on the child's emergency form on file in the preschool office. The child will not be released to a person whose name is not on the emergency form. Parents may add additional names on the emergency form at any time by stopping by the office to update the child's file. A one day form is also available in the office whenever you need a temporary pick up arrangement.

COMMUNICATIONS

We value keeping our lines of communication open between home and school. The majority of our communications will be done via messages through brightwheel for school wide notices and POD happenings. It is imperative that you check this app to stay abreast of our newsletters, flyers, events and sign ups. If you prefer a hard copy, please come in the school office to pick one up. Brightwheel messages go only to your teachers and the office You can also choose to send messages only to Admin..

You will receive an Annual School Calendar with your welcome letters.. This calendar lists all events that request parent participation as well as school closure dates.

This year we continue to maintain and update our web site monthly providing parents with accessible and pertinent information. In order for us to support our commitment to keep communication current, **we urge you to check it weekly for classroom and school activities as well as help wanted items.** You will also be able to check on additional school programs such as chapel, music and science, snack schedules well as newsletters. You can contact us at any time by messaging through the brightwheel app when your child is sick.

Lastly check out our Parent Bulletin Board which is located in the school hallway. Pertinent educational information based on current developmental practices will be posted there.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

Working in concert with parents to help children acquire the tools of self-control is the goal of our approach to discipline. Each conflict in the preschool gives us a chance to help children learn acceptable ways to solve problems. Our job as teachers is to anticipate whenever possible, and to react with a clear, understandable message when necessary. With a beautifully planned environment, a curriculum that allows children to study those things they care most about, and well-trained professional staff, the need for discipline is kept to a minimum (see "School Philosophy pages 4 and 5). Every effort will be made to understand the child's needs and modify classroom practices so that he or she will be successful.

There are two main rules that the children must follow at St. Paul's Preschool. The children may not hurt another child or animal; and they may not destroy property. We continually try to help the children handle their differences by talking it over. They often need help in expressing their wants and needs, and our staff is aware of, and is trained in methods to help them communicate those needs. We try to reinforce positive behavior by honest praise, encouragement and by "catching them being good".

Occasionally a child (or children) will need to have some time to think about his/her behavior and to receive help in problem solving. A staff member will facilitate a discussion and if a mutually acceptable compromise cannot be reached that staff member will re-direct them to a more appropriate or acceptable activity while documenting a record of the incident / behavior.

Parents will be informed about any serious behavior problems and we will work as a team to help the child toward our goals, which are self-control; self-regulation; resiliency and a positive self-image.

In the infrequent event a child continues to have extreme challenges regarding their social or physical behavior the teacher and director will meet with the parents. Together we will:

1. Discuss the behavior and agree upon appropriate interventions.
2. Create a written behavioral plan.
3. Provide the parent with the help of a referral service. This may be through your school district or private resource.

The parent will be called to pick up the child on a repeated incidence. In the event that

1. Interventions and strategies have not been effective
2. The child's behavior has not improved
3. The parent has not supported the behavioral plan; or
4. There is concern for the safety and wellbeing of other children and/ or teachers St.

Paul's Preschool reserves the right to dis-enroll the child from the program effective immediately. In this case any pre-paid tuition balance will be pro-rated and refunded.

EMERGENCIES & ILLNESSES

Our entire staff is certified in both First Aid and C.P.R. The teacher, director or office staff will handle minor injuries sustained during the school day. Soap, water and band-aids will be the extent of first aid given. If your child is hurt while at school, an "ouch report" will be completed by the staff and delivered to you through Brightwheel (these are for minor injuries, i.e. bumps, cuts etc.)

In case of a serious emergency, the parent will be called immediately. The doctor on your emergency card will be called if we cannot reach you. Your signed emergency consent form will be used only in the event that the parents cannot be reached. Paramedics will be called if the occurrence warrants. Typically EMT agencies will transport all emergencies to Orange County Global Medical Center in Santa Ana.

We do have fire and evacuation drills every month during the school year. This will help the child know what to expect in case of an emergency, and to help them respond with a calm(er) demeanor.

If your child is sick we request that you report his/her absence by either phoning the school office or messaging on Brightwheel.

