

## ST. DUNSTAN'S EPISCOPAL PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

St. Dunstan's Episcopal Preschool is a developmental program that strives to provide activities and learning experiences to build each child's self esteem while stimulating cognitive development and socialization skills. We endeavor to provide each child with a loving, accepting environment while increasing skills according to his/her development. We believe that a positive classroom environment is essential for reaching optimal development. We want the children to feel self-confident as well as capable of meeting new challenges, both social and educational. Classroom activities are varied to provide a balance between free-choice and teacher-directed activities, with a large variety of options that meet needs in all developmental areas – large/fine motor, cognitive, social, emotional, and self-help skills. Our teachers seek to create a thought-provoking, motivating curriculum that centers on developing the whole child.

St. Dunstan's Preschool is open Monday – Friday, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for children age three months - five years. There is an optional before-care hour each morning beginning at 8:30 a.m. The charge for before-care is \$5/day.

### CLASSROOMS

*Based on Child's age as of September 1 – may change according to enrollment*

#### JELLYFISH: 3-12 months

The emphasis at this age is positive interaction with teachers and exposure to toys that are appropriate for rapidly developing skills. Individual attention at feeding, nap, and play times provides an atmosphere of loving security for our youngest children.

#### ANGELFISH: 12-18 months

This age is blossoming very rapidly. The focus at this age level is on the growth of physical and social skills. Language is a rapidly developing area that contributes to improved interaction with both adults and peers. Gross motor skills are expanding and many opportunities are provided for practice. Our teachers plan activities to provide a wide variety of learning opportunities, from sharing and peer interaction to early readiness skills.

#### SEA TURTLES: 18 months-2 years

Rapid development, in both verbal and social skills, is taking place during this age. Our teachers plan activities to provide a wide variety of learning opportunities, from sharing and peer interaction to early readiness skills. The children enjoy playing with and talking to their friends, and they are discovering the concept of sharing and cooperating.

#### WHALES: 2–2 ½ years

Children this age are discovering the joy of learning by doing. Along with continued practice in socialization skills, the children are experiencing many new sensations. We foster these sensations with activities focused on cognitive abilities, artistic practice, fine motor skills, and cooperative make-believe. The growth of independence is encouraged, and the children enjoy learning to help care for themselves by dressing, putting on shoes, and washing hands.

#### SEAHORSES: 2 ½-3 years

At this stage of development, children are introduced to some letters and numbers. The classroom is set up in centers to give a more defined space for the children to play. They continue to work on fine motor skills, large motor skills, social/emotional needs, and cognitive abilities. They will also continue practicing their self-help skills as toilet learning progresses.

#### DOLPHINS: 3–3 ½ years

Each child in this age group has the opportunity to explore his/her environment and feelings with positive support from teachers. The day is planned to allow all children the chance to participate in various centers. The curriculum expands to begin fun and educational activities, with colors, shapes, letters, and numbers. The children also begin to explore the environment through the use of calendars and weather charts.

#### STARFISH: 3 ½-4 years

During this year, activities in all developmental areas (cognitive, physical, social, and emotional)- are offered daily. Children explore their own feelings and those of others. Cooperative work and play between peers and teachers provide fun and learning. A wide variety of learning opportunities are offered in activity centers. Exploration of the environment is increased through the use of calendars and weather charts. Readiness activities are a part of each day's curriculum, and fine motor skills are strengthened. Independence and self-control are nurtured through cooperation in daily living skills and participation in whole group activities.

#### SHARKS: 4-5 years

This last year of preschool is a time for polishing up readiness skills before going off to kindergarten. Children have a variety of choices among carefully prepared developmental activities, with individualized planning done for children. The classroom offers individual, small group, and whole group activities that will help the children prepare for kindergarten. Independence and self-control are goals in both work and play, and the development of social skills continues to be guided in a positive fashion.

#### MUSIC AND LARGE MOTOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Once again, we will offer a twice-weekly Music Class and a twice-weekly Large Motor Skills Development Class. All classes from the Angelfish and older will attend Music. All classes from the Sea Turtles and older will attend Large Motor Class.

#### GODLY PLAY/CHILDREN'S CHAPEL

Godly Play is an open-access approach that allows children the tools to identify, name, and value their religious experiences. First, they hear a Bible story. The parable is followed by a set of "wondering questions" to prompt the children to reflect. Godly Play is twice a week for the Sea Turtles, Whales, Seahorses, Dolphins, Starfish, and Sharks.

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

Throughout the year, we will have school-wide events. These events include, but are not limited to, fundraisers, a Christmas program, a spring-time family event, and an End-of-Year picnic. More information will be sent home with your child as any event approaches. Additionally, some of the older classes take occasional field trips and plan functions around holidays.

#### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND HOLIDAYS

St. Dunstan's Episcopal Preschool strives to maintain a community in which all people, children and adults alike, are respected and supported as unique and valuable individuals. The Church provides the Judeo-Christian heritage which underlies the preschool's value system. We follow the guidelines of the Episcopal Church in making decisions about religious views and personal values.

#### RELIGION IN THE CLASSROOM

Staff and children join in saying grace prior to lunch and will read children bible stories.

## CELEBRATION OF HOLIDAYS

The preschool observes the following holidays: Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Easter. Our celebrations take the traditional form, and for the holidays that have both a religious and secular meaning, we observe both. Parents will be asked to become involved in holiday celebrations.

## WHAT TO BRING

### LUNCH

Children need to bring a lunch and a drink clearly marked with their names. Please only send finger foods that are cut up and ready to eat. We cannot give food items that are a choking hazard (i.e. hotdogs, grapes, etc.) unless those items are cut up into small bites. If you send these items and your child is under 3 years old, please cut them up. Please send your child a healthy lunch with the three food groups represented and refrain from sending carbonated beverages. For Seahorses, Dolphins, Starfish, and Sharks, we do not have refrigerator space for lunches and suggest you use an ice-pack to keep the lunch cool. We do have refrigerators in the other classes.

We have microwave facilities for warming baby lunches and bottles, but the lunches of the older children cannot be heated.

Jellyfish class children should have formula, milk, or juice in bottles. Other food must either be in jars or cut up and ready to eat. Label all baby articles and please provide a written daily schedule. Every crib has a laundry basket underneath to keep diapers, baby food, formula, extra clothes, etc. We do ask that you only bring disposable diapers. Angelfish, Rainbow Fish, and Whales need to bring a sipping cup they can leave, with their name written in permanent ink. We will run them through our dishwasher each day.

### NAP MAT

All classes except Jellyfish, Starfish, and Sharks will need a small rest mat. Please mark your child's name clearly on the mat or tag. Rest mats must be taken home at the end of each day according to DHS regulations.

### EXTRA CLOTHES

All children should bring an extra set of labeled clothing. Please include underpants and socks.

### PERSONAL TOYS

We ask that children not bring personal items or toys from home unless the item is a security item. It is just too difficult to share personal items with friends and expect the teachers to keep track of everyone's individual toys. We have plenty of toys at the preschool.

EVERYTHING YOUR CHILD BRINGS TO SCHOOL SHOULD BE MARKED WITH HIS/HER NAME.

## POLICIES

### ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

School hours are from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Parents are asked to wait in the narthex, just outside the preschool wing, until the bell rings and the doors are opened at 9:30 a.m. Children adjust best when they arrive promptly. This is also a courtesy to the teachers, as they begin the day's activities immediately. For every minute after 2:40 that you are not here to pick up your child, you will be charged \$1. Please do call if you are running late, but understand that a phone call does not exclude you from the late fee.

We provide a before-care option for \$5/day/child. Initially, this will be just a drop-in service. However, if it becomes too large, we will have to go to a sign-up. You will be billed only for your use on a monthly basis.

The child information sheet has a special section for names of persons authorized to pick up your child from school. Please keep this information current and abide by it. We will ask for identification from anyone we do not know. If someone who is not on the information sheet attempts to pick up a child, the parent will be called immediately. If there is someone who should not be allowed to pick up your child, please provide that specific information. It is always best to inform the teachers or Director if there is going to be a deviation from the norm.

#### TRAFFIC CONTROL

Please do not park along the sidewalk. This is a fire zone, and can make it difficult to spot small children. All children should be in car seats or strapped in with a seat belt. Handicapped parking spaces should be used only by handicapped individuals with a valid permit.

#### OUTDOOR PLAY

We will be outdoors on most days. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather, especially when it is cold. Coats, hats, mittens, long pants, or tights are needed on those days.

#### CLOTHING

Please think of your child's comfort and dress him/her simply in play clothes. Many of our activities are messy and, although the children wear smocks, accidents do happen. Belts are difficult for young children to manage. Sneakers are the most comfortable and safest shoes for preschool. Please mark all loose clothing items with your child's name.

#### FIELD TRIPS

The children may go on field trips during the year. They will be closely supervised and we require that parents sign a permission slip before any and every outing. All children will be buckled into a seat belt/car seat before any car may leave the school. Children are only transported by parent volunteers. We hope that each of you will be able to share one of these experiences with your child.

#### TOILET TRAINING

During the potty-training process, please send your child in pull-ups that open on the sides. Please DO NOT put your child in underwear before he/she is potty-trained. Also, please DO NOT put your child in diapers if he/she is supposed to be using the potty. Teachers are unable to effectively help with multiple children in diapers, as they are not easy to pull down and up. We also ask that each child starting in the Dolphin class and up be almost toilet trained by November 1 of the school year. Please work on this at home, and we will support your work at school. Also, we do not have the facilities to support potty-training in the Angelfish class.

