

Pre-Kindergarten Handbook Addendum

St. Paul's Catholic School is pleased to offer **Florida's Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten Program (VPK)** to our qualifying four year olds. This fully accredited Pre-K4 program gives our youngest learners the foundation they need for Kindergarten and a lifetime of learning. We have four Pre-K classes and offer both morning and afternoon sessions. Our state certified teachers are experienced, dedicated and have created safe and structured classrooms with joyful and enriching lessons.

The Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) State Program

If your child will be 4-Years-Old **on or before September 1** and resides in Florida, he or she may participate in the VPK, Florida's FREE Pre-K Program. For more information, please call The Early Learning Coalition of Duval at (904)208-2044 or visit the website elcofduval.org.

The State of Florida Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten-4 Program will pay for only 540 hours of instruction during the school year. Our Pre-K program provides several weeks of additional instruction during the school year. Therefore, there will be a fee of \$300.00, payable in one installment, due at time of registration. This fee applies to all PreK-4 students whether they have or have not qualified for the State of Florida Voluntary PreK-4 Program. If you choose not to pay this fee, you will be withdrawing your child from St. Paul's School at the end of the 540 hours of the State of Florida Voluntary PreK-4 Program.

Student Information Sheet

You will receive a student information sheet in the mail. Please take the time to fill it out completely and return it to the school with a current photo of your child prior to your child's orientation day. This information helps our teachers best meet the needs of your child. Please update us if ANY of your contact information should change during the school year.

Student Orientation

Prior to the start of the school year, the children will be invited to come into the classroom for a visit with the Pre-K teachers. This is a wonderful time for students and parents to have the opportunity to see your child's classroom and meet the teachers and staff.

Educational Needs

The Catholic school community in the Diocese of St. Augustine has a goal of helping all children reach their full potential intellectually, emotionally, socially and spiritually. St. Paul's Catholic School established admission policies designed for students who are able to succeed in a mainstream setting. Limited resources prevent accepting students who would require more than basic accommodations. Should a child be found to require more than basic accommodations once enrolled, a recommendation may be made to seek a school that will provide the professional personnel, resources, and /or school setting to meet the child's needs. This decision will be made by the teacher, guidance counselor and administration.

Attendance- Arrival – Dismissal

Since success in any learning environment depends largely on prompt and faithful attendance it is necessary for providers and families to establish an agreement regarding absences and tardiness. The guidelines set forth in this agreement are the basis for your child's state approved funding as well as his or her successful transition to Kindergarten.

Morning Arrival- Park in the church parking lot or along Pablo Avenue and walk your child to his/her classroom. Please do not use the driveway between The St. Vincent DePaul Society Building and Cypress Recording Studio or the grass/dirt area near the ELC playground.

Arrival for the **morning VPK** program is 7:50 a.m. VPK students should enter their classrooms promptly. The earliest time arrivals will be accepted in the classroom is 7:50a.m. Morning supervision is available for early arrivals between 7:00a.m. and 7:50 a.m. in portable D-2.

Afternoon Arrival- Park on Pablo Avenue, in the church parking lot or on 1st Avenue N. and walk your child to his/her classroom. Please do not use the driveway between The St. Vincent DePaul Society Building and Cypress Recording Studio or the grass/dirt area near the ELC playground.

Arrival for the **afternoon VPK** program is 11:30 a.m. VPK students should enter their classrooms promptly. The earliest time arrivals will be accepted in the classroom is 11:30 a.m.

We understand that it is occasionally unavoidable to be running late, but more than twice a month will not be acceptable and will be cause for termination from the VPK program.

Safety Procedures

Students arriving for Pre-K classes should be walked to the classroom teacher. Children may not be released to an unauthorized person or siblings under the age of 18. We must have a WRITTEN consent to release a child and the person authorized to pick up a child must present identification upon arrival.

With arrival and dismissal occurring simultaneously at 11:30, we ask that parents collect their students by the hand and depart the school property. Due to safety and liability issues, students may not remain on school property after dismissal. There are several local parks nearby to meet and socialize with classmates and parents. This will greatly assist the Pre-K teachers in an orderly arrival and dismissal. Please know the safety and security of our students is our utmost concern.

Late Pick Up

The morning VPK program ends at 11:20 a.m. daily and the afternoon VPK program ends at 3:00 p.m. daily. A late fee of \$20.00 per child will be assessed if your child is not picked up by 11:30 a.m. for morning sessions and 3:10pm for afternoon sessions. An additional fee of \$1.00 per minute (each child) will be assessed for each minute the child is still in attendance.