When is a child is too sick to attend? Please use the following criteria to determine your child's attendance for school:

- The child does not feel well enough to participate comfortably in the program's activities.
- The staff cannot adequately care for the sick child without compromising the care of the other children.
- The child has any of the following symptoms, until a health provider determines that the child is well enough to attend and that the illness is not contagious:
 - Fever (>99 F axillary or >100 F orally) accompanied by behavior change and other signs or symptoms of illness (i.e. the child looks and act sick).
 - Signs or symptoms of possibly severe illness (e.g. persistent crying, extreme irritability, uncontrolled coughing, difficulty breathing, wheezing, lethargy).
 - Diarrhea: Changes from the child's usual stool pattern - increased frequency of stools, looser/watery stools, stool runs out of clothing or child can't get to the bathroom in time.

We require that your child be fever free and have not had a vomiting or diarrhea episode for 24 hours before returning to school. For additional illnesses not covered by this policy please contact the school office.

INCIDENTAL MEDICAL SERVICE PLAN

If your child has special medical needs it is the parent's responsibility to come into the office; complete and sign a 'Consent to Administer Medication Form' provided by the state licensing agency. This form is typically used for those children who require an epinephrine pen, diabetic testing materials, inhalers and or other medications The parent must also provide (1) the doctor's written order (including the dosage amount, method and time schedule) and authorization (2) the product must be in the original medication container with the prescription / pharmaceutical label attached and (3) contained in a storage bag with the child's name clearly labeled. It is the parent's responsibility to keep track of all expiration dates and replace when necessary. All medications will be stored and administered through the office. If your child does not have these additional medical needs no further action is necessary on the part of the parent.

SUSPENSION OF SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Although the School expects to operate its facilities during the entire term of this Agreement, events beyond the School's control may necessitate that the School cease its operations for a significant period of time, or suspend its duties and obligations under this Agreement, or both (which are hereafter referred to as a "Suspension"). A Suspension within the meaning of this section will occur only after the School declares in writing that a Suspension has occurred. The School may make such a declaration in its sole discretion and without prior notice. The events that might cause the School to declare a Suspension could include, but are not limited to, fire, act of God, weather event, natural disaster, flood, earthquake, war, governmental action, act of terrorism, epidemic, pandemic, or another event beyond the School's control. The Suspension shall last until the School, in its sole discretion, declares an end to the Suspension. If the School is providing online or other instruction despite the event that caused the Suspension, no refunds shall be due to parents and no tuition obligations shall be suspended. If the School is not providing instruction, then, to the extent that the School has tuition replacement insurance that is triggered by the event that has led to the declaration of a Suspension (fire, epidemic, etc.), the School may in its discretion refund to parents a prorated amount of prepaid tuition and suspend prorated tuition obligations for the duration of the Suspension, but only after and to the extent the School actually receives insurance money that covers such a refund, and only if the School decides that providing refunds or suspending obligations, or both, is in the best interests of the School. If the School

does provide refunds, it reserves the right to provide the refunds in the amounts and on the date or dates that it, in its sole discretion, deems best. The School reserves the right to pay the refunds, if any, on dates and in amounts that may or may not be the same for all School families.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We always encourage you, the parent, to become involved in the many aspects of our preschool operation. Whenever you visit; volunteer or simply come on the campus you need to check in at the school office first and sign in our visitor log. You will then be given an identification badge to wear during your visit. Please be sure to return to the office and sign out when you leave.

At St. Paul's Preschool we consider Parents as our Partners. It is our desire to include parents in our program on a regular basis. Our main goal is for you to volunteer on a typical day (as opposed to only holidays, birthdays or other special events). We want you to observe your child's involvement and learning throughout the domains mentioned previously (See School Philosophy). Please talk with your classroom teacher for more information.

