



**St. Paul's
Children's Center**

Parent Handbook 2026 - 2027

St. Paul's Children's Center

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Mission Statement

The mission of St. Paul's Children's Center ("School" or "Center") is to provide a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment where learning flourishes for children aged 2 months to 3 years old, to active parishioners of St. Paul's Catholic Church and families in the community, by using an integrated curriculum plan to accommodate the broad range of children's needs and in accordance with the Pinellas County Licensing Board Rules and Regulations.

Philosophy Statement

At St. Paul's Children's Center, we encourage the continuing growth of children's knowledge and understanding of themselves and their world. We recognize that children are individuals, and that each child is unique. Our program accommodates the broad range of children's needs, their learning rates and styles, and their knowledge, experiences, and interests to facilitate continuous learning. We achieve this through an integrated curriculum incorporating a variety of instructional models and resources.

At St. Paul's Children's Center, we respect the development of the whole child. We understand that children learn through active involvement and play. Children demonstrate and represent their knowledge in a variety of ways. We recognize the social nature of learning and the essential role of language in developing thought, communication, and learning.

We view assessment and evaluation as integral components of the teaching – learning process. Assessment and evaluation support children's learning and assist the teachers and parents in making educational decisions. At St. Paul's Children's Center, we value parent / teacher partnerships to foster the best environment for your child. Teachers and parents should work together to consult and collaborate to create a climate of respect, success, and joy that is necessary for lifelong learning.

Standards

St. Paul's Children's Center was established in August 2003 in an effort to provide quality childcare to St. Paul's active parishioners and to residents of St. Petersburg, Florida. We are a Catholic early childhood center of the Diocese of St. Petersburg, and a ministry of St. Paul's Catholic Church. We are licensed and comply with Pinellas County Child Care Licensing Board for children's centers, Pinellas County Health Department, and Pinellas County Fire Services.

Non- Discrimination/ Admission Selection Policy

The Catholic Schools of the Diocese of St. Petersburg and St. Paul's Children's Center maintain an open admission policy; namely, that no person on the grounds of race, color, national or ethnic origin is discriminated against in admission or in receiving services in any school operated by them, nor do they hire or assign staff on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin of either the staff or the students. Contributing and supporting parishioners and siblings of St. Paul's Children's Center and St. Paul Catholic School are given priority. Catholic Schools within the Diocese of St. Petersburg require enrolling students to submit a Florida Department of Health Certificate of Immunization as provided for in Florida Statute 1003.22 as a condition precedent to acceptance. Catholic schools in the Diocese of St. Petersburg do not recognize a religious objection to this immunization.

Policy Regarding Admissions and Registration

St. Paul Children's Center and St. Paul Catholic School are ministries of St. Paul Parish, St. Petersburg and their operation is financially underwritten and subsidized by St. Paul's Parish. Although it does not guarantee a spot, priority is given for admission to the Children's Center and to the school for families who intend to raise their child in the Catholic Faith, who are registered active members of St. Paul Parish, are attending Sunday Mass weekly, who are financially supporting the parish through use of the Sunday envelopes, or the Automatic Offering Plan, and for families who have another child enrolled at the Children's Center or the school.

Enrollment in St. Paul's Children's Center or St. Paul Catholic School in a particular year does not guarantee the child a place in the Children's Center or in the School in the following year if these requirements are not met. Registration for St. Paul's Children's Center is intended for infants, ones, or two-year-old classrooms only. Three years old through 8th grade students register with St. Paul Catholic School which is a separate entity and must be contacted directly for enrollment.

Registration Forms

The following forms must be completed and submitted to the Director to register at St. Paul's Children's Center with your annual non-refundable registration fees and registration supplies* prior to the start date of the 2026-2027 school year, during open house or on the child's first day of school.

- ___ Application/ Registration Form with Registration Fee
- ___ Tuition Withdrawal Form (Include a voided check)
- ___ Policy Regarding Admissions and Registration
- ___ Child Enrollment Record
- ___ Emergency Medical Release (must be notarized)
- ___ Written Plan for Infants (Infants Only)
- ___ Infant/Toddler Health and Development Questionnaire (Infants and One year Old's)
- ___ Child Health and Development Questionnaire (Two-Year Olds Only)
- ___ Copy of Birth Certificate (New Students Only)
- ___ Copy of Baptismal Certificate (If Applicable)
- ___ Current Certificate of Immunizations Form (receive a copy from your pediatrician)
- ___ School Entry Health Exam Form (receive a copy from your pediatrician)
- ___ Promotional Media Release
- ___ Food Experience Permission Form
- ___ Influenza Virus Parent Flyer "The Flu Guide for Parents" (Every Sept.)
- ___ Distracted Driver Flyer (Every Sept. and April)
- ___ Medication Record and Parent Authorization Form (for diaper cream)
- ___ Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form

