

Family Handbook

June 1, 2021

St. Clare's Preschool

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

California Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing Facility #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. 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,

Karen Berry
Director

Please note: St. Clare's Preschool is currently functioning under COVID-19 Operating Procedures, in compliance with the CDC, County and State Public Health Departments, and Licensing guidelines (whichever is most restrictive, as required). St. Clare's Preschool adheres to all CDC, State, and County COVID mandates, guidelines, and advisories regarding health protocols for children and staff, attendance at preschool, exclusion from preschool, return to school after illness, and return to school following travel. These procedures supersede all regular health and safety procedures. 5/2021

Families must sign and return our COVID-19 Health Protocols form to the preschool before attending.

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Mission Statement & Philosophy

*No boundaries on faith, no borders on hope, no limits on love.
God loves us all...no exceptions.*

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

St. Clare's Preschool welcomes children 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. Most 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:

- **A Change of Clothes in a one gallon ziplock bag with your child's name on it (Please label everything)**
 - Shirt, underwear, socks, pants/shorts/skirt, and shoes
- **For Nap Time**
 - Nap bag (provided by St. Clare's)
 - cot sheet (provided by St. Clare's)
 - Small crib blanket
 - Very small pillow (only if needed)
 - Small stuffed toy (only if desired)
- **Other Items**
 - Sun block (with child's name on it)
 - Lunch box, and reusable ice block to keep it cool
 - Water bottle
 - Picture of your family

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. It is helpful to 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 email or call the preschool later to check how your child is doing.

Enrollment & Fees

Admission Criteria

1. Parent(s) or guardian(s) must complete a tour of the facility and meet with the director (or another staff member). Licensing asks that we meet each child before offering enrollment. During this meeting, the director will need to understand the state of your child's physical and emotional development, to assess whether our preschool can meet your child's needs.
2. Children admitted to the school must be between 2 – 5 years of age (we cannot admit children until their 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 strives to accommodate the needs of children with 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, signed, and returned to the director:

Registration Form	Consent for Medical Treatment
Admissions Agreement	Personal Rights Statement
ID & Emergency Information Form	Parent's Rights Statement
Pre-admission Health History	Photo Release
Physician's Report	Sunscreen Permission Slip
Copy of Immunization Record	Field Trip Permission Slip
Tuition Express Enrollment form	Getting to Know You form
COVID-19 Operating Procedures	

Tuition Payments

Tuition is due on the 1st of each month and is considered late on the 10th of the month.

We offer electronic tuition payment through **Tuition Express**. Families are encouraged to make automatic electronic tuition payments from your checking or savings account, or by credit card (credit card payments are subject to an additional processing fee). Tuition will be billed monthly. St. Clare's Preschool will process tuition payments through **Tuition Express** on the 5th of every month (or the next business day if the 5th falls on a weekend or holiday). In August, prorated tuition for the first month of the new school year will be charged on the first day of school.

If you choose not to enroll in Tuition Express, a tuition invoice will be emailed to you and is due upon receipt.

Failure to Pay Tuition

If tuition is not paid 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.

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.

A Year-Round Program

St. Clare's Preschool provides a year-round program. If you choose not to attend St. Clare's over the summer, 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. Families may withdraw their children with two weeks' notice any time of the year.

Enrollment Fees

Registration Fee and Tuition Deposit

The one-time non-refundable registration fee is \$150.00 per child. The 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.

Multiple Child Discount

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

Annual Supply Fee

Each family will be charged an annual supply fee of \$150.00 per child, payable in September. This fee is prorated for families enrolling after September. No refunds will be given for early withdrawal.

Family Service Fee (annual)

(Please note: the Family Service Fee has been suspended for school year 2021-22).

Each family will be charged a \$100 Family Service Deposit per child, payable in October. Families are asked to volunteer for five (5) hours of service per child, per school year. This fee is prorated for families who enroll 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 workdays, 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). No refunds will be given for early withdrawal.