St. Paul's requires that every family volunteer 2 hours of time during the school year. If you desire additional information please contact your classroom teachers. Listed below are some of our offerings:

1. **Room Parent** ~ This person helps the classroom teacher coordinate class celebrations and contact other parents when needed.
2. **Classroom Volunteers** ~ From time to time your teachers may need assistance in a variety of activities. Those may include, but are not limited to; *art experiences* (color mixing, clay, sewing ... you would receive instructions prior to participating), *cooking, reading* etc. Also *computer* or *photography* skills would be highly desirable. Please contact your teachers directly and let them know your interests.
3. **Woodworking** ~ We need wood pre-cut for our woodworking program. If you have access to a saw please contact your teacher. The school will pay for the raw materials.
4. **Materials** ~ Do you have access to building supplies (nuts, bolts, tile, paint, carpet, sprinklers, computers, etc.) or installation / construction skills
5. **Fall Fundraiser** ~ Every November St. Paul's Preschool has a legacy brick opportunity. Your family can have a permanent memory left at the entrance of the school.
6. **Garden help** ~ Classroom Liaisons and Watering / Weeding help.
7. **Dads' Club** ~ This group meets for special projects. There will be a sign up with the date and time..
8. **Staff Appreciation Event** ~ This event is held in spring. We will be in need of 2 co-chairs plus volunteers to help with Food sign ups, Table settings, Gifts, Set up, Servers and Clean up.
9. **Christmas Festival; Bike-a-thon and Spring Fling** ~ These are annual community events for all St. Paul's families and friends. We need 2 co-chairs plus these sub- committee volunteers; Entertainment, Invitations, Advertising, Facilities Coordinator, Children's Activities and Decorations.
10. **Special Hobbies or Occupations to Share** ~ You may have a profession (Air Traffic Controller, Dentist, Police Officer, Firefighter etc.) that you could share with your child's classroom or with the entire school. Maybe you could share a talent or special hobby with them as well (artist, cooking experience, guest storyteller, horseback rider, cultural celebration or another language).

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

The best choice for dress at school still is sturdy, inexpensive, washable play clothes. Because we are a developmental preschool, children will be getting messy! Painting, playing with sand and water, clay, flubber and playdough is an active part of the preschooler's day. Tennis shoes are the best choice for footwear. We also encourage children who love to play in our sand and water area to wear rain boots. Please do NOT send your child in sandals, boots or shoes with slippery soles. Their safety is our utmost concern. Please refrain from allowing your child to wear barrettes, rings or other jewelry of value as they can get lost while playing and can be very difficult for us to find.

It presents a frustrating dilemma for teachers and children when you insist that your child does not "get dirty" at our center. We are trying to provide a relaxed homelike feeling. The children want to be able to enjoy ALL of the activities including painting and playing in the sand. Teachers do not want to displease parents by allowing the child to get a little dirty or paint stained, but they know the value of those activities.

We provide a "hands - on" active environment. This is how children learn. Sometimes during painting, "hands - on" develops into 'elbows, clothing and feet on'. Children lose the value of an experience if they can't relax and be creative.

MOTOR LAB

We continue to offer our motor lab experience for our M/W/F and 5 Day children (4 and 5 year olds). Each class will have an opportunity to participate in age appropriate and developmentally sound activities based on brain development.

Children must wear non - restricting clothing (no dresses please), sturdy shoes (preferably tennis shoes) and hair needs to be pulled back to allow them a successful experience. Lesson plans are posted on line (See 'Other Activities' on website).

CHAPEL

The children will be going into church each week to share a special "chapel time" with the Church Rector, school director or staff member. Our visits include singing chapel songs, hearing a special chapel story or "message," saying a prayer and celebrating children's birthdays. Lesson plans will be posted on our web site so you can elaborate on our topics at home.

SNACKS

St. Paul's Preschool is a NUT - FREE ENVIRONMENT. We will provide a snack each day. Snacks will consist of two food groups as required by state licensing regulations. A weekly snack menu is posted on our web site. If for any reason your child has any food allergies or other dietary restrictions, we will ask you consult the snack schedule and then provide a suitable alternative snack for your child for that particular day. Please make your teachers aware of this substitution and bring your snack in a clearly marked container or bag. Pay close attention to cooking schedules and special celebrations where the food is being prepared by the children during class time. Be certain that anything you bring into the class or pack for your child's lunch is nut free (read all packaging carefully. You will be surprised how many food items are manufactured in plants that contain nut by-products!) and that there is not a problem with cross contamination in the process. Drinking water is always available.

