



## **Preschool Parent Handbook**

# Welcome

Dear Parents,

First and foremost, thank you for choosing St. Paul Lutheran Preschool to serve your family's childcare needs. Starting preschool can be a very exciting time for both parents and their children, and St. Paul wants to be able to fulfill the needs of not only your growing child but also our families. St. Paul Lutheran Preschool is a non-profit organization that has been serving the Kodiak Community for over 30 years. Our program is licensed through the State of Alaska Child Care Licensing Program, with this license we uphold the standards set by the State of Alaska that include specific health and safety measures, along with keeping educated staff. St. Paul has grown tremendously, and our goal is to further expand to meet the needs of our growing community.

Our Mission at St. Paul Lutheran Preschool is to provide developmentally age appropriate activities that stimulate your child's growing needs, these needs include cognitive, physical, social emotional, language, and spiritually. Our teachers allow children to make their own choices and develop through experiences, teachers recognize that experiences allow children opportunities for inquiry and exploration. St. Paul's teachers present ideas in a bias-free way fostering critical thinking, also teachers recognize that children develop within different ranges, and we rejoice along with the children as they grow in pride over each new milestone.

The details of this handbook and registration packet contains vital information about St. Paul's program. Our Administrators and Staff sincerely hope your experience with St. Paul Lutheran Preschool will be positive experience for your family. Thank you again for giving us the opportunity to watch your child flourish at our school.

Respectfully,



Asia Torrejas

Director

## **Program Information**

### **St. Paul's Mission**

Our mission at St. Paul Lutheran Preschool is to provide a developmentally appropriate classroom that serves the purpose of expanding your child's development in the areas of cognitive, social emotional, physical, language, and spiritual. The staff at St. Paul's encourage children to learn through their choices and self-exploration.

### **Program Goals**

- Provide a nurturing environment that promotes independence, growth, and creativity.
- Successfully meeting each individual student needs to further growth.
- To help children develop a positive self-image, the foundation on which social and academic success is built.

St. Paul believes that Parents and Staff that work together can better provide an optimal learning environment for your child.

### **Hours of Operation**

School year hours are 7:00 AM – 5:30 PM and will begin September and end in May.

Summer hours are 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM and will begin in June and end in August.

**SEE CALENDAR FOR CLOUSERS**

### **Curriculum**

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool will be following the Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum in each morning classroom. All the classes will also participate in a Music, Chapel, Sign Language and Spanish each week. The Afternoon Adventures room will be following S.T.E.A.M based activities that promote experimentation and creativity. Afternoon Adventures will also be given opportunities for lots of gross motor play and exploration outside to help meet each student's needs.

Exploration play will take place in the learning centers, this is where students will be offered developmental experiences to exercise imagination along with positive peer interactions. Learning centers will include: Construction/Blocks, Art/Language, Music/Dramatic, Sensory, Science/Nature, Library, and Math/Manipulatives. All centers will be transitioned out according to the curriculum.

Each curriculum is molded for each classroom and student, St. Paul understands each student has different developmental needs. It is St. Paul's goal to offer a safe, nurturing environment that supports the whole child's needs.

## **Staff**

Our staff are required to meet the standards required by the State of Alaska Child Care Licensing Program and participate in workshops and other professional growth trainings to expand their knowledge in the classroom. St. Paul strives to recruit staff that are nurturing, energetic, and have knowledge in the early childhood education field.

## **Classrooms Offered**

### Toddler Time (24+ months)

This room focuses on providing a structured and safe environment for new twos. The teacher's work with these children on communications either with sign language or promoting the use of speech. Children will also partake in sensory and fine motor play to help developmental growth; social emotional skills are being introduced in this room. Children **DO NOT** need to be potty trained for this class.

### Busy Bee (2 ½ - 3 ½ years old)

This room is a stepping stone class that assists children with potty training and developmental growth specifically in social emotional area. Children in this classroom are constantly exploring the outside and participating in gross motor activities, along with learning how to self-care, and hold positive peer relationships.

