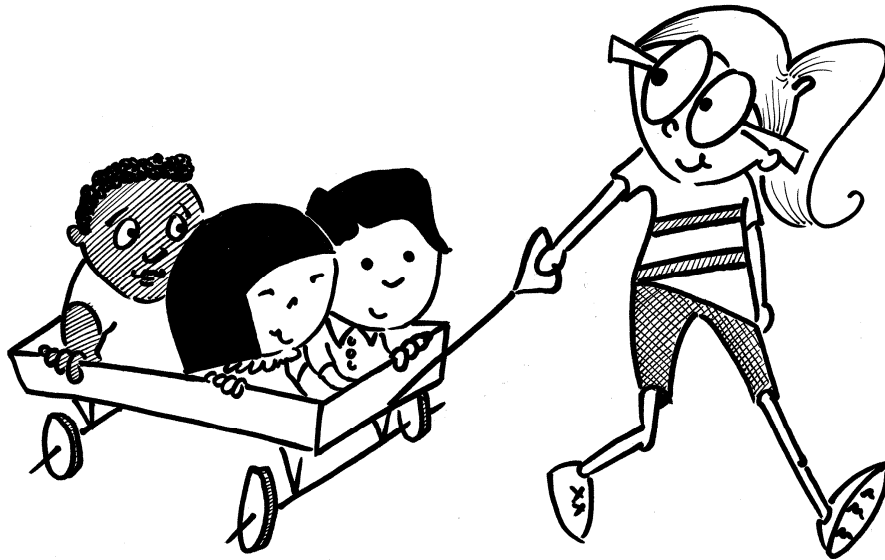


PARENT HANDBOOK



St. Stephen's Preschool

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Director
Mary Mercogliano

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I. ADMINISTRATION

NEW STUDENTS

Parents need to complete or provide the following forms:

- Admissions Agreement
- Identification and Emergency Information Form
- Physician's Report
- Immunization Record (if not recorded on Physician's Report)
- Parent's Report on Child's Health
- Signature Clarification Page

These forms **must** be completed and returned to the school office no later than the first day of school. The State of California requires them, and your child **cannot** attend school until the office has received the forms.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Before your child may be admitted to school we **must have proof** of the following immunizations:

- Polio–3 doses;
- DTP–4 doses;
- MMR–1 dose, given on or after the first birthday;
- Hib–1 dose;
- Hepatitis B–3-dose series;
- Varicella–1 dose, given on or after the first birthday; and
- TB risk-factor screening

Please have your doctor fill in the information on the Physician's Report. The yellow immunization card may be presented if the doctor's form is not completed prior to the child's starting school.

If your child is not immunized because of personal beliefs, please speak with the administrative assistant in the Preschool office to complete the required forms.

RETURNING STUDENTS

Parents need to complete the following forms each year:

- Admissions Agreement
- Identification and Emergency Information Form

Parents also need to provide the office with verification of all new immunizations yearly.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition, parents will receive a copy of the following state forms:

- Parents' Rights (Lic. 995)
- Caregiver Background Check Process (Lic. 995E)
- Personal Rights (Lic. 613A)
- Pesticide Application Notification (AB2698 mandate)

TUITION PAYMENT AGREEMENT

The school relies entirely on tuition to meet operating costs.

Due Date

Tuition is due the first class day of each month. We do not send out bills.

Late Fee

A late fee of \$10.00 will be assessed on all tuition payments not received by the tenth of each month.

NSF Check Fee

There will be a \$10.00 charge on any check returned by the bank.

Tuition Credit

No tuition credit is given for school holidays or absences.

Withdrawal

Should it become necessary to withdraw a child, parents must give at least two weeks' notice. If **written** notice of withdrawal is received by the Friday prior to the third Monday of March, June tuition deposit will be refunded. After that date, no refunds will be given.

Receipts

Your cancelled check is your receipt. If you require further documentation for tax or work purposes, please request it from the office. All payments in cash will be receipted.

Federal Tax ID # 95-2592621

SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT

State law requires that children be signed in when brought to school and signed out when picked up. Your signature must match the one you provide on the signature clarification page, which will be given to you before school starts.

Authorization

Parents must inform the school if someone other than a parent is going to take a child home. Please be sure to list on the Identification and Emergency Information form the **first and last name** of any and all persons you authorize to take your child from St Stephen's. They must present a photo ID if we do not know them. **No child will be released to any person not authorized in writing by the parent. State law prohibits us from accepting authorization over the telephone. This is for your child's safety.**

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

For your child's security, please be sure to provide us with at least two emergency contacts and keep their numbers up to date.

