

Family Handbook

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St. Clare's Preschool

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St. Clare's Preschool Tax Identification number: 94-3108531

California Department of Social Services License number: 010212344.

Welcome to St. Clare's Preschool. We are looking forward to having your child at St. Clare's.

St. Clare's Preschool is licensed by California Department of Social Services License Number 010212344. The Department has the following authorities:

"They shall have the authority to interview children, or staff, and to inspect and audit a child or facility records without prior consent. The Licensee shall make provisions for private interview with any child or staff member and for the examination of all records relative to the operation of the childcare facility. The Department has the authority to observe the physical condition of the child, including conditions that could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate behavior."

Licensing Agency Rights - Code 101200B&C

The purpose of this handbook is to answer many questions families will have regarding our preschool.

If you have any questions or concerns, I can be reached at (925) 462-0938, or by email: director@stclairespreschool.org

Sincerely,

Sue Orbell
Director

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Mission Statement & Philosophy

Mission Statement

Our mission at St. Clare's Christian Preschool is to create a safe, warm, family oriented, loving environment that supports developmentally appropriate practices and encourages each child to grow cognitively, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

Our Philosophy

Children learn best when they are actively involved in the learning process. Research shows that children are capable of great concentration when they are surrounded by interesting things. Children need the time and freedom to explore these areas of interest. With careful observation, we help, encourage and support the learning process in each child, according to their own timetable for growth.

General Information

Non-discrimination Policy

St. Clare's Preschool admits students of any race, religion, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate based on race, religion, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies or admission policies.

Our Teachers

We are committed to hiring educationally qualified teachers who are personally and professionally devoted to the exceptional care, welfare, and quality education of young children. Most of our teachers exceed the academic qualifications required by California licensing regulations and have an average of more than 10 years teaching experience at quality schools. In addition, our teachers are CPR and first aid certified. More importantly, they are enthusiastic and enjoy their work with children. This is reflected in the positive environment they create for the children.

We strive to create and maintain an atmosphere that fosters the healthy spiritual, emotional, intellectual, social, and physical growth in each child. We acknowledge that learning is enhanced in an environment that encourages sharing, caring, laughing, questioning, risk taking, growing, and playing.

How to Help Your Child Prepare for School

Talk about preschool with your child. Discuss positive experiences that are waiting for him or her. Listen, and discuss concerns that they are expressing. Encourage your child and be reassuring. Establish good routines for eating and sleeping. It is important to have your child up early enough in the morning for them to enjoy a rest/nap time at latest 1:00 (see page 17 for full explanation) Establish an effective communication link with your child's teacher so that you are informed

about your child's progress.

What to Bring on Your First Day of School:

An Change of Clothes in a one gallon ziplock bag with your child's name on it (Please label everything)

Shirt, underwear, socks, and pants/shorts/skirt

For Nap Time

Small crib blanket

Very small pillow (if needed)

Small stuffed toy (if desired)

Other Items

Sun block (with name on it)

Lunch box, and reusable ice block to keep it cool

Picture of your family

We will provide a nap bag, bottom cot sheet, and school T-shirt.

Saying Goodbye

Separations are sometimes difficult, especially at the start of preschool. Starting the day in a positive manner will help assure a good day for your child. Here are some suggestions. Develop a reassuring goodbye routine for each day. For example, find a favorite teacher for your child to say "good morning" to or a favorite activity your child likes to begin the day with, then give a warm hug good-bye, tell your child when you will be back (after nap time, or after afternoon play time) and leave with confidence. Having a consistent routine is very important. Talk with your child before you arrive about what he is going to do and the teachers and children who will be at school. When changes in routine occur, please keep teachers informed so they can help your child. It may help to have a teacher take your child in their lap; they can then help your child find an activity of interest, so you can say goodbye and leave.

Our single most important piece of advice is to say goodbye confidently and briefly, then leave. Don't hesitate to call the preschool later to check how your child is doing.

Enrollment & Fees

Admission Criteria

St Clare's Preschool has the following admission criteria:

1. Parent(s) or guardian(s) must complete a tour of the facility and meet with the director (or another staff member). During this meeting, the director will need to understand the state of your child's physical, and emotional development to assess whether the

preschool can meet your child's needs. The State Licensing Department also requires that the director meet your child to complete this assessment.

2. Children admitted to the school will be between 2 – 5 years of age (we cannot admit children until their actual second birthday).
3. Children must have all the immunizations required by the State of California to attend St. Clare's Preschool.

Wherever possible, St Clare's Preschool will strive to accommodate the needs of children with disabilities and special needs. Each child's needs will be assessed on an individual basis, and there will be a discussion with family before a final placement decision is made.