### Little Explorers (3 ½ - 4 ½ years old)

This classroom is introducing academics but still focuses heavily on prompting healthy peer interactions while having fun. Children will participate in having jobs such as being a teacher's helper and focusing on cleaning up after themselves to prompt independence that also reflects all projects.

### Discoverers (4 1/2 - 5 ½ years old)

The focus of this room is to prepare children for kindergarten, by introducing letter, words, and numbers for children to comprehend letter and number recognition. These skills will benefit the upcoming expectation of reading and math. Children will also be exposed to problems within the classroom and will be encouraged to problem solve independently and with peers to prompt team work.

### Afternoon Adventures (5 – 8 years old)

This after school program focuses on providing students with a relaxing, structure, hands on environment. Students will partake in daily gross motor play, S.T.E.A.M activities, and homework/literacy assignments.

St. Paul follows ratio's set by the State of Alaska Child Care Licensing Program, they are as follows (teacher to student): Two's (1:6), Three/Four (1:10), 5 – 8 (1:14). The maximum number of students in the facility is 42.

### **Classroom Structure**

Families that drop off from opening to 8:00 AM need to put the child's personal belongings in the child's classroom then drop off in the large room otherwise known as the Kindergarten Prep Room. From 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM students will be in their designated classroom, following the posted schedule in the room. Below is an example schedule to give families a better idea of what students participate in daily; this schedule represents the Kinder Prep room. Times periods vary for each class:

8:00 – 9:00 Exploration Play

9:00 – 9:30 Interactive Circle Time

9:30 – 9:45 Gross Motor (can be taken outside)

9:45 – 10:05 Morning Activity

10:05 – 10:15 Clean up

10:15 – 10:25 Bathroom Break

10:25 – 10:40 Snack

10:40 – 10:50 Clean up

10:50 – 11:10 Interactive Story Time

11:10 – 11:45 Outside Recess

11:45 – 12:00 Bathroom Breaks

12:00 – 12:30 Lunch

12:30 – 1:00 Yoga

1:00 – 1:45 Quiet Time (individual play)

1:45 -1:55 Bathroom Break

1:55 – 2:45 Outside Recess

2:45 – 2:55 Bathroom Break

2:55 – 3:20 Snack

3:20 – 3:30 Clean up

3:30 – 3:45 Homework

3:45 – 4:15 Gross Motor (outside or gym)

4:15 – 4:45 S.T.E.A.M Activity

4:45 – 5:30 Exploration Play

Diaper changes take place every 2 hours or as needed. Naptime is from 11:45 – 2:15 this time is only for those that choose to nap, nap is held in the Spring Hill Hall.

# **Enrollment Requirements**

## **Starting at St. Paul**

Entering any new program can be a challenging adjustment for both families and their children. St. Paul recommends coming into the facility before your child's start date, to allow your child to become familiar with the environment and staff. When it is time for you to leave your child, St. Paul recommends saying your goodbyes and reminding your child you will be back to pick them up. From there our staff will ensure that your child is being emotionally taken care of by holding your child and using comforting words to calm them. St. Paul understands that these moments are emotionally hard for both child and parent, but we are here to help transition and care for them. Please feel free to call and check up on your child.

## **Registration**

Families new to the program and are currently with St. Paul are required to complete a new registration packet for the school year program and again for the summer program. Our recommendation is to turn in each registration packet immediately, spots are limited in each program. When turning in packets please make sure that packets are completed fully and have immunizations or notarized immunization exemption form and emergency card attached, packets that are not completed will not be accepted.

Those enrolled in the program will have to update emergency cards every August, December, and May. This is a standard that is set by the State of Alaska Child Care Licensing Program, families that choose not to update the cards can be dismissed from the program. Also, immunizations records need to be updated accordingly. St. Paul will be running reports through our system regularly, if you are behind St. Paul will inform you. Families that do not update these records in a timely manner will also be suspend from the program. Those that have immunization exemption forms please keep in mind this notarized form expires every July.