All forms including health forms must be completed and returned before the child's first day of school or before new classes begin each August. **Parents are responsible for submitting current, up to date health forms from the pediatrician to the Director. Children with incomplete or expired paperwork will not be allowed to attend St. Paul's Children's Center until new paperwork is submitted to the Director.**

Fees

In consideration of services performed by St. Paul's Children's Center, the following conditions apply:

- All registration fees are due prior to the child's start date and are non-refundable.
- All registration fees or tuition collected to hold a spot for a child prior to their enrollment is non-refundable.
- Weekly tuition must be paid by automatic funds transfer through our debit system. We do not have the availability to charge a credit card.
- There is no reduction in tuition when St. Paul's Children's Center is closed for in-service days, holidays such as Labor Day, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas Break, etc. OR should St. Paul Children's Center close for maintenance.
- There is no reduction in tuition when a child is absent for any reason, including illness.
- *The fee for children picked up late is \$3.00 per minute.*

Debit Transactions

- A \$30 transaction fee per family is added to the first debit withdrawal & annually each August.
- Failed transactions must be paid within one week, or the child may not return to the center.
- After 2 weeks of failed debit transactions, the child may not return unless other arrangements have been made.
- Any return fees incurred by the church must be paid.

Enrollment Withdrawal Procedures

Parents may withdraw their child from St. Paul's Children's Center at any time. A two-week written withdrawal notice is required when a child is withdrawn. Parents wishing to withdraw their child and fail to provide a two-week written notice will still be responsible for two weeks of tuition. Withdrawing revokes any registration for the next school year. Your family would need to reapply for acceptance at the center.

St. Paul's Children's Center operates year-round. Summertime withdrawals are not permitted without approval. Students completing EC-2 are expected to remain in the center until the August start date for the new school year.

Hours of Operation

St. Paul's Children's Center is open from 7:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Children may not arrive before 7:30 a.m. We begin our morning routine promptly at 8:30 a.m. **All children are required to arrive no later than 8:30 a.m.** Late arrivals are disruptive to the class and other students, therefore arrivals after 8:30 a.m., or mid-day drop-offs are not permitted. Students who arrive late without previous Director approval will not be permitted into the center. Appointments should be made in the afternoon so as not to disrupt the classroom morning routine. **(Special circumstances must have prior approval by the Director).** Please email the Director/ lead teacher OR call St. Paul's Children's Center office phone line at 727-822-3481 ext. 18 if your child will be late or absent. If your child does not arrive by 8:30 a.m. our staff is required to contact you, the parent or guardian. If you are unable to be reached, your emergency contact must be notified.

Arrival / Departure Procedures

Arrivals: To ensure your child's safety, parents/guardians must follow and obey all traffic laws during arrivals & departures. Parents may park on 14th St., 20th Ave. or in the parish office parking lot. Dual enrollment families that stay for morning opening on the school plaza must use the church parking lot. This will help keep our front entrance available for other parents. All children/staff must use the Children's Center front entrance for arrivals. Parents are asked not to enter the facility unless it is an emergency. **Children should arrive no later than 8:30 a.m. ready for school,** have eaten breakfast prior to arrival and arrive in clean diapers. Parents must be vigilant in watching for signs of illness daily, before bringing their child to school. Students who arrive late without previous Director approval will not be permitted into the center. Each child/ staff member will be visually screened for signs of illness before they will be allowed to enter the facility. Parents must check students in at the entrance area documenting the person who dropped the student off and the student arrival time.

Departures: All parents/ guardians must use the Children's Center front entrance for Departure/ Pick up. Parents are to remain in the front entrance area and not enter the building unless there is an emergency. Please ring the bell at our entrance and a staff member will escort your child to you. Parents must check students out at the entrance area documenting the person who picked up the student and the student departure time. No child will be released to anyone less than 18 years of age OR to anyone who is not listed on the Child Enrollment Record Form as an emergency contact. Anyone who is not known by St. Paul's Children's Center staff and is picking up a child will be asked to show photo ID. Please notify us in writing (via email or letter) immediately of any changes to the list of people authorized to pick up your child. Letters allowing friends or relatives to pick up your child MUST be emailed or signed and dated by the parent, and must include the person's name, address, and phone number as it is listed on their ID. Students may not use any of the areas in front of our entrance or the parish building as a play area, including but not limited to trees, planters, and fire escape steps. This poses a safety risk, and families are asked to leave our campus promptly after picking up their children from school.