Policies & Procedures

Please note: During COVID-19 Operating Procedures (see separate form), preschool times are as follows:

- *Part-day schedule: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. Part-Day children may arrive between 9:00 and 9:30 AM, and should be picked up between 2:30 and 3:00 PM.*
- *Full-day schedule: 7:45 AM – 5:30 PM. Full-day children may arrive between 7:45 and 8:15 AM, OR between 9:00 and 9:30 AM, and should be picked up between 5:00 and 5:30 PM.*

Arrival and pick-up times are firm, to allow for appropriate staffing for health screening and escorting children. In order to comply with CA Licensing and Public Health guidelines, operating our preschool during COVID requires additional staffing in all parts of our day. If you need to arrive or pick up your child at a different time because of an appointment on a specific day, please let the director know ahead of time so we can arrange for a staff member to be available.

The Preschool Board of Trustees has approved a fee for unscheduled late arrivals, and for pick-ups after your program end time. This charge will be \$10 per child, per five-minutes late. For example, the charge will be \$10 for up to five minutes late, \$20 for 6-10 minutes late, \$30 for 11-15 minutes late, and so on. These charges will be added to the next tuition invoice.

Preschool Program Times (non-COVID)

The Preschool offers two program schedules. Children enrolled in the Full Day program may attend preschool from 7:00am to 6:00pm. Children enrolled in the Part Day program may attend from 9:00 to 3:15pm. We highly recommend that all children are at school by 9:15am so they are ready for the morning learning activities and can settle in with their friends and be ready to learn. If a child arrives 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.

Pre-Approved Additional Hours and Days of Attendance (Part-Time Students only)

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 ratios exposes the school to the risk of a citation by State licensing authorities. Pre-approved additional attendance days will be charged at \$10 per hour attended (or part of an hour). Time taken without pre-approval by the Director will be charged at double this rate.

Unscheduled Late Pick Up (non-COVID)

The Preschool Board of Trustees has approved a fee for pick-ups after your program end time. This charge will be \$10 per child, per five-minutes late. For example, the charge will be \$10 for up to five minutes late, \$20 for 6-10 minutes late, \$30 for 11-15 minutes late, and so on. These charges will be added to the next tuition invoice.

For Full Day families: Our center closes at 6:00pm. Our staff 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 us to staff the full-day program safely and appropriately.

Change of Scheduled Days or Times

All requests for a change of scheduled days or times must be submitted in writing to the Director for approval. Requests will be accommodated based on availability at the time of the request.

Reporting Absences

If your child will 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.

Class Assignments

The Preschool teachers place students into classroom groups based on the principle of “balanced classes”. We 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

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
- Veteran’s Day
- Thanksgiving Day & the day following
- Typically seven (7) weekdays surrounding Christmas and New Year’s holidays
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Presidents’ Day
- Easter Monday or Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- July 4th
- Plus three days for Teacher Work Days (one each in August, February, and June)

Birthdays

Birthdays may be celebrated at school. We ask that if you want to have a celebration 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 for treats that the children really enjoy. Some classes prefer popsicles, fruit, cake pops, ice cream, or brownies to the traditional cupcake.

Clothing

Please dress your child in “play clothes” for school. Some preschool activities are 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.** High-heeled “dress-up” shoes are not safe for playing on the playground. Children wearing skirts or dresses should wear shorts or leggings underneath.

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

Bathroom/Clothing Accidents

All children must bring a complete change of clothes in a labeled zip-top bag. **Please label all clothes and the bag with your child’s name.** If your child uses these clothes, we will send them home with a note; please send a new change of clothes the next time they come to school.

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:

Any food or snack containing nuts
Toys promoting violence
Candy or chewing gum
Vitamins or throat lozenges

Flip Flops, or sandals without backs
Anything unlabeled
Personal toys/items, except on Share Days

Toilet Training and Diapers

We accept children who are not toilet trained in our two-year-program (Playful Pandas 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, please provide 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.

Please note:

During COVID-19 Operating Procedures, children must be potty trained to join the 3-4-year-old classes. They may still wear a pull-up at naptime if needed.

Non-COVID: We need to have all children toilet trained by the time they move into the 3-4-year-old program. The 3–4-year-old classes have a 1:12 ratio and a reduced tuition rate, which is based upon children being toilet trained and ready to use the main preschool bathroom with independent skills. If they are not yet ready, they may continue to wear diapers until they are ready. However, they will be directed to another staff member at the restroom for diapering. For this reason, we will continue to charge the 2-year-old tuition rate until they are toilet trained.

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.