## **Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures**

It is important that when dropping off your child you are walking them into the building and classroom and signing them into the designated binder. Please keep in mind that this is a State of Alaska Child Care Licensing Requirement and is required for families on subsidy. When picking up your child please make sure the teacher is aware of them going home and sign them out, those that are not familiar to staff will be required to show their ID's and will only be allowed to pick up if they are on the authorized pick up list or if a parent gives a written permission form to admin. Please remember that these are put into place for the safety of your child.

# **Policies and Procedures**

## **Challenging Behaviors**

As childcare providers our staff understand that growing children are always testing boundaries in and outside of the classroom. To decrease behavioral obstacles our teacher's setup rooms that have clear boundaries, consistent routines, but that are also flexible in offering children choices. When addressing challenging behaviors, the staff often separate the child from the problem and allow them time to calm down in an environment the teacher can control before addressing the behavior. When addressing the behavior staff recognize that some children are less receptive than others on talking about the behavior and feelings behind it. Our staff strive to give children the words to help recognize their feeling along with adequate coping skills. Children that cause harm to other peers and teachers a maximum of 3x in a day will be sent home for the remainder of the day. This is a safety protocol to ensure that staff and students are in a safe environment.

When a student in St. Paul's care presents developmental delay or disruptive behavioral obstacles, our facility has a specific protocol that is to be follows.

1. Identify the problem
2. Discuss these problems with the Director(s)
3. Effectively document behavior
  - What lead up to the behavior?
  - Describe the behavior
  - Teacher(s) response to behavior
4. Private conference with family (plan of care and/or evaluation)

If the family is against their child being evaluated the teachers and directors will re-group and investigate the right avenue that benefits the child, this is a case by case situation. However, if the behavior continues teachers and directors will then again regroup with the child's family. If the family refuses to work with us, the directors are at liberty to terminate care. Families need to keep in mind that St. Paul Preschool is a facility that has no specific individual that is equipped with handling developmental needs or behavioral obstacles and a resource that the facility works closely with KANA's Infant Learning Program and KIBSD Early Childhood Services.

## **Communication**

St. Paul Preschool welcomes and encourages open communication with all of our families, our staff find it important that families are aware of what their children are doing on a daily basis. Check out our Communication Board, above our sign in and out binder and our school newsletters for any up in-coming events.

On occasion young children can often harm themselves and even others while playing. In these incidents, an incident report will be filled out and the parent will be notified. These incident reports are placed in your child's sign in and out sheets, after they are signed, will be placed in your child's folder. You may request a copy from our staff.

**St. Paul Preschool has an open-door policy, so please feel comfortable to visit us at any time.** Please feel welcome to come to our staff and administrators with any questions or concerns, we are happy to address any concerns you may have.

### **Concerns or Complaints**

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool encourages families to come to the Administrators with any concerns or complaints this is how St. Paul's continues to improve our program. Families can email, call, come into the office or use the suggestions box. Any serious complaints that you feel need to be reported due to your un-satisfaction can be directed to the State of Alaska (information provided below).

State of Alaska

Department of Health & Social Services/ Division of Public Assistance

Licensing Specialist

1-888-268-4632

### **Daily Needs and Belongings**

Children need to be sent to school with necessary LABELED items, if you do not send these St. Paul Lutheran Preschool will have call you to drop off items that may include:

- Outdoor gear
- Extra clothes
- Nap gear (if needed)
- Diapers/Wipes (if needed)
- Snack and Lunch
- Emergency Backpack **(if not provide a fee will be added to account)**

A school supply list will be sent with the school year registration packet and look for specific needs the teachers have. Families need to make sure that nap gear, back packs, and lunch boxes are going home before the weekend. Art and food left in the cubbies Friday evening will be thrown away to maintain clean cubbies.

### **Dismissal**

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool is at liberty to dismiss families from the program the reasons for dismissal include but are not limited to the following:

- Nonpayment of tuition and fees
- Failure to update necessary paperwork, includes signing your child in and out
- Challenging behaviors

St. Paul will allow families an opportunity to correct before dismissing them from the program, if families do not take advantage of this opportunity the consequence will be dismissal from the program. Families that have been dismissed from the program will not be able to re-enroll into further program offered at St. Paul Lutheran Preschool.