Before your child starts preschool, the following documentation must be completed and returned to the director:

Registration Form	Consent for Medical Treatment
Admissions Agreement	Personal Rights Statement
ID & Emergency Information Form	Parent's Right Statement
Pre-admission Health History	Photo Release Slip
Physician's Report	Sunscreen Permission Slip
Copy of Immunization Record	Field Trip Permission Slip
	Getting to Know You Form 2020-2021

Enrollment Fees

Children ages 2 years through Pre-K age will be accepted for enrollment. The registration fee is \$150.00. This is a non-refundable fee. A half-month tuition deposit will be collected at registration; this will be refunded when you withdraw from the Preschool with two weeks' notice. The Registration Fee and the half month tuition deposit, and a completed registration form with the director's signature will secure a place for your child.

Annual Supply Fee

Each family will be assessed an annual supply fee of \$150.00, which is payable in September. This fee is prorated for families starting after September.

Multiple Child Discount

A tuition discount of 10% will be given to the second and additional children enrolled from the same family.

A Year-Round Program

St. Clare's Preschool runs a year-round program. Families can withdraw their children with two weeks' notice any time of the year. They can also request a Schedule Change by filling out the required form; the schedule request must be accepted by the Director to become effective (acceptance will be shown by the Director's signature on the form). If you choose not to attend St. Clare's over the summer period, we cannot guarantee a spot for your child in the fall. You

may, of course, guarantee a fall spot by paying through the summer for our shortest schedule which is Tuesday/Thursday Part Day, even if you are unable, or choose not, to attend over the summer.

Security Keys

Each family enrolled must leave a deposit for at least one key. Each key requires a \$40.00 deposit, which will be refunded upon return of the key. This will allow you access to the school Monday through Friday from 7:00am- 6:00pm. Only visitors are to use the intercom system at the front door to enter the school.

Tuition Payments

You will be billed at the first of each month for the monthly tuition. Your bill will be e-mailed to you. Payment is due by the 10th of the month. All tuition payments must be made by check. Checks should be dropped off in the Office.

Returned Check Fee

If a tuition check is returned from the bank, the amount of the check plus a \$35 returned check fee will be applied to your account.

Failure to Pay Tuition

If you do not pay tuition by the 10th of the month you will receive an email reminder. Failure to make payment in a timely way will lead to a meeting with the Preschool Director to discuss a repayment plan. Failure to comply with the agreed repayment plan will result in a request for you to withdraw your child from the preschool.

Family Service Hours

Each child will be charged a \$100 family service deposit payable in October. Families are asked to volunteer for 5 hours of service per child, per school year. This fee is prorated for families starting after October. Alternatively, families can opt out of family service hours and leave the \$100 with the school. For those choosing to volunteer, parents, or other family members, may select from a wide variety of activities such as work days, classroom assistance for special events, fundraising events, field trips, washing towels, shopping etc. Once the hours are completed, the deposit will be refunded (partial refunds will be given).

Additional Hours and Days Attendance Fees for Part-Time Students

Please note that additional attendance of any type must be pre-approved by the Preschool Director so that we can be sure we have sufficient teachers to cover our student headcount. Failure to be in the required headcount ratios exposes the school to the risk of a citation by State licensing authorities. Provided the extra hours have been approved by the Director, you will be charged \$10 per hour, or part thereof. Time taken without pre-approval by the Director will be charged at double this rate.

Pre-approved additional attendance days will be charged at \$10 per hour attended (or part of an

hour).

Late Pick Up

For Full Day families, pick up after 6:00pm is charged \$2.00 for every minute after 6:00pm. These fees are per child. Teacher's workday ends at 6:00pm. Please be respectful of their time.

For Part Day families, pick up is 3:15pm at the latest. Our staffing pattern changes when the part-day program ends at 3:15. Our teachers must be on the playground to supervise Full Day children immediately after 3:15pm. Your help picking up on time will enable the teachers to get outside in a timely way.

Policies & Procedures

Preschool Program Times

The Preschool offers two program times. Families paying for the Full Day program are free to have their child at school from 7:00am to 6:00pm. Families paying for the Part Day program can have their children at school from 9:00 to 3:15pm. We highly recommend that all children are at school by 9:00am so they are ready for the morning learning activities and can settle in with their friends and be ready to learn. If a child is dropped off after 9:30am they must be dropped off with the Floater Teacher in the Lobby or the office staff. The school staff will take your child to their class. This results in minimum disruption to the classes learning time. We do this because Preschoolers are so easily distracted.

Families can request to switch from Full Day to Part day or the reverse, by filling out a Schedule Change Request Form (kept above the sign-in book in the Preschool lobby). Please note that we can accommodate a maximum of 42 children in our full-day program. If we reach this maximum, the Director may not be able to accommodate your request.

Reporting Absences

If your child is going to be absent, please notify the preschool office. If your child is ill, please notify us as to the nature of the illness, particularly if it is contagious, so that we can consider the health of all the children enrolled in the program.