Leaving the Preschool

Any family that is withdrawing from the school must notify the Director in writing at least two weeks prior to the leaving date. Your half-month deposit will be credited to your tuition account if we receive two weeks' notice.

The Program

Education

Non-COVID: 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 after activities have begun.

Prayer

The children say or sing grace together before they eat snack and lunch.

Chapel

Once a week, the children will have Chapel time with the Chaplain of St. Clare's Preschool. This is a 20-minute story and song time, usually held in the Church. The focus is on how much we are loved, and how much we are called to care for each other. We welcome and respect families from many different faith traditions. If you do not want your child to attend Chapel, please notify the director.

Sample Daily Schedule – Full Day (during regular, non-COVID operations)

7-8am	School opens, mixed age group activities
8-9am	Children play outdoors (weather permitting)
9-9:30am	Bathroom break, morning snack
9:30-10am	Circle time (greetings, songs, story etc.)
10-10:30am	Free choice / play centers
10:30-11am	Art and/or table 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, afternoon snack, center activities
3:00-3:15pm	Closing circle
3:15-5pm	Children play outdoors (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!

Nap/Rest Time

State Licensing requires that all children are offered a 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 asleep; 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 laundered on a weekly basis, or more frequently if necessary.

Field Trips

Occasional walking field trips are taken. For identification purposes, we ask that each child wear

their 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 understanding and helping to make all field trips successful and enjoyable for your child and their classmates.

PreK Share Days

Non-COVID: 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). This provides a valuable time for the child to develop their 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.

Additional Activity Options

Non-COVID: Each school year we may offer additional activity options, taught by outside agencies. 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, in addition to regular monthly tuition, with payment made to St. Clare's. A member of St. Clare's staff is always present during these activities, even though they are facilitated by staff from the contracting organization.

Special Events

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

Communication and Family Involvement

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.

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.

Family Communication

The teachers will inform you, via the ProCare Parent Engagement App, 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 communication 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.

Adult Volunteers at the Preschool

Please note: During COVID-19 Operating Procedures, we are unable to welcome adult volunteers inside the preschool.

Non-COVID: 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 (no more than one year old)
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)

Back to School Night

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

Preschool Progress Reviews

Progress Reviews will be completed twice a year in the fall and spring (only in the spring, in the 2-year-old class). 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 at any time.

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.

Safety and Security

Security Access

When we are able to welcome families inside the preschool for arrival and dismissal times, each family will be assigned a security code. This will allow you access to the school Monday through Friday from 7:00am - 6:00pm. Families must not share their security access code with anyone outside their own family. Your security code may be changed upon request, for a \$10 administrative fee. In the event that you believe your code has been compromised, we require that you inform the school as soon as possible. Additional people who will regularly bring your

child to or from school will be assigned a separate security code upon request. If a caregiver is no longer associated with your family, you need to inform the school so their security access code can be disabled. One-time visitors should use the intercom system at the front door to contact the office for access.

Signing In and Out

Your signature (or permitted electronic signature) signifies the legal transfer of the child to the care of the preschool, and back to you at the end of the day. State Licensing Department requires that children must be signed in when brought to school and signed out when picked up. Signatures must be *your full legal name, no initials please*, and the time must be noted. The school can be cited and fined by State Licensing if children are not signed in or out.

Beginning in August 2021, we will use the ProCare Parent Engagement App (with QR code or a personal PIN) to sign children into and out of school. If you have forgotten to sign in or out, we will contact you to return to school and check your child in by scanning the QR code. If it happens a second time 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 sign-in or sign-out is missing.

Arriving at and Leaving the Center (non-COVID)

When the center opens in the early morning and attendance is low, children will be gathered in one classroom or on the playground before they move to their respective classrooms with their teacher at 9:00am. When arriving at preschool, 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, bathroom, 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 come together again on the playground or in classrooms. When you pick up your child you must make sure a teacher knows you and your child have left; 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 ask that families arrive at the school no later than 5:55pm to achieve this.

Security Doors and Gates

Every family will be assigned a security code to enter the school. Please don't admit anyone you don't know. Remember to latch each door and gate as you enter and exit the building and playground. Any visitor should ring the door buzzer and wait for admittance by the office staff.

Emergency Contacts

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

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 from St. Clare's. They must be 18 years or older and must present a photo ID before we release the child to them. No child will be released to any person not authorized by a parent or guardian.