## **Health and Safety**

St. Paul strives to keep a clean and sanitized environment for both our students and staff. By doing this we sanitize and disinfect toys nightly and scrub them on Friday nights. The facility is also cleaned nightly and all trash is removed. Teachers and students are required to wash their hands after bathroom use, please encourage this at home to keep consistency. Staff also handle all foods and accidents with gloves to prevent spreading of germs or exposure to bloodborne pathogens.

## **Health Policies**

The facility can not permit any child into the facility when they are ill, this is to protect your child, other children that attend, and staff members. Children that have the following symptoms may not attend, if they exhibit this at school they will be sent home immediately:

- Fever 100 degrees or over
- Flushed or Pale Complexion
- Undiagnosed Rash or Lice
- Vomiting or Diarrhea
- Deep Coughs
- Excessive mucus drainage

Children that have had any of the above symptoms will not be permitted back at school until they are symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours or a doctor's note detailing your child is no longer contagious. This will be up to the Directors discretion.

## **Natural Disaster/Fire**

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool practices earth quake drills every semester, students will know appropriate response in the incident of an actual earthquake. In the case of a tsunami students will be able to stay within the preschool due to our elevation being roughly 100 ft above sea level. During the case of a tsunami parents will be notified and are welcome to stay within the preschool. The preschool is equipped with 72 hours of food and water. If parents or guardian decide to pick up, children will only be released to those on the emergency card.

Fire drills are practiced each month and the facility is monitored by the city fire marshal every two years or as needed according to the State of Alaska. Students will be familiar with how to safety exit the building under the supervision of their teachers.

## **Parent Involvement**

St. Paul Preschool strives to have open communication with all of our families, our staff find it important that families are aware of what their children are doing on a daily basis. Teachers communicate through private Facebook pages, parent board (located in rooms), monthly newsletters, and semester conferences. If you have any questions, please reach out and they will happily answer any further questions or concerns you have about your child or the classroom.

Since St. Paul Preschool is a non-profit facility volunteer time is encouraged, there will be multiple opportunities for families to assist the preschool during the school year. Such as fundraising events, school improvement, classroom assistance, or donations. If families are unable to put in certain hours in a semester the facility will charge families a \$50 fee per child, this fee will go straight to the classroom to help with any needed materials.

Bringing snack on designated snack days provided by the teacher will result in .25 hours of volunteer time.

Involvement is based off how many days your child attends. Documentation slips are found with your teachers, if you are donating materials, they can be consider hours, receipts are needed to ensure families meet the \$50 fee. Hours required by parents are as listed below.

2-day program = 4 hours per semester

3-day program = 6 hours per semester

4-day program = 8 hours per semester

5-day program = 10 hours per semester

## **Tuition and Fees**

St. Paul sends out invoices the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior and the invoice is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month if the invoice is not paid by the 5<sup>th</sup>. During the school year families are signing up for the whole year, families will be charged a monthly tuition regardless if their child is present or not. This charge is to hold your spot if you decide to un-enroll please keep in mind St. Paul requires a 2 – week notice, families that do not provide a notice will be charged \$100 fee and will not be prorated.

St. Paul will add a \$50 late fee. At this point your child will not be able to return to school until the bill is paid in full. Families need to recognize that they are responsible for paying bills in full even after they have left our program. Families that decide to leave a balance at St. Paul unpaid will be given a 30-day notice to pay the bill in full before proceeding with Alaska Small Claims Court. If you receive any childcare assistance, please remember that you are still responsible for all invoices.

Families not enrolled in full time care will be charged accordingly when dropping off early or picking up late. These fees will be calculated at the end of the month and families have 30-days to pay until late fee is added. Late pick up fees will be added when children are pickup after 5:30 PM. A \$50 charge will automatically be added, after 5:35 PM families will be charged an additional \$1 for each minute. Families that repeatedly pick up late will be dis-enrolled from St. Paul Lutheran Preschool.

Families that are struggling financially please come see the Director for options