Change of Scheduled Days

Any change of scheduled days must be made by written request on a *Schedule Change Request* form and given to the Director for approval. Please note that we do have a cap on the number of Monday/Wednesday/Friday and Tuesday/Thursday spots in the classrooms that have those schedules. If we are at this cap the Director may not be able to accommodate your request.

Leaving the Preschool

Any family that is withdrawing from the school must notify the Director using the *Withdrawal Request* form, at least two weeks prior to the leaving date. Your half-month deposit will be credited to your tuition account. Tuition unused, following your time at St. Clare's, is refundable.

Class Assignments

The Preschool teachers place students into classroom groups based on the principle of “balanced classes”. This means we will aim to balance:

- Gender
- Age
- Schedule, a balance of full day and part day students in each class
- Temperament
- Finally, how the whole class will learn together

Custody and Visitation

From time to time, issues arise as to the release of a child to the appropriate parent or legal guardian. Please note any custody or visitation restrictions on your enrollment forms. Additionally, please provide the preschool director with any legal documents supporting those restrictions. We will strictly adhere to the instructions provided in such legal documents. Please provide updated legal documents as needed.

Closure Dates & Holidays

A calendar of school closure dates will be provided in the enrollment packet. No discounts are given for holidays and closure dates that fall on your child’s regularly scheduled day. The holidays are as follows:

Labor Day	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Veteran’s Day	President’s Day
Thanksgiving Day & the day following	Easter Monday or Good Friday
Christmas Day & the day following	Memorial Day
New Year’s Eve & New Year’s Day	July 4th

Plus, three days for Teacher Work Days

Please also note that at the discretion of the Board the Preschool may close between Christmas and New Year.

Emergency Closures

In the event of a closure for an emergency event (earthquake, burst water main, all day power failure) the preschool reserves the right to close the school for 2 days without considering a tuition refund. Any closures longer than 2 days will be assessed for refund on an incident by incident basis by the Preschool Board and Church Vestry. Please note, in more than 30 years the preschool has had one emergency closure that lasted 2 days, due to a water main failure.

Clothing

We strongly encourage you to dress your child in “play clothes” for school. Some of our activities can get messy, and we want your children to be comfortable while they play and learn. For safety

and comfort, children should wear rubber soled shoes, and have plenty of protection for their heels and toes. **Please do not allow your child to wear flip-flops or sandals with no backs to school; these can easily cause injuries and accidents.** Children wearing skirts or dresses need to wear bike shorts or leggings underneath.

Please dress your children in clothes they can get on and off by themselves. This enables them to be much more independent when using the bathroom. Tight jeans with zipper or buttons, and laced shoes, for example, are not easy items for the children to deal with themselves. Elastic waist, and Velcro shoe closures are the absolute best for helping the children feel competent and independent.

Important: label all clothing with your child's name in permanent marker. Please check the lost and found area in the lobby periodically for missing items.

Toilet Training and Diapers

We accept children who are not toilet trained in our two-year-program (Playful Panda class). Parents provide diapers. We will leave you a note when we need more. We need to be able to change your child without taking off their shoes, socks, and pants. For this reason, we prefer diapers. If you choose to provide pull-ups, they need to be the type with Velcro fastenings. When your child is showing signs of readiness to be toilet trained, we will talk with you. Signs of readiness includes, but are not limited to, verbally making it known s/he needs to go, able to pull own pants up and down, goes for periods of time without wet diapers, and cooperatively will try the training processes.

When we agree that the toilet training process is appropriate, we will ask that you begin the training over the weekend. We recommend that the child goes straight into underwear. Plan to stay home lots that first weekend. Keep prompting the child to use the toilet. Be prepared for accidents, and have plenty of changes of clothes around. Be positive whatever happens! We will continue the training process on Monday. Remember to bring us lots of changes of clothes (elastic waisted). If we correctly determined that your child was ready the accidents should become less frequent during this week. If accidents are occurring often, we will discuss with you if a second weekend of toilet training at home should be undertaken, or if it is more appropriate to go back to diapers for a while.

We need to have all children toilet trained by the time they move into the 3-4-year-old program. The reason is that our 1:12 ratio, with the reduced tuition rate, is based on the children being toilet trained. If they are not, they may continue to wear diapers until they are ready, however, they will be directed to our Panda classroom for diapering. For this reason, we will continue to charge the Panda Class tuition rate until they are toilet trained.

Below are some notes about toilet training that you may find helpful.