Absence

Daily attendance in the VPK program is necessary for optimal learning, however, you will be allowed (3) absences per month. All absences require a written note from the parent for one of the following reasons:

- Illness or injury of the child or the child's family member which requires hospitalization or bed rest;
- Physician or dentist appointment;
- Infectious disease or parasitic infestation;
- Funeral service, memorial service, or bereavement upon the death of the child's family member;
- Compliance with a court order (e.g. visitation, subpoena);
- Special education or related services for the child's disability;
- Observance of a religious holiday or service;
- Family vacation, not to exceed 5 excused absences per program year.

Please note: Absences of 5 consecutive instructional days will be considered a **withdrawal** from the VPK program at St. Paul's Catholic School. Withdrawals from the VPK program will not be eligible for re-enrollment. St. Paul's Catholic School will allow one **documented** 5-day absence during the school year. Documentation must be submitted in advance, explain the reason for the 5-day absence, and be dated and signed by the child's parent/guardian.

Verifying your child's attendance and absences

Each month you will be given a form to review and confirm your child's recorded attendance. Your signature on this form will not only verify the attendance, but also will update the Early Learning Coalition of Duval to direct payment for the month's VPK program for your child to St. Paul's Catholic School.

Daily Routine/Schedule

The daily schedule in a Pre-Kindergarten room includes a variety of learning opportunities and experiences. These are provided through teacher directed activities as well as free exploration. There is also ample outside playtime each day and a snack or lunch time is scheduled as well. Please note that A.M. classes bring a snack and P.M. classes have an option to bring a lunch or a snack. Below is a sample schedule, please note that some schedule elements will vary with each classroom.

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| 7:50-8:05am | or | 11:30-11:45am | Arrival and Table Activity |
| 8:05-8:35am | or | 11:45-12:15pm | Calendar/Whole Group Learning |
| 8:35-9:05am | or | 12:15-12:45pm | Restroom and Snack for a.m. Lunch for p.m. classes |
| 9:05-9:20am | or | 12:45-1:00pm | Story Time |
| 9:20-9:50am | or | 1:00-1:30pm | Outside Play |
| 9:50-10:50am | or | 1:30-2:30pm | Centers/Small Group Learning |
| 10:50-11:20am | or | 2:30-3:00pm | Music and Movement / Prepare for Dismissal |

Bathroom/Accident Policy

Our school program is designed for students who are comfortable taking care of their own toileting needs.

Your child must:

- 1) Consistently recognize when he/she needs to go to the bathroom.
- 2) Have the ability to wait to use the toilet.
- 3) Pull down pants and sit on toilet without assistance.
- 4) Use toilet paper correctly.
- 5) Pull pants up with no assistance
- 6) Flush the toilet.
- 7) Wash and dry hands after using the toilet.

These are the seven skills that must be in place before your child enters our school. Please note that our facilities are not set up to deal with bathroom accidents in a sanitary manner. If your child has an accident that requires adult assistance, you will be called to come pick your child up from school. Teachers and staff are unable to assist with accidents that require more than a clothing change. If a child is having difficulty in this area, the parents will be called to take the child home. If accidents continue, a conference will be held to discuss further actions and/or solutions to aid the child's independence in this area. However, in a case in which the child is unable to achieve independence, then he or she may be asked to leave the school.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special occasions for young children. If your child wishes he/she may bring treats for the class on their special day. We suggest a small treat like a cookie, doughnut holes or **mini** –cupcakes. We respectfully ask that parents not join us during these celebrations – there are quite a few of them and our learning time is limited. If your child is having a birthday party out of school, invitations may be distributed in the classroom, only if all children or all boys/girls in the class are being invited.

Parent-Teacher Communication

We believe that a good parent- teacher relationship is necessary for maximum school success. Throughout the year, your child's teacher will communicate with you through e-mails; your child's take home folder, notes, telephone calls and parent-teacher conferences. All parents should have access to our schools information page and view it regularly for school events. It is important that you log on to this system the first week of school. Check with the main office for more information on how to access your account. Parents are encouraged to contact their classroom teachers with questions or concerns.

Assessment Reports

Each Pre-K teacher will host two Parent/Teacher Conferences a year. A state required assessment and a teacher checklist will be used to discuss the student's progress and achievements during the first semester. The mid-year assessment results will be sent home the first week in January along with a Pre-Kindergarten Report Card. You are always welcome to contact your child's teacher to request an additional conference. The final VPK assessment is completed in May. These results will be sent home the last week of school. Report cards will be mailed in June.

Pupil progression for students entering St. Paul's Kindergarten will be determined based on the standards mastered, social and emotional development, teacher recommendation as well as principal approval.