Late Pick- Up Fees

St. Paul's Children's Center closes promptly at 5:30 p.m. Parents should arrive by 5:25 p.m. for pickup. The fee for children picked up late is \$3.00 per minute. Parents must contact St. Paul's Children's Center if they will be late in picking up their child. We understand emergencies do arise; however, parents must have a backup plan for those instances. Excessive tardiness/late pick-ups are prohibited. All late fees are at the discretion of the Director.

Custody Agreements

The director must be given written notification when there are any changes to your family's emergency contact information. Both parents listed on the child's birth certificate are considered the child's parent/ guardian unless there is a court order stating otherwise. St. Paul's Children's Center cannot prevent a parent from picking up his/her child without a court ordered custody agreement. All custody agreements are kept in a confidential file in the director's office

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14

Illegal and Harmful Objects

Alcohol, tobacco, and drugs may not be carried or used at any time on our campus. Matches, fireworks, knives, guns, slingshots, chemicals and objectionable materials or objects are not to be brought to the center at any time. Smoking of any type is not allowed on campus, including e-cigarettes and vaping.

Persons Appearing to be Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol at Pick-up

The staff of St. Paul's Children's Center will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent should a parent, or other authorized pick-up person, appear to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit the agency from denying a custodial parent or authorized person access to their child even if that person is or appears impaired. However, St. Paul's Children's Center staff will delay the impaired person as long as possible while contacting the other parent, the local police, and Child Protective Services.

Child Restraints – Car Seats and Booster Seats

Florida law requires children aged 5 and under to be secured properly in a crash-tested, federally approved child restraint device. Children aged 3 years must be in child restraint device of a separate carrier or a vehicle manufacturer's integrated child seat in the back seat. Staff are prohibited from assisting with removal or placement of any child restraint/car seat. Parents/Guardians must unload/load children from car seats/restraints. Staff are required to report on any parent/guardian who does not follow this law.

Daily Prayers

Prayer is an integral part of St. Paul's Children's Center philosophy and curriculum. All classrooms practice daily prayers with the children and encourage, when developmentally appropriate, the children to recite and use hand motions. All prayers begin and end with the Sign of the Cross.

Our pastor and associate pastors visit the classrooms regularly. The children will receive ashes and a special blessing on Ash Wednesday.

Classroom Angel Sponsorship

Parents and business owners are given the opportunity to sponsor a class by becoming a Classroom Angel. Donations are tax deductible and support the children with instructional enhancements and enriching student learning. Be an Angel and Sponsor a classroom! Please contact the director for details.

*For he will order his angels to protect you, wherever you go.
Psalm 91:11-13*

Infant Classroom

Required Supplies

The following items must be provided for your child. All items must be **labeled** with your child's FIRST AND LAST NAME and should be brought prior to their first day of school*.

- Large size back pack (Dimensions: 17"H x 13"W x 9.5"D, not child size)
- Diapers (2-week supply to keep at school, refill as needed)
- 1 Baby wipe plastic container and 2 refill packs (refill as needed)
- 2 FITTED crib sheets to fit mattress size 36 inches in Length & 24 inches in Width
 - Crib sheets must fit snugly around mattress
- 2-Pack Long Sleeve Sleeping Bag (Sleep Sack Shirts)
- 3 complete changes of clothes
- 5 cloth bibs
- Feeding spoons, 1 for each meal- (must be labeled)
- Bottles- prepared and ready to feed (daily)
- Baby food and snacks- (daily)
 - Finger foods, starting at 8 months (see our "Food Safety and Nutrition Policy")
- 2 pacifiers (only if your child uses these at home)
- Diaper rash cream (Current Medication Record and Parent Authorization Form must be on file including a note from the pediatrician if medically prescribed)
- 1 sippy cup with lid, starting at 6-7 months, **each piece must be labeled**, (examples of approved cups on page 14 under Cups required by Classroom in the "Food Safety and Nutrition Policy")
- Written Plan for Infants (Daily Routine) completed by parent – includes feeding times, amount of formula, napping times, etc.

The following items do not need to be labeled.

- 3 packs of 3 Disinfecting Wipes Value packs ("kills 99.9% of germs and the flu/cold virus")
- 3 boxes of facial tissues
- 3 boxes of Large Gallon size Ziptop bags
- 1 box black sharpie permanent marker
- 1 box double AA batteries, any brand
- 4 Softsoap Liquid Hand Soap Pumps, Aquarium - 7.5 fl oz Clear Softsoap brand hand soap only. No other soap is acceptable per PCLB. (Only Softsoap brand does not say "keep out of reach of children.")

*Registration Supplies are due to your classroom teacher during open house or on the child's first day of school.

