



Early Childhood Enrichment Center | PreK  
**HANDBOOK**





Dear Parents,

Today is a new step in your child's life!

It is our pleasure to welcome you to St. Paul Lutheran School. Our staff is committed to providing a loving, safe, and educationally appropriate environment for our children to grow academically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally.

We understand how difficult it can be for parents to balance all of their commitments and responsibilities in their lives. For this reason, we strive to offer a program that enriches your child's development while putting your mind at ease.

Please review the policies and procedures outlined in our handbook as it serves as a secure base upon which we operate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask!

It is our goal to offer your family a quality childcare experience. Please feel free to openly discuss any problems or concerns you may have at any time. An open and honest relationship is the key to a happy childcare experience for everyone involved.

Again, thank you for sharing a part of your child's life with us at St. Paul Lutheran School. We look forward to meeting your child and working together with you to create a loving, nurturing learning environment.

**"Children are a gift from God; they are His reward," Psalm 127:3**

In His Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Kelly Ogliavoro". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "D" and "K".

Dr. Kelly Ogliavoro  
ECEC/Preschool Director



## Philosophy of St. Paul Lutheran School

The philosophy of St. Paul Lutheran School is based on the firm belief that children are unique individuals worthy of our respect. As parents are the primary teachers and caretakers of the child, we place emphasis on listening and understanding the parents' particular needs and concerns. We strive to build a rapport between home and school.

We believe that God's Word is the basis for all behavioral guidelines. The curriculum provides a solid emphasis on academic skills, balanced with Christian teaching of Biblical truths and how they apply to everyday living. Academic and enrichment programs are planned for the children's spiritual, mental, social, emotional, and physical growth. The entire program offers many opportunities for the child to observe the miracle of God's wonderful world.

### Mission and Vision

#### **Mission:**

St. Paul Lutheran School, through Christ, serves a diverse group of learners by **nurturing** the spirit to function confidently in the community and the faith, **engaging** the mind to its full potential through educational excellence, and **equipping** the whole student to impact the world through the transforming power of God's grace.

#### **Vision:**

Providing comprehensive educational excellence the **nurtures** the spirit, **engages** the mind and **equips** learners to transform their community through Christ.

## **What to Expect**

Regardless of your child's age, you can expect some sort of separation anxiety at drop off times. This is completely normal and can last months. Please understand our teachers work hard to make your child feel loved, secure, and comfortable while in our care. Rest assured, most children stop crying within minutes of parents leaving.

One thing to remember is that the first few weeks are always times of transition. Some children are able to transition easily while others take time to adapt to new routines, procedures, and even people.

Please know that while this transitional time is hard, it does get better. A few suggestions to make drop off easier:

\*Speak positively about school around your child. Talk about how much fun is to be had at school, etc.

\*Even if you're sad at drop off time, please do not let your child see this because it can add stress to him/her.

\*Make drop off quick. The longer we linger, the harder it is to say good-bye.

\*Remember that you're not alone and that it takes a village!

\*Know that your child is loved and cared for while here.

## **Drop Off and Pick Up**

We are open for morning care beginning at 7AM each day for a fee. Students can be dropped off as early as 7:55AM without being charged an incidental fee. We strongly encourage students be in their classrooms by 8:15 which allows for students to receive the most of their educational experience. We also know that students thrive on routine so a consistent drop off allows for optimal success.

Students will be signed in on a daily sign in sheet. The sheet will include slots for time in, person's initial who is dropping off, how the student will eat lunch, when the student will leave, and a section for notes. This will also be where the student is signed out at dismissal.

Students in ECEC (15s and 2s) must be picked up by a person

listed on their transportation list. The person picking up should be prepared to show his/her ID to the teacher in the classroom to ensure we release the student to the appropriate person. Students will be signed out on the daily sign in sheet by placing the time out and person's initial who is picking up the child.

Pre-K students have the option to be picked up by their parents at the elementary carline at 3PM. A Pre-K teacher will pick up all carline students from their classrooms. Once at carline, Pre-K students will sit together and wait for their car.

If you know your child will be tardy or absent ahead of time, we ask that you communicate this with the teacher via face-to-face, phone call, or email. Once a pattern of drop off time has been established, teachers will call you if you are not here by this time to check to see if your child will be coming to school. This is a requirement by DCF.

## **Daily Routines**

Each classroom will have a daily schedule posted. Again, we believe that children will receive the most from their school experience if they are able to experience the daily routines. Recommended arrival time is 8:15. While each room's schedule varies, it will consist of the following: free play, circle/story time, Jesus time, playground, snack, and centers. Students in our Pre-K program will also visit our music class, PE, and library throughout each week.

## **What to Bring**

Each day, students should bring a tote bag (can be purchased from front office). At the beginning of each week, students staying for nap should bring a crib sheet and blanket. This will come home at the end of each week for parents to wash.