It is the parent's responsibility to make note of your child's allergy (both food and environmental) on their EMERGENCY MEDICAL FORM. We generate a school wide allergy list but please be certain to also notify your classroom teachers of any other specific information.

Whenever a child stays for our extended day programs parents are required to provide a nutritious lunch including a drink in a lunch box that is clearly labeled with the child's name. We ask that you pay close attention to the nutritional value of the food you offer. Staff will always encourage children to eat the contents of their lunch however, they cannot by the regulations set by the licensing agency force a child to eat.

PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

We will close the school for a "formal" conference for each of our programs. Both parents are encouraged to attend. Children will be assessed by their teaching team and parents will be presented with an overview of their developmental progress. Conference dates will be announced ahead of time.

Please feel free to ask for a conference with your child's teacher or the director at any time. We will make every attempt to return your phone calls during the school day. We ask that you do not talk about your child in front of him/ her. As always, we will respect your child's as well as your families' confidences.

When appropriate, feel free to let your teacher know whenever anything "traumatic" occurs in your family (moving, death of a family relative, friend or pet, even a new baby). We will work as team to give you feedback and / or referrals if necessary. We are also a praying community and have a prayer board in our office if you or a loved one have any prayer requests.

TOILETING

As stated in the Program Description section of this handbook, children need to be potty trained by the time they attend school (Parent and Me participants are excluded from this rule). Because children may have an occasional lapse in this training or because they may otherwise become messy with a certain activity the school will have extra clothing on hand. If your child uses school clothing we ask that you launder and bring the items back as soon as possible returning them to the office. Pull-ups are allowed if they are not quite ready, but we are not licensed to change diapers so you will be called if they have an accident.

SHARING

We feel sharing is an excellent way of helping your child experience speaking in front of a group. The staff will be providing ample opportunities for students to share their ongoing work, projects, or knowledge orally with their peers. While it is not mandatory for your child to participate, we do ask you to encourage him/ her to do so as they feel comfortable.

We feel strongly that pretend weapons, money, candy, expensive items etc. are **NOT** brought to school at any time. We also ask that your child not bring toys on other regular school days. If you wish to share your family pet, please speak to your teacher first to arrange a date. We ask that you do not bring your pets to school to pick your child up on a daily basis.

FIELD TRIPS – SPECIAL EVENTS

We offer a number of special activities throughout the school year. Our main emphasis however is on bringing the experiences to our school. We will offer a variety of special visitor talks. Please check your school calendar and newsletters of up and coming activities.

We want to encourage you, the parent, to participate by visiting your child's classroom and presenting your occupation, family custom, hobby or any other area of interest you may have (see also "Parent Involvement" page 10).

On the rare occasion we take trips through the community a specific permission slip will be handed out as specialized trips come up.

As always we are limited to the amount of children we can take on these outside trips therefore it is our school policy that siblings **do not** attend these outings.

VISITORS AND SCHOOL TOURS

We are sorry that we cannot permit visiting at school by children not enrolled, due to State of California, insurance and staff ratio regulations. Child visitors are welcome if an adult stays with them at all times and is responsible for their supervision. Parents are welcome at school anytime.

We request that all parents and visitors check in with the school office **first**, signing in our visitor log before you volunteer to work in the classroom. You will need to sign out at the completion of your time as well. An identification badge will be given to you to wear during your stay with us.

School tours for prospective enrollees are given twice a month. In order to be placed on our wait list please call the school office for available appointment dates. If you know someone who is interested in our school please encourage them to get on the wait list as early as possible. The annual tour dates will also be available on our web site.

BIRTHDAYS Children and Staff

Each classroom will be celebrating monthly birthday (and 'un-birthday') parties for all of the children who are turning another year older. We do not offer individual parties, but celebrate as a community. To make it a more meaningful experience each POD will celebrate birthdays in their own unique way. This will be presented to you at the beginning of the year and as always parents will be included guests. Teachers will choose one day per month as their birthday celebration day. This information will be posted for you ahead of time.