Extended Day for Pre-K

Morning Care

St. Paul's offers early morning care for those families who need child care before school hours. Families can sign up for between the hours of 7:00am and 11:30am. Morning care is run by St. Paul's staff and provides indoor and outdoor fun and games, quiet activities and arts and crafts for the children. Families are welcome to bring a light breakfast and /or snack for their child. Breakfast can be eaten between 7:00am- 8:00am. Snack time will be from 9:00am- 9:30am only.

Afternoon Care

St. Paul's offers after school care until 6:00p.m. Lunch, rest time, indoor and outdoor playtime and arts and crafts are all components of the aftercare program. Parents should send a lunch and water each day. If your child is staying past 3:00pm, an additional snack should be sent as well.

A late fee of \$20.00 per child will be assessed if your child is not picked up by 6:00 p.m. An additional fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed for each minute the child is still in attendance.

Health Policy

It is very important for children who are ill to stay home. This helps them to regain their health and prevents other children from getting sick. Students with fever, diarrhea, undiagnosed skin or eye irritation, symptoms of any other illness or condition not diagnosed by a doctor, and/or students who have vomited must remain out of school and symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours. Students who are sent home during the school day with fever or vomiting will not be allowed to return to school the next day, as this would not allow for the 24-hour protection of the entire school community.

We recommend that you apply sunscreen each day before sending your child to school. Sunscreen cannot be applied by teachers or staff.

If your child requires medication during the school day, you must come to the school and administer the medicine. You may also choose to take the medicine to the school clinic supervisor before drop-off with instructions. Please see the main school handbook for more specific instructions. Teachers and assistants are not able to give medication or apply ointments at school.

Allergies or special diet concerns should be reported to school staff and your classroom teacher. On days when treats are given at school, we ask that you have a fitting substitute treat available for your child.

What to Bring to School Each Day.

PLEASE LEAVE ALL TOYS AT HOME – unless it is a designated show and tell day for your child.

Morning VPK students 7:50a.m. - 11:20a.m. -Please bring the following items to school each day.

- A full sized backpack with your child's name on the outside.
- A healthy snack labeled a.m. snack.
- A water bottle 6" or shorter with your child's name on it.

Morning VPK students that go to after care bring the above items **AND**

- A lunch box labeled on the outside (Meals should be precooked and able to be eaten at room temperature). Please remember that lunches should be packed in child friendly containers (no glass).
- If your child stays in care after 3:00pm please pack, an additional snack labeled p.m. snack.

Afternoon VPK students 11:30a.m.-3:00p.m. – Please bring the following to school each day.

- A full sized backpack with your child's name on the outside.
- A lunch box labeled on the outside (Meals should be precooked and able to be eaten at room temperature). Please remember that lunches should be packed in child friendly containers (no glass).
- A water bottle 6" or shorter with your child's name on it.

Afternoon VPK students that attend the morning care program (7:00a.m.-11:30a.m.) bring the above items **AND**

- A healthy morning snack
- You may bring a light breakfast if arriving before 8:00a.m. (not required)

Dress Code

Pre-K students may wear the school uniform OR the P.E. uniform any day of the week.

Pre-K Girl's School Uniform

- Polo Dress with Logo (Bike shorts should be worn under the dress.)
- Pull on navy pants or shorts with the white or light blue polo shirt with the school logo.
- Plain white t-shirts or turtlenecks can be worn under the white polo shirts.
- P.E. Uniforms
- Socks or tights should be solid navy blue, gray or white.
- Solid navy, black, brown or gray leather shoes or any color sneakers. Shoes may not have glitter, characters, be sound activated or light up. No boots, open toed or backless shoes.
- No belts
- Sweaters and fleece with the school logo may be worn in the classroom.
- Jewelry-stud type earrings are acceptable. Please leave all other jewelry and watches at home.

Pre-K Boy's School Uniform

- Pull on navy pants or shorts with the white or light blue polo shirt with the school logo.
- Plain white t-shirts or turtlenecks can be worn under the white polo shirts.
- Socks should be solid navy blue, black, gray or white.
- P.E. Uniforms (take out school store)
- Solid navy, black, brown or gray leather shoes or any color sneakers. Shoes may not have glitter, characters, be sound activated or light up. No boots, open toed or backless shoes.
- No belts
- Sweaters and fleece with the logo may be worn in the classroom.
- Please leave all jewelry and watches at home.

Please put your child's name on all outerwear.

**Classes have outdoor activities scheduled every day. Please be sure your child is dressed appropriately for daily weather conditions.

Tag Days- Tag days are non-uniform days that are offered throughout the year to celebrate holidays or support fund raising events. Specific instruction will be given for dress on tag days.

Field Trips

Various on campus or near campus field trips and enrichment activities will be offered throughout the school year. Pre-Kindergarten does not participate in field trips that require bussing.