If your child is still in diapers, please send a sleeve of diapers. Teachers will indicate on daily sheets when your child is running low on diapers. All students should also send an extra set of clothes and shoes in case of an accident.

## **Chapel**

Students in the 2s and Pre-K attend a weekly chapel (alternate Wednesdays and Thursdays). Students in all levels are taught a Bible lesson that usually extends on their weekly Christian studies topic.

While St. Paul school families do not have to attend our church or

be members of a local church, we do strongly encourage families to be in regular church attendance. If you do not have a church home, we would love for you to join us. Our services are at 8:30AM (traditional service) and 10:47AM (contemporary service).

## **Dress Code**

Early childhood guru, Maria Montessori once said, "Play is the work of the child." As such, please dress children accordingly their job. Our teachers use a multi-sensory approach when teaching which includes use of various mediums like play-doh, paint, markers, sand, water, and other materials. Play clothes are best suited for school so children and parents do not have to worry about dirtying their clothes. Students should wear closed-toed shoes. Tennis shoes are encouraged. Please do not wear boots.

Also, please dress your child in clothes that are easy to change. Onesies and overalls are difficult to take on and off during diaper changes or potty trips.

## **Lunch/Snack**

Students are able to purchase a school lunch or bring their lunch from home. SLA is our lunch provider. A monthly menu is emailed and printed so you can pick and choose days you would like to purchase. Student lunch accounts should be current and maintain a positive balance in order to purchase lunches.

If you choose to pack a lunch from home, please make sure lunches are healthy. Lunches should never include candy or sugary drinks like soda. We encourage you to consider using the USDA's My Plate as a guide for packing lunches. This includes a protein, fruit, vegetable, grain, and dairy item. Lunches sent should be prepared and ready to eat because we cannot store lunches in our refrigerators or heat lunches. Students should be able to independently feed themselves whatever is packed.

Students will be offered a mid-morning snack. Teachers have various methods of collecting snacks: some ask for you to bring a snack to share at the beginning of the month, others assign days/weeks. Your child's teacher will let you know her preferred method of snack collection.

Students who stay past 3:00PM will receive a snack provided by aftercare.

Occasionally, students will partake in a special class snack. I

understand it is my responsibility to notify the staff of any allergies or dietary restrictions my child has prior to each food activity.

## **Potty Training**

Children as young as toddlers may begin to express interest or show signs of being ready to potty train. As with all educational and learning experiences, we believe potty training is an important time to partner with parents. We look for the following signs as an indication that the child may be ready to start potty training: diapers are dry for long periods of time; is able to communicate need to use the potty; parents are ready to train at home.

We begin to focus on potty training in our 2 year old classrooms. Teachers look for developmental readiness signs before beginning the process. In order to move to PreK3, We do expect students to be fully potty trained by the completion of their 2 year old year. An occasional accident is perfectly fine and normal; however, students should be wearing underwear. Our Pre-K classrooms are not equipped for diaper changes. PreK classes begin moving around campus visiting PE, music, and library, so potty training is essential.

## **Grade Transition**

Typically, we operate on a school year calendar (August to late May or early June). Students entering our 15 month classrooms must be 15 months and walking prior to admission. In order to move up to the next grade level, students must be the age of level (2, 3, or 4) by September 1 of that school year.

Since we operate on a school year calendar, summer registration is completely different and requires a separate registration each year unless you have opted for a 12-month plan.

## **Communication**

Each week, you will receive a weekly school newsletter. It will include general ECEC-8th grade information. Occasionally you will receive a newsletter from the early childhood director with ECEC/Pre-K specific information.

You may also receive text alert notifications. These are generally quick reminders or updates containing pertinent information.

Teachers will also communicate classroom specific information via newsletters (weekly or monthly), emails, phone calls, or scheduled

conferences. Additionally, drop off and pick up is not the most convenient times to communicate with teachers. We ask that you use discretion and realize that the teacher may request a scheduled time to talk to maintain privacy and to also keep her focus on the children in her care. Child-specific questions or concerns should be communicated directly to the person most closely involved – Matthew 18 principle. If the issue or concern persists, you may contact the director.

## **Hiring Process**

Prior to hiring any teacher or teacher's assistant, all employees must pass a DCF background screening. Once this is complete, teachers and assistants are required to complete 45 hours of DCF training. This training covers various topics and areas such as child development, rules and regulations, abuse, and health, safety, and nutrition.

ECEC lead teachers must be working on and complete their CDA within one year of hire date as a lead teacher. Pre-K lead teachers must possess a 4 year degree.

## **Early Withdrawal**

**ECEC:** Enrollment is limited to a set number of children. Should a parent decide to withdraw his/her child(ren) from school, we require a written notice to the director giving at least two weeks' notice.