STUDENT RECORD UPDATES

Whenever there are changes or additions to the information originally provided on the registration form, please complete a change of information form. **This is most important regarding telephone numbers where the parent can be reached while the child is at school. In an emergency, we want to be able to reach the parent quickly.**

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING REQUIREMENT

Preschool teachers are considered "Mandated Reporters" in the State of California. Section 11166 of the Penal Code requires "any childcare custodian who has knowledge of or observes a child in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of child abuse, to report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately or as soon as practically possible by telephone and to prepare and send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident."

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

St. Stephen's Preschool is governed by a board of directors, which is composed of members in good standing of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and a teacher representative. The Preschool Board meets the first Tuesday of each month.

II. PROGRAM

Teachers plan activities for the entire 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. or 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. class time. Your child will benefit most from our program when present for the complete class.

DAILY SCHEDULE

The daily schedule provides opportunities for each child to make individual choices within the activities offered and to participate in classroom maintenance (clean-up time), as well as whole group activities appropriate to the age of the children in the class. The children have about 45 minutes outside each day where they are free to explore our large playground and various activities the playground teacher has provided. Snack time is provided after outside time.

PRAYER

Prayer is a part of the daily activities at St. Stephen's. The children will say grace before they eat. In general, God-centered language is used in prayers.

CHAPEL TIME AND CHAPLAIN CLASSROOM VISITS

Once a month, the children will have chapel time with the Preschool chaplain. This is a 15-minute session with one or two classes at a time, usually held in the church. The topics vary. Parents are welcome to observe, and the chaplain is always open to suggestions or questions about chapel time. In addition, the chaplain will visit each class monthly. During these visits, there will be stories, songs and, at times, related games or other activities. The chaplain will write a column for the monthly newsletter where parents will be informed of the topics to be presented.

SHOW AND TELL (not for Two-Year-Old Class)

Each class has Show and Tell once per week. Children may bring a toy, book, CD, cassette, or other item of their choice. This provides a valuable time for the child to develop speech and language skills and self-confidence. The toy must be put in the Show and Tell box and will be brought out only for Show and Tell time. Only toys that DO NOT promote aggressive or violent behavior may be brought to school (NO guns, knives, swords, etc.).

SCHOOL RULES AND DISCIPLINE

Ensuring the safety of everyone is the most important thing at school. Behavior that causes or threatens harm to self, others, or any property is not permitted.

We feel that all our children are in the process of learning appropriate behavior, and it is our responsibility to guide them on the right path. The teachers use children's mistakes as learning opportunities, encouraging the children to find their own solutions, rather than having the adults force a solution upon the children. We encourage appropriate behavior and remind the children often of our school's rules and the reasons behind them.

The staff members guide children toward age-appropriate behavior using positive techniques, such as logical or natural consequences, redirection, and anticipation or avoidance of problems. We use encouragement of appropriate behavior rather than competition, comparison, or criticism. **Staff members**

never use corporal punishment. Your child's teacher will have more detail as to how discipline is handled in her class.

If a problem continues, parents will be notified. The teacher and director, if necessary, will work with parents to develop a plan of action. Parental cooperation is expected, and lack thereof could be grounds for dis-enrolling the child from school. If at any time we feel a child has behavior problems so serious that we are not equipped to help or we feel other students are being negatively affected, the child may be dis-enrolled.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Learning to manage conflict is an important part of preschool. All children need to understand how to resolve conflict on their own and ask for help when they need it. As we guide children toward their independence, we keep in mind that children need to learn to repair their relationships on their own, without forcing them to be insincere.

- We help children verbalize their feelings and desires and listen to one another.
- We give children the opportunity to suggest their own solutions to the conflict.
- We assist children in finding a solution if needed.
- We help children recognize and take responsibility for their own behavior.

FIELD TRIPS (Pre-K classes)

Field trips are a very valuable part of the curriculum. They let the children experience things that are not available within the classroom setting. For identification purposes, we ask that each child wear a St. Stephen's Preschool T-shirt or sweatshirt. Parents will be notified in advance of all trips or outings. If a trip is not within walking distance, each parent will be responsible for driving his or her own child. If parents cannot drive, they should make arrangements with another parent in the child's class. Parents must sign the field trip permission roster before their child may participate in each field trip.