Infant Classroom

Things to know

- Anyone entering the infant classrooms must remove their shoes or wear shoe covers.
- Parents are responsible for daily reporting of the following information prior to arrival each morning:
 - How your child slept overnight/ wake up time
 - When your child ate last, how much they ate, how many bottles/ sippy cups or food brought to school
 - Any signs of illness in the last 36 hours (Cough, Runny Nose, Congestion, Fever, Rash, Diarrhea, Vomiting, or Bruises)
 - Any change in your child's behavior or mood
 - Any different phone numbers or new pick-up information
- Each day, teachers will report on your child's daily activities, along with any additional supplies needed including bottles, diapers, crib sheets, blankets, and extra clothes (in the correct size and season).
- Our Infant classroom follows an "Infant Classroom Feeding/Sleeping Daily Routine" by your child's age to support the classroom setting. Routines may vary depending on the needs of each individual child. As always, Daily reporting is essential, as Parent and Teacher communication is the key to success. The classroom daily routine is sent to families via the Infant Classroom Welcome packet.
- Parents are responsible for bringing new Bottles, Sippy Cups, or Food items daily. We cannot refill sippy cups; parents should send enough for the entire day.
- GLASS containers are not permitted. This includes bottles & food containers.
- Bottles must be prepared by parents and arrive ready to feed with a lid covering the nipple.
- Bottles will be heated on low in crockpot according to PCLB regulations. **NO bottles after a child's first birthday.** (See Food Safety & Nutrition Policy for Required Cups for Classroom).
- Cloth diapers are not accepted at the center. Alternatives for children with allergies suggested are bamboo or hypoallergenic diapers.
- By 8 months of age, parents must provide finger food for their child (we recommend beginning with one fruit and one vegetable). Please see our "Food Safety and Nutrition Policy" for details.
- Pack ice packs in lunchboxes to keep food chilled. Note: we cannot microwave food. Please send in any food that you would like to serve warm in a Thermos type container to keep it warm.
- Everything must be labeled with your child's first and last name. We require families to purchase labels that are dishwasher safe. Example websites: www.stuckonyou.biz , www.namebubbles.com , or www.inchbug.com for rubber bands that have your child's name on them and go around bottles/sippy cups.
 - Permanent markers on bottles/containers or permanent markers on masking tape is not permitted or an acceptable form of labeling.
- Jewelry is not permitted to be worn at St. Paul's Children's Center, with the exception of stud earrings with screw backs, subject to director approval.
- As your child begins standing, walking, OR no later than 8 months old, your teacher will discuss your child's readiness to begin wearing shoes. We require hard bottom, closed-toed and closed-heeled shoes that tie, with ankle socks for safety and stability. Velcro shoes are not permitted if a child can remove the shoes. Please see our shoe policy under "Dress to Play" for more information.
- All other Infant classroom specific information is sent via email in the Welcome Packet and reviewed during Open House.

EC 1 Classroom

Required Supplies

The following items must be provided for your child. All items must be **labeled** with your child's FIRST AND LAST NAME and should be brought prior to their first day of school.

- Large size backpack (Dimensions: 17"H x 13"W x 9.5"D, not child size)
- Diapers (2-week supply to keep at school, refill as needed)
- 1 Baby wipe plastic container and refill packs (2-week supply to keep at school, refill as needed)
- 3 complete changes of clothes including socks and 1 extra pair of shoes
- Blanket for rest time and a small lovey (must be soft, fit in backpack, and make no noise or sounds, to be kept at school Monday through Friday and sent home on weekends for washing)
- Diaper rash cream (Current Medication Record and Parent Authorization Form must be on file including a note from the pediatrician if medically prescribed)
- 3 Sippy Cups with lids (daily, See "Food Safety & Nutrition Policy" for recommended cups)
- Monthly group snack (sign-up sheet will be emailed from teacher)
- Lunch box (daily, see our "Food Safety and Nutrition Policy" for more information)
- 1 Small Cot sheet (approx. dimensions 40 x 22, Purchased by parents, see pg. 15 for details)

The following items do not need to be labeled.

- 3 packs of 3 Disinfecting Wipes Value packs ("kills 99.9% of germs and the flu/cold virus")
- 3 boxes of facial tissues
- 1 box EXPO dry erase markers, any colors
- 1 two pocket **Plastic/ Vinyl** BLUE Folder (no paper folders please)
- 1 pack of glue sticks
- 3 boxes small/ regular size bandaids (any brand, any size box)
- 4 Softsoap Liquid Hand Soap, Aquarium - 50 fl oz (Gallon refillable size) Clear Softsoap brand hand soap only. No other soap is acceptable per licensing. (Only Softsoap brand does not say "keep out of reach of children.")
- 1 can of Lysol disinfectant aerosol spray

EC 1 Things to Know

-All one-year-olds must be fully walking and off bottles to enter our EC1 classrooms.