**Pre-K:** Enrollment is limited to a set number of children. Therefore, should a parent decide to withdraw his/her child(ren) from school after July 1 of the upcoming school year, with the exception of a move out of the area, the parent will be financially responsible for a full semester's tuition due to the school. Additionally should the parent decide withdraw my child from school at any time during the school year, the parent will be responsible for paying that semester's tuition in full regardless of days attended. The tuition will be refunded for all time periods for which the school is able to fill the space, minus the withdrawal fee which shall be equal to 5% of the total tuition.

## **Discipline Policy**

We are committed to the belief that children learn best in an atmosphere which values and respects each child's uniqueness. At St. Paul, we use the Love and Logic philosophy. This philosophy instills positive techniques of guidance including redirection,

anticipation and removal of potential problem, encouragement, and choice. We provide reasonable boundaries, logical consequences, and are willing to give personal responsibility for the children as they are able to assume it. Consistent, clear expectations and daily routines are established, and it is vital that these are followed by everyone.

In the event of any persisting problem with your child, we will work closely with you so that together we can work on a solution. If a child has continual difficulty controlling behavior that is deemed continual disruption to the class and educational process, a conference with the parents, teacher, and director will be necessary.

In early childhood settings, aggressive behavior such as hitting, pushing, or biting may occur. These are all fairly normal behaviors children exhibit due to their lack of communication, reasoning, problem solving, and sharing skills. Teachers work with children on teaching these skills but like all skills they take time to develop. Biting seems to be the most worrisome for parents on both sides (the biter and bitten).

When a child bites, we follow NAEYC's (National Association for the Education of Young Children) biting recommendations. NAEYC recommends using a firm voice and saying, "No biting. Biting hurts," while mentioning what could have been the trigger for the biting. Teachers then comfort the child who was bitten. We also work closely with the parents of the child who is biting to make sure we are on the same page and using the same vocabulary for consistency.

Please remember that a change at home often affects children's behavior at school. Please let us know the joyous events, upsetting or troublesome experiences, or important changes that may affect behavior. In all events we like to consider this a joint venture with you.

## **Wellness Policy**

The following information **MUST** be provided by the first day of school in order for your child to attend:

- **Medical Exam** (gold form) which states your child is in good health or any known medical conditions are under control
- **Immunization Form** (blue form)

These forms can be obtained from your physician's office. Both must be current, up to date, and from the state of Florida. These will need to be updated yearly.

## **Illness Policy**

Please make sure to keep sick children home. If a child becomes ill during school hours, we will ask that you pick him/her up from school (clinic or classroom). Students must remain home for at least 24 hours **after** signs and symptoms of sickness have passed or with doctor authorization.

We are unable to dispense medication at school. Any prescription medications that your child may need must have an authorization form completed and on file. We ask that you have direct communication with the classroom teacher(s) to inform her/them of the medication procedures.

Teachers take great care to make sure to clean, disinfect, and sanitize their classrooms. We follow a DCF suggested cleaning schedule. Please understand that while great measures are taken to stop the spread of germs, unfortunately, sickness is inevitable in school settings. We ask that our parents partner with us and keep sick children home.

## **Emergency Response Plans**

On Site Emergencies allow for teachers and students to remain on campus (loss of power, etc.) but may require us to close. In this event, you will be contacted by a teacher or staff member via telephone, email, or text alert depending on severity.

Evacuation to an Alternate Location is an emergency situation where it is not safe for students and staff to remain on campus (fire, etc). At the time of the event we will transport students by whatever means necessary in order to leave the school quickly and safely and go to Resurrection Catholic School. Resurrection is located at 3720 Old Hwy 37, Lakeland, FL 33813. Parents and emergency contacts will be notified as soon as the children and staff are safe. Updates will be made via emails or text alerts.

Teachers and staff members will stay with the children to keep them as calm and make this process as smooth as possible. In the event of a relocation emergency, please remain calm and patient. The relocation and release of students could potentially be a time consuming task. Our students' safety is our priority.

## **Disenrollment Policy**

Per the St. Paul Lutheran School contract with the Department of Children and Families, St. Paul Lutheran School has created an expulsion policy.

For the remainder of this policy the term disenrollment will be used in lieu of expulsion.

This policy is centered around the well-being of children served by St. Paul Lutheran School. SPLS seeks to provide programs designed to support children's growth and to challenge them to learn as individuals who are part of God's big world. Given the diversity of the families and communities that are served by SPLS, it is necessary to recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child and family brings to our program.