1. Learning to control urine flow and learning to listen to your body's signals that it needs to evacuate are significant developmental steps in early childhood. It can take time. Each child comes to it on their own timeline.
2. We are looking for signals that the child is ready to potty train. What are they?
 - a. Interest in friends and family using the bathroom
 - b. They say they want to use the toilet
 - c. Diaper starts to stay dry between changes (holding urine has been mastered)
3. Have some books by the toilet to encourage staying on the toilet longer. Particularly for #2, children can jump up after one poop, and there's more to come (TMI sorry!)
4. Toilets can be scary, some kids think they will lose something down the toilet, the flush noise can be loud and scary, you may want to flush for them if they seem scared of the noise
5. Have a step stool in the bathroom to make it easy to reach the toilet themselves
6. Go directly from diapers to underwear
7. Have them choose their underwear and get excited about it
8. Don't potty train at unusual times, vacations, over Christmas, when moving to a new house, starting a new school
9. Accidents are not premeditated, try not to get angry, accept they are going to happen and travel with plenty of changes of clothes!
10. We celebrate trying, not success. Sticker charts, positive praise, sharing achievements with family etc. work for some children, and it's for trying not going.
11. Have some cute potty-training story books in your library to read to your child
12. Talk with your teachers, do they think your child is ready yet?
13. When you decide to go for it, make sure the teachers are fully involved and ready to assist you.
14. If it's too stressful for everyone involved just let your child know that you will try again in a few weeks, calmly and with no anger in your tone!

Birthdays

Birthdays may be celebrated at school. We ask that if you want to have a party for your child at school, that you discuss the arrangements with your child's teacher, or email them (each class has a classroom email account that teachers check daily). Please make sure that any food treats are nut free. Feel free to seek the advice of your teacher on treats that the children really enjoy. Some classes prefer popsicles, or fruit, or cake pops, or ice cream, or brownies to the traditional cupcake.

What Not to Bring to School

For the safety of our children and in consideration of our philosophy we ask that you leave the following at home:

Toys promoting violence
Candy or Vitamins

Chewing Gum
Flip Flops, or sandals without backs

Anything unlabeled

Personal toys/items, except on Share Day

The Program

Education

The preschool doors are open from 7:00am to 6:00pm. Between 9:00 and 3:15pm the children are in the “preschool” part of their day. To get the most from our program we recommend that families arrive at school at the 9:00am start time. It really helps your child to settle into the day with their teacher and friends. If your child arrives after 9:30 we ask that you drop them off with the floater teacher in the lobby, or the office. Preschool staff will then take your child to the classroom, in order to minimize class disruption that can occur with children arriving late to class.

Prayer

The children say or sing grace together before they eat.

Chapel

Once a week, on Wednesdays, the children will have Chapel time with the Chaplain of St. Clare’s Preschool. This is a 20-minute session, usually held in the Church. If you do not want your child to attend Chapel, please notify the director.

Additional Activity Options

Each school year we may offer additional activity options. For example, soccer is currently available for children age 3+. These additional activities are arranged at the discretion of the director. These are parent pay classes, over and above regular monthly tuition, with payment made to St. Clare’s.

PreK Share Days

Each PreK class has “Share Day” (please check with you child’s teacher for days and times.) Children may bring a toy, book or any other item of their choice (please no weapons or toys that promote violence.) This provides a valuable time for the child to develop speech and language skills as well as self-confidence. The toy must be put in the designated “Share Day” box or bag and will only be brought out for “Share Day” time.

Adult Volunteers at the Preschool

All adults who volunteer in the school and therefore have close contact with the children are required by State Licensing to provide evidence of the following:

1. Statement signed by the volunteer saying they are in good health (we will provide a document for volunteers to sign)
2. Results from a TB test showing no TB is present
3. Proof of current whooping cough vaccination (part of the DTAP shot)
4. Proof of measles vaccination, or proof of being immune to measles (the latter being obtained from a blood draw)

5. Proof of flu shot, or note declining flu shot (we will provide a document for volunteers who want to decline)

Field Trips

Occasional walking field trips are taken. For identification purposes, we ask that each child wear a St. Clare's t-shirt. Families will be notified in advance of all trips or outings. To ensure the safety of all the children and to enhance their enjoyment of the experience we ask that families follow these guidelines:

- Teachers consider you as part of a team and ask that you follow their directions in assisting the children.
- We ask that chaperones keep their attention focused on the children and not on adult conversation.

Thank you for your understanding in helping to make all field trips successful and pleasurable for your child and their classmates.

Special Events

There will be several fun events during the school year: Back to School Night (adults only), Family Fun Night, and the Christmas Program, to name two. We strongly encourage family involvement on these occasions.

Sample Schedule

7-8am	School opens, mixed age group activities
8-9am	Children are outside (weather permitting)
9-9:30am	Bathroom break, a.m. snack
9:30-10am	Circle time (greetings, songs, calendar, story etc.)
10-10:30am	Centers
10:30-11am	Art and/or table time activities
11-12 noon	Children are outside
12-12:30pm	Bathroom break, lunch
12:30-1pm	Transition to naptime
1-2pm	Nap and rest time
2-2:45pm	Wake up time, p.m. snack, center activities
3:00-3:15pm	Closing circle
3:15-5pm	Children are outside (weather permitting)
5-6pm	Transition inside, bathroom, wash hands, story time, indoor toy time

Schedules vary according to class. Please check with your child's teacher for an actual classroom schedule. Please note that schedules do change based on weather, and the class energy!