-EC1 Children should not be carried and use walking feet when arriving at school. Shoes must be worn at all times; see our "Shoe Policy" for more information.

-Parents are responsible for checking Daily Reporting, Blue Folder, and the app or emails where teachers communicate supplies needed such as: diapers, cot sheets, extra clothes (in correct size and season).

-Bottles are not permitted. (See Food Safety & Nutrition Policy for Required Cups for Classroom).

-All food must be sent in a labeled lunch box, with all containers labeled. The food must be ready to eat per our "Food Safety and Nutrition Policy". Note: we cannot microwave food. Please send food that your child can feed themselves. Pack ice packs in the lunchboxes to keep food chilled or send warm food in a thermos.

-We cannot refill sippy cups, so please send enough for the entire day. We recommend 3 sippy cups each day- one for a.m. snack, one for lunch, and one for p.m. snack.

-Everything must be labeled with your child's first and last name. We require families to purchase labels that are dishwasher safe. Example websites: www.stuckonyou.biz , www.namebubbles.com , or www.inchbug.com for rubber bands that have your child's name on them and go around sippy cups.

-All other EC1 classroom specific information is sent via email in the Welcome Packet and reviewed during Open House.

EC 2 Classroom

Required Supplies-

The following items must be provided for your child. All items must be **labeled** with your child's FIRST AND LAST NAME and should be brought prior to their first day of school.

- Large size backpack (Dimensions: 17"H x 13"W x 9.5"D, not child size)
- Pull ups with Velcro sides only (2-week supply to keep at school, refill as needed)
- 2 Baby wipe containers and refill packs (2-week supply to keep at school, refill as needed)
- 3 complete changes of clothes, including socks and 1 extra pair of shoes
- Blanket for rest time/small quiet lovey (must fit in backpack and make no noise/ sounds, kept at school Monday through Friday, and sent home on the weekends for washing)
- Diaper rash cream (Medication Record and Parent Authorization Form must be on file including a note from the pediatrician if medically prescribed)
- Monthly group snack (sign-up sheet will be emailed from teacher)
- Lunch box (daily, see our "Food Safety and Nutrition Policy" for more information)
- 2 sport bottles/straw cups filled with water daily (No Glass Permitted, See Food Safety & Nutrition Policy for Required Cups for Classroom)
- 1 Large Cot sheet (Dimensions approximately 52 x 22, Purchased by parents online, see pg. 15 for more information)

The following items do not need to be labeled.

- 3 packs of 3 Disinfecting Wipes Value packs ("kills 99.9% of germs and the flu/cold virus")
- 3 boxes large bandaids (any brand, any size box)
- 2 bottles hand sanitizer (no scents please, 8 oz)
- 1 box expo markers (any colors)
- 1 two pocket **Plastic/ Vinyl** BLUE Folder (no paper folders please)
- 4 Softsoap Liquid Hand Soap Pumps, Aquarium - 7.5 fl oz Clear Softsoap brand hand soap only. No other soap is acceptable per PCLB. (Only Softsoap brand does not say "keep out of reach of children.")
- 1 can of Lysol disinfectant aerosol spray
- 1 box of jumbo size crayons

EC 2 Things to Know

-There is no daily reporting required in EC2.

-Parents are responsible for checking the app, emails, and the Blue folder for communications from teachers including refills of any supplies needed such as: diapers, cot sheets, and extra clothes (correct size/season).

-Binky's/ Pacifiers are not permitted.

-All food must be sent in a labeled lunch box, with all containers labeled. The food must be ready to eat per our "Food Safety and Nutrition Policy". Note: we cannot microwave food. Please send food that your child can feed themselves. Pack ice packs in the lunchboxes to keep food chilled or send warm food in a thermos.

-Bottles are not permitted. (See Food Safety & Nutrition Policy for Required Cups for Classroom).

-Beverages in lunch boxes must be disposable juice boxes, small disposable water bottles or small disposable milk chugs.

-Everything must be labeled with your child's first and last name. We require families to purchase labels that are dishwasher safe. Example websites: www.stuckonyou.biz , www.namebubbles.com , or www.inchbug.com for rubber bands that have your child's name on them and go around sippy cups.

-All other EC2 classroom specific information is sent via email in the Welcome Packet and reviewed during Open House.

Food Safety and Nutrition Policy

St. Paul Children's Center is required to follow guidelines set forth by the USDA and the Health Department, with regards to nutrition and food safety. These guidelines are required for snacks and lunches being provided by families for their children while attending St. Paul's Children's Center.