Parents are welcome to join the class for our field trips. To ensure the safety of all of the children and to enhance their enjoyment of the experience, we ask parents to follow these guidelines:

- No siblings may accompany parent.
- Teachers consider you part of the team and ask that you follow their direction in assisting the children.
- We ask that parents keep their attention focused on the children and not on adult conversation.
- Parents may take pictures as time and conditions permit.

Thank you for your understanding in helping to make field trips pleasurable for all children.

SCHOOL CLOTHES AND SHOES

We strongly request that your children wear play clothes at school. Many of our activities are messy, and we want the children to be comfortable as they experience each activity and not worry about getting "good" clothes dirty. **Please be sure to label all outerwear.**

Preschool children are very active. Our large playground offers them many opportunities for gross motor activity. **For their safety and comfort, children must wear rubber-soled shoes.** Shoes must fit securely. Sandals that fit securely on the foot, i.e., have an ankle strap, and rubber soles are acceptable if your child will not be bothered by sand or rubber chips. Students may **not** wear clogs or other slip-on shoes. Dance shoes and smooth-soled boots are **not appropriate** school shoes.

Additional Change of Clothes

All children must bring a complete change of clothes in a labeled Ziploc bag. Parents should label all clothes with the child's name. If your child uses these clothes, please send in replacement clothes the next day he or she comes to school. Children are more comfortable in their own clothes.

DIAPERS AND BATHROOMS

We understand that bladder and bowel control is developmental, and as such we allow children who are still in diapers to attend preschool. To ensure your child's comfort and to permit the teachers to fully engage with the entire class during the transition to school, please be sure that your child's diaper is clean and dry when you leave your child at school. If you discover that a diaper has been soiled on the way to school, you are welcome to use our changing table before leaving your child in class.

As your child becomes aware of these bodily functions and begins to use the toilet, we will work with you to help your child successfully gain bladder and bowel control. Please speak directly with your child's teacher regarding how this process will take place within the school setting.

We have two centrally located bathrooms, each of which has five child-sized porcelain toilets. In each bathroom, one of the toilets is in a stall. There will always be adult supervision in the bathrooms; however, we expect each child to wipe himself or herself. Please empower your child to be self-sufficient in the bathroom. We will assist with clothes as needed.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parents are invited to assist in their child's class. Prior to volunteering parents must attend a volunteer orientation meeting with the director. These meetings will be scheduled throughout the year, beginning in October. Parent volunteers must check in at the office and get an ID badge before going to the class. While volunteering, please focus your attention on the children and refrain from socializing with other parents or staff and using your cell phone.

DISMISSAL

Children should be picked up **promptly** at the end of class. If parents must come early for their children, they should notify the office or the teacher at the beginning of the class so that class will not be unduly disturbed. The doors will remain closed and locked until dismissal. Access to the playground and Room 10 is restricted until just before dismissal. It is necessary for all of the children to be off the playground before parents enter. Ask in the office if you need access when the gate is locked.

Late Pickup

Children who are not picked up on time will be brought to the office until an authorized person picks them up. Please, when possible, notify the office if you will be delayed in picking up your child. We will then assure your child that you are coming. **A late fee of \$1.00 for every five minutes will be charged** if you are more than five minutes late. Children not picked up by 10 minutes after the end of class will be taken to the preschool office to await pickp.

EARLY BIRD AND LUNCH BUNCH

We offer extended care from 8:00–9:00 a.m. and 12:00–2:00 p.m. Sign-ups are taken in the office. Early Bird from 8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. will take place in one of the classrooms. Lunch Bunch is held on the playground, weather permitting. On rainy days or days of extreme temperatures, they move indoors. The children are to bring their own lunch. The cost for Early Bird is \$6.00/hour and the cost for Lunch Bunch is \$10.00/day when you pre-register using the monthly extended care calendar or use a Lunch Bunch coupon (purchasable in books of five coupons). Details will be included in your enrollment materials. An additional late fee of \$1.00/5 minutes will be charged for pick up after 2:00 p.m. **Children who stay for**

Lunch Bunch should bring a backpack to hold artwork, “What We Did Today” notes, Show and Tell items, etc. Please label backpacks and lunch boxes.

Students enrolled in our afternoon classes may come for Lunch Bunch from 12:05–1:00 p.m. The cost is \$5.00/day when you pre-register using the monthly extended care calendar or use a Lunch Bunch coupon (purchasable in books of five coupons). Afternoon students may also attend Lunch Bunch from 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. on days when they are not attending class – the pre-registered cost is \$10.00/day.