A PIN will be assigned by ProCare to each person on your pick-up list, and you will be responsible to tell that person their PIN. In case of an emergency pick-up change, we will accept an email from you, but licensing prohibits us from accepting authorization over the telephone. This is for your child's safety.

Student Record Updates

Please inform the preschool office whenever there are changes or additions to the information originally provided on your enrollment forms. 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.

Parking Lot

Please be sure your child holds your hand while in the parking lot. 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 small children walking behind your car.

Emergency Procedures

We schedule emergency drills (fire and earthquake) two to four 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. Should such an emergency occur, the Director will notify you as soon as possible. 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.

Emergency Closures

In the event of an emergency closure, the preschool reserves the right to close the school for two (2) days to ensure the health and safety of the children and staff, without considering a tuition refund (due to natural disaster, water supply failure, power failure of more than two hours, fire or smoke emergency, illness outbreak or pandemic, events beyond our control). Any closures longer than two (2) days will be assessed for refund on an incident-by-incident basis by the Preschool Board of Trustees and the Church Vestry.

Health and Nutrition

***Please note:** St. Clare's Preschool is currently functioning under **COVID-19 Operating Procedures**, in compliance with the CDC, County and State Public Health Departments, and Licensing guidelines (whichever is most restrictive, as required). St. Clare's Preschool adheres to all CDC, State, and County COVID mandates, guidelines, and advisories regarding health protocols for children and staff, attendance at preschool, exclusion from preschool, return to school after illness, and return to school following travel. These procedures supersede all regular health and safety procedures. 5/2021*

Families must sign and return our COVID-19 Health Protocols form to the preschool before attending.

Food and Nutrition

Some students have life-threatening allergies. St. Clare's Preschool is a "nut-free" facility. Please check all processed food items packed in lunches to make sure they are nut-free.

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 lunch that needs to be heated up, please make sure you have the food in a microwave-safe container.

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.

Sunscreen *

We ask that you provide the sunscreen you want us to use, with your child's name on it. St. Clare's will not apply sunscreen if you have not provided it and filled out the sunscreen 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 sunscreen provided by the family.*

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.

Incidental Medical Services: 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 *handed to a staff member and should not be placed in a child's pocket, lunch bag, 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 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 only be administered if 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 provided by the family.*

Illness

One of the best ways to keep preschool children healthy is to limit their exposure to others with obvious signs of illness. **That means that when your child has an illness that could pose a health risk to others, they need to stay home.** If you will be keeping your child home from school due to an illness, please notify the office so that we may advise their teacher (and other families, if the illness is contagious).

State Licensing requires that upon arrival, preschool staff make sure your child is well enough to attend preschool. State regulations prohibit us from admitting any child who is 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. The determination that a child is well enough to attend school is made by preschool staff, and if necessary, you will be asked to take your child home.

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 requires more care than staff can provide in our group setting, without compromising the health and safety of other children and staff members.
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 medicine, 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 your child becomes sick while in preschool, you will be contacted and need to pick them up as soon as possible. An authorized person must pick up your child up within one hour. When a child returns to school after being sent home for illness, they must be checked and cleared by a staff member before they can rejoin their class. We will ask you to come and collect your child from preschool if:

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

Every family with a child at St. Clare's is required to 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).

Should your child be exposed to a contagious illness at school, a notice (without 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:

- **COVID-19:** Please see separate **COVID-19 Operating Procedures and COVID-19 Health Protocols.**
- **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 (“Slapped Cheek”):** The child must stay home until fever free for 24 hours (without the use of a fever reducer).

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 cases of suspected abuse and neglect, 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.

- Our staff provides 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
- We redirect children away from problems and toward constructive activity to reduce conflict
- We teach children to use acceptable alternatives to problem behaviors

In general, we use consistent rules for behavior and deal with specific problems in a caring and positive manner. The staff acknowledges positive behaviors, offer reasonable choices, recognizes 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.

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, 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 Special Needs

Wherever possible, St Clare's Preschool strives to accommodate the needs of children with a special need. If your child has a known special 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 the 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 a child's special needs 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.

Management of Preschool

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 members on the Board. Members are usually preschool parents, church members, or child development experts from the community. Membership terms are 2 years, and new prospective 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.

Handbook approved by the Preschool Board of Trustees, 6/15/2021