Nutrition

1. Good nutrition is critical to proper growth and development.
2. Children should arrive at school having had breakfast prior to their arrival. Due to allergies, students may not walk into the children's center or classroom with food in their hands.
3. Parents must provide a nutritious and healthy snack/lunch and drink for their child.
4. Two food groups must be part of the snack/meal provided, with portions and choices appropriate for your child's age.
5. Refer to the nutritional information and requirements outlined on **The USDA MyPlate website at <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>** which has the guidelines for diet/food groups/ serving size/ age appropriateness.
6. Families will receive a 'gentle reminder' note if their child's snack/lunch was missing or incomplete.
7. Children are encouraged to eat all of their lunch. Therefore, it's important to send only as much as your child can eat in 20 minutes. Please send food your child can eat unassisted in EC1 and EC2. All fruit must be peeled and sectioned. Sandwiches and meat must be cut up and ready to eat. We cannot microwave food. A thermos should be used to keep food warm.
8. St. Paul's Children's Center will supplement your child's snack/ lunch on any emergency situations where the proper nutritional requirements were not met.

Food Safety

1. Food for infants must be cut into pieces $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or smaller to prevent choking.
2. Food for toddlers (EC1 and EC2) must be cut into pieces $\frac{1}{2}$ inch or smaller to prevent choking.
3. We are not able to refrigerate or heat lunch items.
4. Fast food lunches, junk food of any kind, candy, gum, sports drinks and carbonated drinks will not be permitted and will be sent home.
5. Parents must include ice packs to keep perishable food cold or a Thermos to keep warm food warm.
6. Lunch boxes and all inside containers (all parts and ice packs) should be labeled with the child's first and last name.
7. The children will be taught not to share their food with others at school for safety reasons, such as allergies.

Food Safety and Nutrition Policy(cont'd)

8. Foods that are associated with young children's choking incidents will not be served to children under 4 years of age, such as, but not limited to:
- whole/round hot dogs
 - popcorn
 - chips
 - pretzel nuggets
 - whole grapes
 - nuts
 - whole spoonful of peanut butter
 - cheese cubes
 - any food that is of similar shape and size of the trachea/windpipe

Food Allergens/ Special Diet

For children with specific food allergies or special diet: Parents must document this on their Food Experience Form and Child Enrollment Record. Parents must also include a note from your pediatrician about the type of allergy the child has and what foods their child may not eat or handle while at school. Any child requiring a special diet shall have a copy of the physician's order, a copy of the diet, and a sample meal plan for the special diet as documentation in the student file. Parents should provide extra snacks to be kept at school to use as needed for special occasions.

Food Experiences at School

Classroom cooking experiences will occur periodically throughout the school year. All families will indicate on their Food Experience Form and Child Enrollment Record if their child has any food allergies. Parents must also include a note from your pediatrician about the type of allergy the child has and what foods their child may not eat or handle while at school. Parents should provide extra snacks to be kept at school to use as needed for special occasions.

Snacks and Lunches

EC1 & EC2 participate in community snack. Each child is requested to bring in a large nonperishable snack donation for the month. An email will be sent to parents at the end of each month with requests. Please choose from the list provided and do not deviate from the requested items without prior approval from the teacher due to other student allergies.

Birthday Celebrations

We celebrate birthdays! Check with your child's teacher prior to the big day for classroom guidelines and any allergies. We require 1 weeks' notice before bringing in a birthday treat. We encourage healthy choices for birthday treats. (Popsicles, frozen yogurt, etc.). Small/ mini cupcakes or cookies are also acceptable. All treats must be store bought, to comply with Pinellas County Health Department regulations and for the health and safety of those children with allergies.

LUNCH/SNACK

*** (all food must be cut into pieces smaller than 1/2 inch for toddlers, smaller than 1/4 inch for infants) ***

Healthy Ideas:

Fresh fruit (no fruit cups)
Sliced Avocado
Fresh cooked/ steamed vegetables (light salt/seasoning)
Cooked/steamed lean meats (chicken, beef, pork, fish)
Cheese slices
Peanut Butter & Jelly OR Grilled Cheese sandwiches
Quesadilla Wraps
Cheerios /Kix Cereal
Soft Cereal Bars (Nutrigrain)
Mini-Muffins (homemade, low sugar)
Animal Crackers
Fig Newton
Graham crackers
Water /Milk

NOT PERMITTED:

Any food of similar shape/size of the trachea/ windpipe
Dried Fruit or Nuts
Whole / round hot dogs
Popcorn, Chips, and Pretzel nuggets
Whole grapes
Whole Spoonful of Peanut butter
Cheese cubes
Candy/Cough Drops
Soda/ carbonated beverages/cafeinated beverages/ Sports Drinks

Cups Required by Classroom

(All Examples are recommended by FLDOH Early Steps Program as best cups for orofacial development)