Safety and Security

Parking

Please drive very slowly in the parking lot, following the directional arrows. Exit your parking space very carefully as it is almost impossible to see preschoolers walking behind your car. Please be sure your child holds your hand while in the parking lot.

Arriving at and Leaving the Center

When the center opens, and attendance is low, children will be gathered together in one room or on the playground before they move to their respective classrooms. At 9:00am the children are taken to their classrooms. At drop off you must accompany your child to the classroom or playground and ensure a teacher knows they have arrived, by making acknowledged eye contact. Please never leave a child unattended in the corridor or preschool classroom, even if you think the class will be coming inside in a minute or two.

Likewise, after 3:15pm, as part day children are picked up, remaining children will be joined again on the playground or in classrooms. When you pick up you must make sure a teacher knows you have picked up your child; eye contact with a teacher or a quick word will suffice. When you come to pick up your child, for the safety of all children, please keep your child with you from the time you pick them up until you get them into the car.

The Preschool closes at 6:00pm. Please make sure you arrive in time to transition your child out of the preschool by this time. We advise that families arrive at the school no later than 5:55pm to achieve this.

Signing In & Out

State Licensing Department requires that children must be signed in when brought to school and signed out when picked up. Your signature signifies the legal transfer of the child to the care of the preschool, and back to you at the end of the day. Signatures must be your full legal name, no initials please, and the time must be noted. The school can be cited by State Licensing if you do not sign in/out. The Sign In/Out book is kept in the preschool lobby.

We check the number of children and signatures daily. If we find you have forgotten to sign in/out we will send you a reminder email. We will send a second reminder email. Thereafter, as well as an email reminder, we will add a \$30 fee to your account for every time your signature is missing.

Security Doors and Gates

Our exterior doors and gates are locked with security keys. Every family is given a security key(s) to enter the school. Please don't admit anyone you don't know. Any visitor should ring the door buzzer and wait for admittance by the office staff. Remember to latch each door and gate as you enter and exit the building and playground.

Emergency Procedures

We schedule emergency drills a minimum 2 times per year. We have developed an emergency evacuation system designed to meet the needs of our center.

Evacuation plans are posted in each classroom. In the unlikely event that our center is severely damaged or declared unsafe, all children will be evacuated to a safe distance from the building, where we will await your arrival. Should such an emergency occur, the Director will notify you as soon as possible.

Emergency Contacts

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

Bathroom/Clothing Accidents

All children must bring a complete change of clothes in a labeled Ziploc® bag. Families should label all clothes and the bag with the child's name. If your child uses these clothes, please send a new change of clothes the next day that they are at school. Children are most comfortable in their own clothes.

Child Pick-up Authorization

You must inform the school if someone other than an authorized pick up person is going to be taking your child home. On the emergency form, please be sure to list all persons you authorize to take your child home from St. Clare's. They must present a photo I.D. if we do not know them. No child will be released to any person not authorized by a parent. State law prohibits us from accepting authorization over the telephone. We will accept an email from you in an emergency, however. This is for your child's safety. Additionally, whoever picks up must be at least 18 years of age.

Student Record Updates

Whenever there are changes or additions to the information originally provided on your enrollment forms, please stop by the office to make changes. This is especially important for telephone numbers where you can be reached while your child is at school. In an emergency, we want to be able to reach families quickly.

Health and Nutrition

Health

One of the main ways to keep children at preschool healthy is to limit their exposure to children with obvious signs of illness. **That means that when your child has an illness that could pose a health risk to others, you will need to keep them at home.** And if they become sick while in preschool, you will need to pick them up as soon as possible. Every family with a child at St. Clare's must have a documented backup plan for care if their child is ill and needs to stay home or becomes ill at school and needs to be collected during the school day (LIC 702 Form has a space for this plan).

State Licensing requires that upon arrival, preschool staff make sure your child is well enough to attend preschool. The determination about a child being well enough to attend school is made

by preschool staff, and if necessary, you will be asked to take your child home.

State regulations prohibit us from admitting any child too ill to participate in regular daily activities and/or needs more care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.

We ask families to keep their child at home if any of the following apply:

1. They have an illness that prevents them from participating comfortably in preschool activities.
2. They have an illness that will result in them needing more care than staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children.
3. They have an illness that poses a risk of spreading to other children and adults.

Do not medicate your child with fever reducers, cough syrup, etc. before sending them to school. We find that when medications wear off in 2-3 hours, we have an ill and unhappy child on our hands. A child who is ill enough to need these medications should be at home.

If you will be keeping your child home from school due to an illness, notify the office, so that we may advise their teacher (and other families, if the illness is contagious).