RESOURCES AND REFERRALS

Our staff is trained in child development and prepared to be classroom teachers; however, there are times when situations arise that require input beyond the scope of our expertise. We will provide parents with information on where they may receive information and/or support. We may also ask for your permission to have an expert observe your child in our school setting. This observation will give both the parent and the teacher input with regard to which services, if any, which would benefit the child. We welcome “shadows” for special-needs children. Shadows must show proof that they have an FBI fingerprint clearance and a negative TB report.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Birthdays

Birthdays may be celebrated at school. All children will have a birthday celebration day scheduled close to their birthday or, for students with summer birthdays, at some other time during the year. You may bring in a treat for your child’s class to share on the day. The treat will be in addition to the children’s personal snack. Some suggestions for something special are mini muffins, ice cream cups, **homemade** cupcakes (minimal frosting), cookies, or popsicles.

- **Please do not bring balloons for classmates.** Often the balloons pop or fly away, and the children are disappointed.
- We understand that your child may wish to include classmates in birthday parties or other celebrations that will take place outside of school. So as to not hurt children’s feelings, it is our policy to put invitations into cubbies or backpacks only when all 13 children in the class have been invited. If you choose to invite fewer children or children from different classes, we ask you to hand the invitation directly to the parent. If you do not see the parents, you may bring the stamped invitation to the office, and we will address and mail it.

Special Events

There are several special events throughout the school year to which parents are invited:

Halloween Parade	Mother's Day Celebrations
Christmas Program	Dad's Night
Open House	Last Day Picnics
Graduation for Pre-Kindergarten	

The dates and times are listed on the calendar you will receive prior to the start of school. The children work very hard to prepare for these events. Your attendance and participation are extremely important to your child. Please mark your family calendar when you receive the school's calendar. If you absolutely cannot attend, we welcome a substitute. Please advise the teacher as soon as possible.

Holiday Celebrations / Gift Exchange

At Halloween and Valentine's Day, parents will be invited to bring in a **small** token for children to exchange. Please understand that everything a child receives must fit in the lunch-sized bag that the children have decorated.

- At Christmas, in lieu of exchanging tokens with classmates, St. Stephen's Preschool will "Adopt a Family" from Hillside, an Episcopal Outreach program for abused and neglected children.
- Many holidays are observed within the classroom; however, only Halloween and Valentine's Day will be recognized with token exchanges among students. Please do not bring gifts for classmates to school for other holidays, as the teachers are not permitted to distribute them.

III. COMMUNICATION

OPEN-DOOR POLICY

St. Stephen's Preschool maintains an open-door policy to parents of children enrolled in the Preschool. The classroom doors are locked for the safety of your child. Just knock and, after looking out the peephole, the teacher will open the door to you.

DIRECTOR AVAILABILITY

The director welcomes comments and concerns from parents. Through open communication we can ensure that the needs of all are met.

PARENT-TEACHER CONVERSATIONS

Teachers are busy at the start of class greeting children as they arrive. If parents wish to discuss something with a teacher, they should do so after class rather than at the beginning. These occasional five- or ten-minute conversations are invaluable and, when held at the end of class after all the children have been dismissed, will not be in conflict with the program.

BULLETIN BOARDS

Parents should check the classroom bulletin board for the monthly curriculum outline, the "What We Did Today" notice, birthday snack calendar and other announcements. Please remember to keep the members of your carpool informed. Between Rooms 4 & 5 is a small bulletin board where notices of upcoming events and other pertinent information will be posted as well as a large bulletin board where different items of interest to parent will be posted throughout the year.

NEWSLETTER

The school distributes a monthly newsletter to communicate upcoming events, as well as to review what happened the previous month.

INFORMATIONAL EVENTS FOR PARENTS

Parent Orientation - before school starts

During the week prior to the start of school, the director will hold a mandatory evening meeting for all parents, except those whose child has already completed our 3-year-old or Pre-K program. At this meeting, policies and procedures will be reviewed and there will be an opportunity for questions.

Meet the Teacher Day

During the week prior to the start of school we will hold our Meet the Teacher day, when parents and children are encouraged to come to school to meet the teacher and assistant(s). This is intended to make the first day of school easier on both parent and child.

Back to School Night

Curriculum, teaching methods, assessment format, schedules, and discipline techniques will be discussed at Back to School Night at the beginning of the year. This evening is for parents. When possible, please make childcare arrangements for your children.

Meeting for Parents of Two-Year-Olds

The parents of two-year-olds will have a meeting just for them. This meeting will usually take place the second week of school during the class day. Parents will have the opportunity to observe their children on the playground.