INFANTS (transitioning from bottles)

Spout Free Cups:

- Munchkin Miracle 360 <https://www.munchkin.com/miracle-360-100z-cup.html>

Straw Cups:

- OXO Straw cup <https://www.oxo.com/transitions-straw-cup-9-oz.html>

EC1:

Straw Cups (bottles not permitted)

- Thermos 12oz FUNtainer Water Bottle <https://thermos.com/collections/funtainer>
- Pop up straw cups like Playtex Sipster <https://playtexbaby.com/collections/stage-3/products/playtex%C2%AE-stage-3-milk-water-cups>

EC2:

Sport Bottles/Straw Cups (only straw cups, no other sippy cups or baby bottles permitted):

- Thermos 12oz FUNtainer Water Bottle <https://thermos.com/collections/funtainer>

Dress to Play

Children should be dressed in sturdy, washable clothing that will allow them to play freely and permit participation in all art and playground activities during a busy day at St. Paul's Children's Center. Children will go outside each day (weather permitting), so please dress them appropriately for each day's weather. Children's clothing should allow them to undress themselves easily for bathroom purposes. Overalls, leotards, and belts are difficult to unfasten and do not foster independence. Shorts and pants should have elastic waist bands, no buttons, snaps, or zippers. Girls wearing skirts or dresses must wear shorts underneath. **Tutu's, Tulle Skirts and Costumes of any kind are not permitted.** No onesies, bibs, or pacifiers in EC1 or EC2. Jewelry of any kind is not permitted to be worn at St. Paul's Children's Center, with the exception of stud earrings with screw backs, subject to director approval.

Shoe Policy

Shoes are to be worn at all times while at school for children who are ready to wear shoes which include all EC2, all EC1, and any infants walking, or infants preparing to walk*(See "Infant Room Things to Know" for more info). **Children must wear closed-toed and closed-heeled shoes with laces that tie, with ankle socks.** Sneakers and socks to the ankle are required at all times. We do not permit "no show socks". Also NOT Permitted: VELCRO, MOCCASINS, CROCS, BALLET SHOES, BOOTS, SANDALS, FLIP FLOPS, or SLIP-ONS. Should your child continuously remove their shoes, we will require that you provide a different pair.

Spare Clothes

In the event of illness or accident, a minimum of three complete sets of seasonally appropriate clothing (underwear, socks, shirt, shorts and one extra pair of shoes) must be kept in your child's cubby at all times. When the spare clothing is used, you will need to replace it for the next school day. Please put your child's FIRST & LAST NAME on all clothing and belongings to help ensure their safe return. If your child does not have extra clothing, you will be called to bring clothes or pick up your child for the day.

Cot Sheets

Each child is required by licensing to have a fitted cot sheet. Cot Sheets may be purchased on line from sites such as Amazon or Etsy for approximately \$15. Please use a label or write your child's name on the sheets. One-year olds will need to purchase a "small" cot sheet (approximate dimensions 40 x 22) with elastic on all four sides. Two-year-olds will need to purchase a "large" cot sheet (Dimensions approximately 52 x 22) with elastic on all four sides. Please order to allow enough time for shipping and arrival in time for the beginning of the year. If a cot sheet breaks, is damaged, or becomes lost, parents will need to repair or replace it.

*Children are a gift from the Lord, the fruit of the womb, a reward.
Psalm 127:3*

Rest Time

Rest time is a calm period in which your child is required to rest quietly on their cot without disturbing others. EC1/EC2 parents send in a rest time blanket for their child that will stay in their cubby all week (blankets are not permitted for infant cribs). EC1/EC2 blankets, cot sheets and Infant sheets will be sent home every Friday for weekend cleaning. Please return clean cot sheets/blankets every Monday. If your child does not bring their clean bedding to school on Monday, you will be called to bring it or pick up your child at rest time. Rest time loveys should be small enough to fit in backpack/cubby, soft, contain no batteries, and make no noise/sounds. All rest time items (cot sheets, blankets, loveys, etc.) must be labeled with your child's First & Last name. St. Paul's Children's Center is not responsible for any lost or damaged items from home.

Treasures from Home

We provide a variety of age and developmentally appropriate toys in every classroom at St. Paul's Children's Center. Unless otherwise requested for a special event from your teacher, children are not permitted to bring toys or other treasures from home to school as we cannot be responsible for loss or damage. Licensing requires age-appropriate toys in each classroom. Toys brought from home often have parts that pose a choking hazard and become a safety concern.