Should your child be exposed to a contagious illness at school, a notice (not identifying classroom or child) will be sent so that families are made aware of symptoms to be alert for.

To keep the children healthy, we ask that you adhere to the following guidelines and keep your children home if any of the following apply:

Pink Eye: If the child has a *bacterial* infection, the child must stay home, on antibiotic eye drops or ointment for at least 24 hours. If the child has a *viral* infection, consult a doctor, and the child may return to school with a note from their doctor confirming that they are well enough, and not contagious and can therefore be at preschool. If your child has eyes that are red, swollen, crusting or draining when they arrive at school you will be asked to get a clearance note from the doctor before they can stay at school.

Strep Throat: Keep your child at home and away from other people for at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotics. In addition, your child must stay home until well enough to participate in preschool activities, without the aid of fever reducers.

RVS (respiratory syncytial virus): RSV is one of the many viruses that cause respiratory illness – illnesses of the nose, throat, and lungs. Look out for a high temperature, ear tugging/drainage, chest pain, and fussiness. Children can return to school when they have been fever-free (without fever reducers) for 24 hours, don't have any trouble breathing, and can participate fully in a preschool day.

Ear Infection: The child must stay home until they are well enough to participate in preschool activities without the aid of fever reducers.

Lice: The child may return 24 hours after they have had an over-the-counter (OTC) or prescription medication treatment for lice, followed by using a fine-toothed nit comb to remove the nits. A member of staff will check your child's hair (privately) to make sure

they are nit-free before they go back into a classroom. If they are not nit/lice free, then you will need to take them home for another combing.

Fever: A child with a fever of 100 degrees or higher (two readings, taken 15 minutes apart) must go home. The child must stay home until they have been fever-free for 24 hours with no fever reducer.

Runny Nose: A child with an excessively runny nose may be sent home, particularly if they are not well enough to participate fully in preschool activities, and the nose needs constant attention from teachers to stop yellow or green mucus getting on hands and then on toys and furniture.

Vomiting: The child must stay home for 24 hours without vomiting. If your child has vomited the night before, or in the morning, please do not send them to preschool.

Diarrhea: The child must stay home for 24 hours without diarrhea.

Coughing: If a child is coughing uncontrollably and unable to participate in a preschool day due to the cough we will ask you to take the child home.

Rashes: If a child has a rash or other skin bumps, the parent will be asked to take the child to a doctor to diagnose it. If it is not contagious, the child may return to school with a doctor's note stating what the condition is, and that the child may participate in the preschool program.

Scabies: Scabies is a very itchy skin problem caused by tiny bugs called mites. It is treated with a medicine or ointment prescribed by a doctor. Your child can return to preschool on the day after treatment ends.

Impetigo: Is a skin infection caused by bacteria. It causes blisters that break and become oozing, yellow, crusty sores. A child can usually return to preschool after 24 hours of treatment with antibiotics.

Hand-Foot-Mouth: The child must stay home until all the lesions are crusted and dry, and they are well enough to participate at school.

Fifth Disease "Slap Cheek": The child must stay home until fever free for 24 hours (without the use of a fever reducer).

We will ask you to come and collect your child from preschool:

1. If they cannot participate comfortably in daily activities
2. If they require more care than we can provide without compromising the health and safety of others
3. If they have an acute change of behavior – lethargy, difficulty breathing, spreading rash, persistent crying etc.

Should your child exhibit any of the above, you will be notified. An authorized person must pick up your child up within one hour. When a sick child, who has been sent home, returns to school after the symptoms noted above, they must be checked and cleared by a staff member before they can rejoin their class.

Medication Policy *

Prescription medication will be administered if prescribed by a physician. Medication must come

to school in the original bottle or container, with a current prescription label attached. It must always be given to a staff member and should not be placed in a child's lunch bag, pants pocket or cubby. The parent or guardian is also required to complete a Medication Administration form, available from the Director. We do not administer fever reducers at the Preschool. If your child has a medical condition that requires emergency use of such medication, then it will be treated as a prescription medication with the same requirements.

Non-prescription lotions/soaps/lip balms etc. will be administered if it is accompanied by a note from a physician saying that it must be administered during the school day for the health of the child. The non-prescription product must be in its original container and will be applied according to the label directions once a parent/guardian has completed the Medication Administration Forms.

**St. Clare's Preschool shall have no responsibility for any kind of reaction caused by the ingestion of prescribed medication.*

Sun Screen *

We ask that you provide the sun screen you want us to use, with the child's name on it. St. Clare's will not apply sun screen if you have not provided it and filled out the sun screen approval form. Please apply sunscreen to your child before coming to school. We will apply again later in the day for children in the Full Day program.

** St. Clare's Preschool shall have no responsibility for any kind of reaction caused by the application of sun screen*

Accident/Illness Procedures

If your child is involved in an accident or suffers a major illness during school hours, we will make every effort to notify you immediately about the condition and any medical treatment. Concurrently, we will contact the appropriate emergency agency (consistent with your requests set forth in the *Identification and Emergency* form that you completed at registration) to provide the necessary medical care that your child needs.