If you are hosting a birthday party at home, we ask that invitations are NOT distributed in class or POD, unless every child is being invited to attend the party. We also request that you do not invite teachers and other staff members to attend your child's home party, as it is not possible for them to honor every request.

Staff birthdays are posted in the school office as well as a listing of their favorite things. We ask that if you want to acknowledge your teacher or other team teacher's birthdays you keep it simple. You may want to contact your room parent for additional information.

BIRTHDAY BOOK CLUB

To commemorate your child's special day, you and your child are welcome to choose the book he/she would like to donate to the school's library. A special bookplate will indicate the donor's name and special occasion.

The child can bring the book to share with the class and parents are welcome to come and read it to the class on their special day. Each book will stay in the classroom for a short period before becoming part of our library.

Outdoor Classroom Demonstration Site



In 2015 St. Paul's Preschool went through an accreditation process through the Outdoor Classroom Project based in La Canada, California. We are the second demonstration site located in Orange County. As such we conduct tours of our playground (now commonly referred to our Outdoor Classroom). The goal of the Outdoor Classroom is to increase the quantity, quality, and benefit of children's outdoor experience.

Principles and tenets include:

- Recognition that learning occurs everywhere and all the time.
- Children's development is optimized when they spend a significant amount of time participating in child-initiated activities that are teacher supported.
- Children need a connection to nature to be whole.
- A full range of activities for children to participate in are available every day.
- Children need a broad variety of learning experiences and opportunities to grow in areas such as gross and fine motor development, social-emotional development, language development and creative expression.
- Outdoors, the process of mastering the fundamentals of literacy, math and science is greatly enhanced in a curriculum that is holistic and complete.
- The Outdoor Classroom evolves from the real needs of children, offers activities that are personally meaningful to them and fully embraces developmentally appropriate practices in Early Care.

Benefits of the Outdoor Classroom

Physical:

- An increase in physical development, capability and activity
- Setting up patterns for an active, healthy lifestyle
- Fewer children suffering from diseases such as obesity, Diabetes and ADD/ADHD

Cognitive:

- Stronger language, problem-solving and communication skills through projects and group activity
- Developing an interest in science and math through connecting with nature

- Fostering learning through self-initiation, control and personal responsibility

Psychological:

- Happier
- Higher, more positive self-esteem
- Effective relationship building in a cooperative, non-competitive environment
- Building a healthy and balanced internal psychology from time spent alone
- Manifesting classroom harmony
- Social-emotional mastery

Understanding:

- Familiarity with and appreciation of nature
- Wide, expansive view of how the world works
- Building stewardship skills for the environment

Children's Garden

The garden was established in 1996 and is considered an extension of our core Reggio philosophical ideals and it also supports and enhances all of the theorist's work that we promote as best practices for early learners. It exists to provide an interactive play area and working laboratory where parents and teachers can instruct children on the planting and harvesting of a variety of plants; the care and maintenance of a garden as well as the preservation of nature and ecosystem. Your child will have the opportunity to visit the garden monthly for a 'formal' lesson with our garden instructor as well as with their classroom as the interest and need arises.

Parents are a huge part of helping us carry out this work. We have Dad's Club work parties monthly, parent escorts who assist the teachers in walking children out to the garden; parents who can help serve with expertise, materials and supplies and families who sign up to water our classroom beds on a weekly basis.

Of course, to run a garden of this size we also ask for ongoing parent financial support. Participation is optional and any donation you can make will be greatly appreciated. Checks should be made payable to St. Paul's Preschool adding "Garden Donation" on the memo portion of your check. You will receive a tax deduction letter for your contribution. Your name and level of sponsorship will appear on our Donor's List in the garden kiosk for the entire school year.

General Garden Rules include;

1. Supervise your child at all times (*please do not allow your child to swing on the gates*).
2. Return all items to their proper area (place shovels, watering cans to potting table).
3. Haul out your own trash and place in dumpster located by the church kitchen.
4. Respect other's property while on garden grounds.
5. Do not allow your child to pick fruits, vegetables and flowers without permission.
6. Try to leave the Garden in BETTER condition than when you arrived.
7. ENJOY YOUR TIME IN THE GARDEN, MAKE IT A REGULAR ROUTINE TO COME OUT AND VISIT!