#### BIRTHDAYS

We love to celebrate birthdays! If you wish to provide treats for your child to share with his/her class, please notify the teacher in advance. If your child does not attend school on the day of his/her birthday, it may be celebrated on a day close to the actual date. Any treats brought to school must be store bought and not homemade, as required by DHS.

#### CONFERENCES

Because our teachers, as well as parents, are concerned with your child's daily experiences, we will schedule parent conferences when requested by the parents. Please see Kristi or Stacy to schedule.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

Our typical policy is to close school when Union Public Schools close. However, there are times when we do *not* close when Union is closed (particularly if they are closed due to cold weather). Sometimes St. Dunstan's must close when the public schools do not because of our hilltop location. When we deem it necessary to cancel Preschool, you will be notified by email, our Facebook page will be updated, and the voicemail will be changed by 7:00 AM. We are unable to provide refunds for snow days.

## FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

We feel that your child will adjust to his/her new situation more quickly if you introduce him/her to the teacher and leave the room. Always tell your child goodbye and what time you will be back. If your child is having difficulty adjusting, please feel free to call the school during the day to check on him/her.

## ABSENCES

Please call the preschool office by 9:15 a.m. if your child will not attend that day. We are unable to provide refunds or make-up days for those absences.

## ILLNESS

Please be aware of the problems involved in spreading illnesses to other children when your child is sick. Licensing requires that children not attend school if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

Temperature of 101 or higher	Scabies
Persistent crying	Tuberculosis
Difficulty breathing	Impetigo
Uncontrolled coughing	Strep Throat
Diarrhea within last 24 hours	Ringworm
Vomiting within last 24 hours	Chicken Pox
Mouth sores	Shingles
Rash with no diagnosis	Pertussis (Whooping cough)
Pink eye	Mumps
Head Lice	Measles
Rubella	Hepatitis A
Too tired to do any activity	

A child **MUST** be fever, diarrhea, and/or vomit free for 24 hours without medications before returning to school. If you have any questions about your child's symptoms, please call the office so we can refer to the Good Health Handbook provided to us by the Health Department.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

All immunizations must be up to date and a record on file in the Preschool office.

## MEDICATIONS

Medications may be administered while a child is at school. There is a sign-up sheet in your child's classroom where you can list the medication, dosage, and time to be given. Also, please be sure that you sign the form as your signature gives us permission to administer the medication. Medication **MUST** be kept in the office out of children's reach. Please leave it there in the mornings and pick it up there in the afternoons.

## EMERGENCIES

In case of emergency, we will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. If we cannot reach you, or one of the people you have designated, we will call the child's physician. If necessary, we will call an ambulance. Until arrival of a parent, the physician or an ambulance, the Director will be in charge and make all decisions.

You will be expected to assume responsibility for any resultant expense. It is to your child's benefit that you keep the school up to date on phone numbers, emergency numbers and other pertinent information.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE AUTHORIZATION FORM IS PROPERLY FILLED OUT AND RETURNED WHEN SCHOOL BEGINS.

#### TUITION PAYMENT

Monthly tuition is the same price, regardless of the number of days, holidays, etc. in the month. The only exceptions are August (pro-rated at  $\frac{1}{2}$ ) and May (pro-rated at  $\frac{3}{4}$ ). Our teachers are modestly paid, but they do receive paid school holidays. When space is available, you can add a day to your child's normal schedule and pay the daily rate of \$25. In the summer, we typically go to a daily rate tuition plan.

Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. There will be a \$15.00 late fee posted to all accounts with a balance on the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month. There is also a \$15.00 charge for returned checks. Children will not be allowed to return to school if an account is 45 days past due.

Limited financial aid is available upon qualification.

#### WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

Notification of 30 days prior to the departure of your child from the program is required. We will refund  $\frac{1}{2}$  of any pre paid tuition. The enrollment and supply fees are non-refundable. Failure to notify the school of withdrawal will result in pre-paid tuition being retained or you being billed for any days your child attended school for which had not been paid.

#### REMOVAL FROM THE PROGRAM

There are, unfortunately, instances in which a child must be removed from the preschool. You will receive written notification explaining the reasoning if this is the case. We have to keep the safety of the children and staff constantly in mind.

We are so pleased to have your family associated with St. Dunstan's Episcopal Preschool and we look forward to watching your children learn and grow. Please know that you may come to the office anytime to share thoughts about experiences. Our goal is to keep you, the parents, happy with the care your child is receiving when he/she is away from you. We are looking forward to a wonderful school year.

St. Dunstan's Episcopal Preschool does not exclude children because of race, creed, sex, national origin, or insofar as possible, economic status.