In the case of an emergency, and if we cannot contact you or your designated emergency contact, St. Clare's Preschool, in its sole and unlimited discretion, shall seek any necessary treatment, including, but not limited to, calling 911. The parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be responsible for all expenses incurred, if this course of action becomes necessary.

Nap/Rest Time

State Licensing requires that all children are offered nap/rest time, and many do drop off to sleep. We encourage sleep by dimming the lights, playing soothing music, keeping the room quiet and cool and for the younger children, rubbing backs. We believe that young children need a nap/rest in their busy preschool day. Some children do not fall into sleep; however, please note they are expected to rest quietly for a developmentally appropriate period. Please get your child up early enough in the mornings for them to need a nap by 1:00 latest, this makes nap/rest time more pleasurable for all concerned.

We ask that you provide a small blanket and a small soft toy (if your child will rest better with the soft toy). We will provide a cot sheet and nap bag. Bedding bags are to be taken home by families and bottom sheet (at least) laundered on a weekly basis, or more frequently if necessary.

Food and Nutrition

We promote good nutrition at St. Clare's Preschool. Snack and lunch time is a learning time when we talk about the growing body and what children need to eat for strong bones and healthy bodies. We provide a morning and afternoon snack and ask that you provide a lunch. A snack schedule is posted monthly. If you provide your child with a heat up lunch, please make sure you have the food in a microwave safe container that can be easily placed in a microwave for a 10-20 second heat up.

Grapes, cherry tomatoes, hot dogs and carrots are considered choking hazards for young children. We ask that you cut these items into lengthwise quarters when you prepare your children's lunches at home. Popcorn is also a choking hazard and should not be sent to school.

As some students have allergies which can be life threatening, St. Clare's Preschool has a policy of being a "nut-free" facility. Please check all processed food items packed in lunches to make sure they are nut-free.

Reporting Child Abuse

St. Clare's Preschool is concerned about the wellbeing of all the children and families. The preschool has a moral and legal responsibility to report any case of suspected child abuse. In suspected abuse and neglect cases, no evidence will be excluded on grounds of confidentiality, including preschool records.

Guidance and Handling Challenging Behaviors

General Guidance Policy

At St. Clare's Preschool our behavior policies encourage positive, healthy and safe interactions between children, and between children and adults. We ensure:

- Our staff provide all children with positive role models of acceptable behavior
- Our curriculum and practices are tailored to be developmentally appropriate for 2-5-year-old children
- That we redirect children away from problems and toward constructive activity to reduce conflict
- That we teach children how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behaviors

In general, we use consistent ground rules for behavior and deal with specific problems in a caring and positive manner. The staff acknowledge positive behaviors, offer reasonable choices, recognize feelings, and make clear what behavior is unacceptable. If a behavior becomes dangerous or destructive then staff will intervene in order to protect people in a way that protects the child's self-esteem and helps them understand the problem with the behavior.

Challenging Behaviors

Discipline is based on an understanding of each child's individual needs and level of development. When correcting a child's behavior, the teacher's response is individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to the child's level of understanding, and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

The goal of managing challenging behaviors is prevention. We will always do our best to be reflective about the environment we create for children, the curriculum and our awareness of personal temperaments, biases, and feelings about challenging behaviors. Being reflective helps our staff improve things such as the classroom environment and/or routines to foster success for all children and to avoid certain kinds of stimuli associated with challenging behavior.

There are times that children's behavior warrants a response other than helping them talk it through, either because of severity or repetition of action. We use consequences that follow closely in time to the behavior. When a child repeats a challenging behavior, a variety of methods for encouraging cooperation are used. These include the positive methods described above, conferencing with other staff, parents, and Preschool Director. Every effort is made to understand the child's needs and modify classroom practices so that he or she will be successful. Teachers work closely with parent/guardians to understand each child and to determine which methods work best for him/her.

In most instances, when repeated challenging behaviors are exhibited, and the above strategies have not worked well enough, a family/teacher/Director conference will be arranged to discuss possible methods of dealing with challenging behaviors. A written plan of action will be developed by the Director laying out behaviors that need improvement, proposals to improve them, and actions the Preschool will take if no improvement occurs within a specified timeframe.

Challenging Behavior - Biting

Biting is a normal developmental process for some young children. Biting can also be an emotionally charged issue for everyone concerned.

We do not focus on punishment for biting, but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for biting. When biting does occur, we have five main responses:

- Care and help for the child who was bitten.
- Encourage the child who bit to participate in the care of the bitten child, if appropriate
- Inform the parent/guardian of the child who was bitten and the parent /guardian of the child who bit, by phone or via an Incident/Injury Report (which must be signed by the parent of the child who bit).
- Help the child who bit learn other behaviors to deal with anger, frustration, or lack of verbal or communication skills.
- Examine the classroom environment and routines and make changes that may stop further occurrences.