Garden Pavilion Rental

The St. Paul's Preschool Children's Garden and Pavilion is available for use by students and alumni for private events such as birthday parties, celebrations and family

gatherings by reservation. Reservations can be made by filling out an application with the Preschool Office. Certain rules and guidelines will apply.

The Parent's Role (IDEAS TO ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE!)

- ♥ Walk the Prayer Path in our middle garden section.
- ♥ Observe the daily changes in the environment.
- ♥ Ask your child to share with you his recent monthly garden / nature lesson.
- ♥ Take time with your child: Relax on the swing; Talk; Share lunch, or snack; Visit with friends; Listen; Find peace.

Parking, Church Grounds and Car Pools

Parking is provided in the church parking lot. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS A 5 MPH SPEED LIMIT IN OUR PARKING LOT AT ALL TIMES.** Please park in the marked spots only. Parallel parking is not allowed along the grounds. Handicap parking may not be used unless you have a valid tag on your automobile. You must walk each child to his/her classroom and sign him/her in on Brightwheel. Upon dismissal we ask that all parents have their little one's hand, thus ensuring that children will not be running into the parking lot without adult supervision. If you are visiting with other adults after school is dismissed, please remember that your child **MUST** be within your eyesight **AT ALL TIMES.** Children may not leave the gate without a parent.

Make sure that you lock your valuables up in your car before escorting your child (ren) to class. **Do not leave your purse unattended.**

It is also unacceptable to leave younger siblings alone in your parked car. If you have a sleeping child, please ask another parent who you have designated on your Emergency Card sign out your preschooler and walk them out to your car.

Please note that the parking lot behind the church kitchen is for handicapped parking only. Under no circumstances are you to use this area to drop off your child. We are required to keep this lot traffic free by order of the fire department.

We want to instill the value of respecting other's property, therefore please make sure that the plants on church grounds are not being picked, gravel remains in flower beds and that your children are respectful of church property in general.

We encourage you to take advantage of these beautiful church grounds. You may want to meet with your child's class before or after school either at the picnic bench or in the Children's Garden. It's a great way to meet other parents and provide some additional socialization experiences for your child.

After the first few weeks of school, you may wish to arrange a car pool with parents that live in your area. If this is the case you must include the carpool driver's name(s) in your child's Emergency Information and inform the teacher in order for them to be released from school (please see Arrivals and Departures in this handbook).

If you do become part of a car pool, we strongly suggest the following safety rules:

1. Be sure that each child is buckled in a car seat.

2. Parent should escort their child to the car and see that the doors are closed and locked. Be certain that children do not run out into the parking lot ahead of you.
3. **Never leave the children unattended in the car, even for a short period of time.**
4. If a disturbance occurs with the children while you are driving, pull to the curb first; then deal with the problem.
5. When you deliver children to his/her classroom, sign them in and be sure that the teacher is aware of their arrival.
6. When delivering the carpool child home walk them to the front door making certain that the parent is at home before releasing them.

St. Paul's Preschool

Parent Contract

2025- 2026

Initial

I have read the Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the policies of St. Paul's Preschool. *(Please note policies in handbook may be updated or changed without notice).*

Initial

I understand that St. Paul's is requiring that each family donate two hour of service time per year towards our children's garden or other designated project. *(See "Parent Involvement" in Parent Handbook).*

Initial

I understand that I am providing my home address, phone number and e-mail address. This information is for the exclusive use of St. Paul's Preschool parents only. If you do not wish to have your information shared, please contact the school office as soon as possible.

Initial

Further, I consent to the use by St. Paul's Preschool of any photographs taken of my child.

Child's Name (Please Print)

Teacher/Room

Parent Signature

Date

Please return this form to the school office when you turn in your registration materials. These must be kept on file for the school year according to the State of California Department of Social Service and Community Care Licensing.

Thank You.



St. Paul's Preschool

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Web Site:

www.stpaulspreschooltustin.org

Director: Gail Forbes

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