Individual Parent-Teacher Conferences

For the two-year-old classes, conferences will be held in the fall and spring to discuss expectations for the year, review your child's growth, and share concerns that the parents and the teacher may have. For the three-year-old and Pre-Kindergarten classes, conferences will be held in January to discuss your child's growth and development and answer any questions parents may have about class placement for the next school year.

Developmental Checklists

The teachers will be using a developmental checklist to track your child's growth in the following areas:

- Emotional/social growth,
- Receptive language/cognitive development,
- Expressive speech and language, and
- Gross and fine motor development.

You will receive these completed checklists in May. A conference to discuss the checklist may be requested by parents or teacher.

Kindergarten Readiness Forum

The Faith-based Preschool Director's Fellowship sponsors a Kindergarten Readiness Forum each year in January or February. Kindergarten teachers from local school districts will be at this forum to talk about Kindergarten readiness and expectations. This forum can be especially helpful for parents who are not sure whether their child is ready for Kindergarten.

Meeting for Parents of Pre-K Students

In January or early February, the Director will hold meetings for parents of our Pre-Kindergarteners. Topics covered will include curriculum for the second half of the year, preparation for Kindergarten, and special activities for the end of the year, including graduation.

IV. HEALTH

DAILY HEALTH ASSESSMENT

All children must check in with the teacher prior to being left for class. At this time, the teacher will ensure that the child is free from obvious signs of illness.

ILLNESS

Ill children will not be admitted to school. A non-clear, runny nose or persistent cough is a sign that children are ill and may not attend school. Children may return to school when they have had a normal temperature and no vomiting or diarrhea for at least 24 hours and they feel well and can participate fully in the program.

- If children become ill at school, they will be isolated, and their parents will be notified. An authorized person will need to pick up the ill child as soon as possible.
- Please notify the school office (259-8527) if your child is ill. This is especially important if he or she has a communicable disease. When we are notified of a communicable disease, we will post a notice on the classroom bulletin boards, without naming the child who is ill.

MEDICATION

Generally, Preschool staff may not give medication to children. However, **medication in its original container and accompanied by a written parental request may be given.** Please provide a measuring device if necessary. Leave medications and requests with the administrative assistant in the Preschool office. Parents will receive written confirmation that their child received the medications indicated.

V. NUTRITION

We promote good nutrition at St. Stephen's. Snack time is a learning time when we talk about the "growing" food children need to eat and how it helps to make strong bodies.

PERSONAL SNACK

Each day children will bring a personal snack from home. While we cannot dictate which part of their snack your child eats first (see the note below) we strongly encourage you to pack a small, nutritious snack for your child and save the "treats" for home. Class snack time is not intended to be the child's lunch.

Note to Parents Regarding Food Brought From Home

The State of California states that your child's personal rights in part are "to be free from corporal or unusual punishment, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature, including but not limited to: interference with daily living functions, including, eating, sleeping or toileting; or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication or aids to physical functioning."

Our licensing program analyst interprets this to mean that we may not set rules or restrictions on the order in which your child consumes the food that you provide in his or her lunchbox. In other words, **this means that, although we would like to tell your children to eat their healthful food before their treat, the law prohibits us from doing so.**

At St. Stephen's, we promote good nutrition, but you, the parent, are not here to monitor what your child eats and in what order, and we cannot insist that your children eat their healthful food first or at all. You know your children best. If eating a well-balanced snack or lunch is important to you, and your child may not be able to make healthful choices on his or her own, you might want to save the goodie for after your child gets home.

VI. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

EMERGENCY CARE AND DISASTER ACTION PLAN

The school has a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan. This plan covers the jobs each staff member will perform in the case of an emergency, the emergency supplies, and emergency food and water. At the beginning of the school year, you will receive a copy of the emergency assignments for the year.

BUDDY KIT

We ask parents to provide a “Buddy Kit” for their children. The requested items are intended to be a comfort to the child while waiting to be picked up. We will provide parents with a list of suggested items in the mailing you will receive in August. Please bring in the completed “Buddy Kit” the first day of school. Inclusion of a picture of the family and a small toy should bring comfort to your child in a stressful time. Please be sure to include the names of anyone who might call for your child in an emergency. We will release children ONLY to those listed on this list or their Identification and Emergency Information Form. They must provide photo identification.

MEDICAL INSURANCE

For injuries occurring while at school, the school carries student medical insurance that may cover some costs after the student’s primary insurance has paid. There are forms available in the Preschool office for the attending physician(s) to complete. Please note, insurance claims must be filed in a timely manner.