St. Paul Lutheran School works to create a solid, open partnership with families as a basis for children's success within the program. Because St. Paul Lutheran School's child-centered/family approach seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual differences, it is only on rare occasions that a child's/family's behavior may warrant the need for the family to find a more suitable setting. SPLS faculty, staff and leadership will do everything possible to work with families to avoid a child's disenrollment from our school. The following are some reasons why expelling a child or family from SPLS would be considered:

### **Child's Actions:**

- A child is unable to adjust to the program after a reasonable amount of time and is experiencing and/or causing significant disruption
- Repeated, unresolved physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Repeated, unresolved tantrums and/or angry outbursts

### **Parental Actions:**

- A parent/guardian fails to abide by St. Paul Lutheran School policies or the requirements imposed by the appropriate licensing agency.
- Non-payment of tuition.
- A parent/guardian demands special services that are not provided to other children and cannot reasonably be delivered by the program

### Immediate Causes for Disenrollment:

- A parent/guardian is physically or verbally abusive or intimidating to St. Paul Lutheran School faculty, staff, children, or anyone else at SPLS.
- Potentially dangerous behavior by a parent or child

### TEACHER/DIRECTOR EXPECTATIONS:

When a child's teacher or the Early Childhood Director has concerns about a child's behavior or other circumstances, he or she will document such concerns.

The teacher will inform and involve the child's parent/guardian by notes, phone calls, and meetings, as necessary, to establish a collaborative environment.

If the child's behavior is problematic, a review of that behavior will occur to help the parents and administration understand the behavior in its appropriate context.

SPLS will work with parents to develop strategies to address a child's particular problem. A variety of options should be considered, including changes to:

- the physical environment
- the daily structure of activities
- classroom consistency
- transition time procedures
- redirection procedures

It is the hope of SPLS that parents and teachers are able to work together to develop a plan to help the child. This expectation will include parents supporting the teachers and adjusting the expectations of the child. Similarly, teachers' expectations, management skills, and intervention techniques should be evaluated and changed to adapt to the particular circumstances.

Whenever possible and appropriate, efforts will be made to help a family understand how they can support the plan at home or encourage a resolution by adjusting their interactions or expectations for a child.

Literature and other support resources regarding methods of improving behavior will be provided to the family, if available.

Lines of communication with parents will be established, and parent conferences will be conducted to review the problematic behaviors, the strategies implemented to resolve them (and their relative success), and the possibility of disenrollment if the behaviors are not resolved.

It is the ultimate goal of SPLS to provide parents sufficient time to take the necessary corrective action to allow the child to remain at St. Paul Lutheran School and to provide them with sufficient notice of the potential for disenrollment, so they can secure alternative care.

Ultimately, SPLS will attempt a number of approaches before making the final decision to expel a child from the program.

#### EXPULSION (DISENROLLMENT) PROCESS:

If the behavior has not resolved after all remedial actions have been exhausted, a conference will be held with the child's parent/guardian to communicate the administrative (Early Childhood director) decision to expel. A follow-up letter will be provided which will include, if applicable:

- The reasons for the disenrollment.

- The effective date of the disenrollment.

SPLS will do as much as possible to afford the parent sufficient time to seek alternative care.

Parents will have the option to appeal the decision through a due process hearing with the Principal of St. Paul Lutheran School. Beyond establishing the facts of the situation, two main questions guide such a hearing:

- Why would the child be best served at SPLS?

- Why would SPLS (students, faculty, staff) be blessed by the child's continued enrollment?

Unlike disenrollments in elementary and middle school programs, the Board of Christian Day School of St. Paul Lutheran does not have a direct role in the disenrollment process for children in the SPLS Early Childhood Enrichment Center (ECEC) or Pre-Kindergarten (PK) program.

Detach and Return

## Acknowledgments

Your signature below indicates that you have received the below items, and the information on this form is complete and accurate. I hereby grant permission for the staff of St. Paul Lutheran School to have access to my child's records and agree to notify the facility of my child's absence by a designated time as set by the child care facility.

Sections 7.1 and 7.2 of the Child Care Facility Handbook require a current physical examination (Form 3040) and immunization record (Form 680 or 681) within 30 days of enrollment.

- Section 7.3 of the Child Care Facility Handbook requires that parents receive a copy of the Child Care Facility Brochure, "Know Your Child Care Facility," (CF/PI 175-24).
- Section 7.3, C.3 requires that parents are provided food and nutrition policies used the by the child care facility.
- Section 7.3, C.4 requires that parents are provided with information detailing the causes, symptoms, and transmission of the influenza virus during the months of August and September.
- Section 7.3, C.5 requires that parents are provided with information regarding the potential for distracted adults to fail to drop off a child at the facility and instead leave them in the adult's vehicle upon arrival at the adult's destination during the months of April and September.
- Section 2.8 of the Child Care Facility Handbook requires that parents are notified in writing of the disciplinary and expulsion policies used by the child care facility.

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