If biting is a repeated and severe behavior that requires further action by the preschool, the Director/teachers will decide on appropriate action, considering the age of the child, the situation that preceded the bite, severity of the bites and frequency. A family, teacher, and Director conference will be arranged to discuss what will happen next. After this meeting, a written plan of action will be developed by the Director, laying out behaviors that need improvement, proposals to improve them, and actions the Preschool will take if no improvement occurs within a specified timeframe.

Please note: If the bite is severe enough to break the skin of the child that is bitten, and the wound is bleeding we will call the injured child's parents and ask that the child be taken to the Doctor for a check-up. In this instance, the parents of the child who bit will also be called and asked to take their child home for the remainder of that school day. Before returning to school a discussion must take place between the Director and this child's family.

Very Severe Challenging Behaviors

St. Clare's Preschool may issue notice immediately to any family whose child's behavior creates a significant risk of harm to the health and safety of others without following the guidance steps outlined above.

Children with a Disability or Specific Needs

Wherever possible, St Clare's Preschool will strive to accommodate the needs of children with a disability or specific need. If your child has a known disability or specific need, it is important to share that information with us before registration/enrollment. This will enable us to determine if we can meet the needs of your child in our environment.

Sometimes specific needs are discovered after enrollment in preschool. If possible, we try to observe a child's behavior for 6-8 weeks before having any discussion with family. This allows the child to settle in and get used to our routines. After 6-8 weeks, if we still feel a child is displaying non-typical behavior that is impacting their day or that of others we will meet with family and ask them to engage with us in completing the Ages & Stages Questionnaire (ASQ). The ASQ gives us a structured way to share information about behaviors and skills in the home and at school. A meeting will be arranged to look at the separate assessments and discuss what we do next. We may recommend a full developmental evaluation by the School District, or pediatrician. We ask that you share those results with us. If we find that your child needs extra support to be successful in our 2:12 (2-3-year-old) or 1:12 ratio classrooms, we will try our best to provide that. However, if the needs of your child are more than we can provide for, or the classroom/other children's days are being impacted by the needs of one child, we reserve the right to request that you withdraw your child.

If specific needs or a disability are driving behavior that raises a concern for the physical safety and wellbeing of other children and/or teachers, we will request that you remove your child immediately without going through the steps mentioned above.

Family Involvement and Communication

Open Door Policy

Parents/guardians are always welcome. We encourage you to visit at any time. Open communication between families and staff is important, and so is your input. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns you may have, regarding the preschool, with the director.

Family Communication

The teachers in younger classrooms (2's/3's and 3's/4's) will inform you, in writing, what the children's day was like. This provides a quick means for you to be informed of your child's daily activities and can promote a conversation between you and your child. You will receive a monthly newsletter containing information on curriculum, activities, and school events. Additional emails will be distributed as needed. Please note that it is your responsibility to read them carefully. The information they contain is important to your child and you.

Lesson Plans

The teacher of each classroom will post a monthly newsletter and lesson plan (curriculum). These will provide information on activities the children will be doing that month.

Back to School Night

Curriculum, teaching methods, progress reports, schedules and guidance techniques will be discussed at back to school night at the beginning of the school year. This is also an evening for you to get to know your child's teacher and the other families with children in the class.

Preschool Progress Reviews

Progress Reviews will be completed twice a year (once a year in the 2-year-old class), in the fall and spring. The purpose of the progress review in preschool is to monitor each child's progress in all areas of the child's development. The reviews help us to meet both the current and future needs of the child. Parent-teacher conferences are available upon parent request after receipt of your child's Progress Review.

A shorter assessment of progress against key milestones will be made for our 2-year-olds in April each year.

St. Clare's also offers a parent-completed developmental screening tool called *Ages and Stages Questionnaires-3 and Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional*. If you are interested in using the questionnaire at any time, please contact the Director.

Director's Open-Door Commitment

Please feel free to meet with the Director at any time. If there are elements of the program you don't understand, feedback you have for us, suggestions you have for us, concerns you want to share, information about child development and how your child is doing, just see the Director.

Preschool Board of Trustees

The Preschool Board assists the Director in setting policies for the Preschool, overseeing financial matters, fundraising and arranging appreciation events for the staff, to name just a few. There is a maximum of 12 voting members on the Board. Members are usually preschool parents, church

members, or child development experts from the community. Membership terms are for 2 years, and new potential members are interviewed by the Board. If you would like to serve on the Preschool Board, please let the Director know.

The Vestry of St. Clare's Episcopal Church

The Preschool is wholly owned by St. Clare's Episcopal Church. Consequently, all that is done at the school is with the consent of the Church's governing body known as the Vestry.