Communication

The success of St. Paul's Children's Center relies upon great communication with parents, staff, and administration. We strive to keep quality relationships with our families. Parents' opinions and concerns are very important to us. We attempt to keep families informed in a variety of ways, including the following:

Phone/ Emails: Important communications are sent via the classroom app, email, or as a phone call to parents. When parents have questions or concerns regarding a classroom situation, the policy is to discuss the situation with the classroom teacher prior to contacting the director. Parents may contact their lead teacher via email (email addresses provided in your child's Welcome Packet and during Open House). Parents with additional questions or concerns may contact us via email or by leaving a voice message to schedule an appointment. All messages and emails will be returned by the next business day. Please contact the director or the parish office by phone for immediate support in the event of an emergency.

Parent/ Teacher Conferences: Parents are encouraged to schedule a conference with the classroom teacher to discuss individual concerns or questions. The director is available to assist parents with concerns that have not been resolved with the teacher's help.

Daily Info/ Folders: Infants and One-year old classroom parents/guardians will receive daily information regarding their child's activities, including information concerning nutritional intake/times of meals, bowel movements, naps, changes in behavior, or other developmental milestones such as first steps and first words.

EC1/EC2 are provided a classroom folder for their backpack which holds any completed activities or important notes from the teachers that should be checked and emptied by parents daily.

Monthly Newsletters: Center events, monthly curriculum themes/activities are provided from teachers, posted in classrooms, sent via email or in monthly classroom newsletters.

SPCC Website: Parent Handbook, annual calendar and other center information can be found on our website at www.stpaulschildrencenter.com

Health/ Illnesses

Childhood illnesses/diseases, unfortunately, are part of growing up. Keeping children healthy is a job that needs everyone's assistance. Hand washing and proper hygiene are critical to good health. Best practices we follow and recommend for preventing illness:

- Washing hands often, and for at least 20 seconds
- Avoid touching your face
- Covering coughs and sneezes with the sleeve of your shirt or coat
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects often

Below is a list of symptoms that parents must be vigilant in watching for daily, before bringing your child to school. Parents must have an alternative plan for care when your child is sick as children may not attend our center if any of the following conditions exist:

1. **Fever above the normal range within the last 36 hours***, at home or school
2. Coughing that is persistent or severe, or causing the child to become red or blue in the face or making a whooping/clicking/whistling sound, difficult or rapid breathing
3. Diarrhea or Vomiting at any time in the past 48 hours, at home or school
4. Stiff Neck, Body/Muscle Aches
5. Headache
6. Fatigue/Lethargy
7. Dizziness or nausea
8. Poor Appetite or Poor Feeding
9. Loss of Taste or Smell
10. Exposed, open skin lesions, or unexplained rashes
11. Thick, yellow, green, or bloody discharge from the nose, ears, or eyes, including pink eye.
12. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
13. Children with lice or nits (may not return until they have been treated/are nit free.)
14. Any other unusual sign or symptom of illness

Children who become ill during school will be separated into a comfortable and supervised area while parents are notified, and arrangements are made for **immediate** pick up. If you are called to pick up your child due to illness, they may NOT return to school the following day and may be required to stay home longer due to certain contagious illnesses. **Children must be symptom free and fever free without the use of over-the-counter medications for 36 hours before returning to school.** A child placed on an antibiotic may NOT return to school until the child has been on the antibiotic for 24 hours prior to their return.

Parents must notify the director in writing if your child is diagnosed (or has been exposed to) a contagious disease or illness. In some cases, children who are out sick may be required to stay home longer than 2 days, additional testing may be required before they return, or a physician's note to return to school may be required before your child may return to the center.

- Any or all of the above symptoms, requirements for return or return dates will be defined at the discretion of the director.

Immunizations

The state of Florida requires that a current record of immunization be on file in the director's office. A health exam by a physician, within one year prior to admission, is also required. Please schedule doctor appointments so that your child receives immunizations in the afternoon. Children occasionally get a fever and may not be in school with a fever. Parents are responsible for providing updated information to the director. **Children will be temporarily excluded from admission to the center if their immunizations are not current or if proper documentation is not on file in the director's office prior to the first day of new classes or when the child's immunizations expire. There will be no grace period.**

Medication / Allergies

St. Paul's Children's Center does NOT dispense any regularly prescription medication, such as antibiotics except for prescribed diaper cream. This includes and is not limited to sunscreen or insect repellent; please apply these prior to arriving at school. All prescribed medications including Diaper Rash Cream require a completed "Medication Record and Parent Authorization" form, available from the director by request. Any medications which are approved to be given in our center (such as Diaper Cream or Epi-Pen) must have this completed Medication Record and Parent Authorization and the medicine must not be expired. Parents are responsible for checking expiration dates prior to providing the medication and staff will notify parents of any expired medicines.

Parents/ Guardians must provide written documentation from your child's pediatrician concerning any life-threatening allergies. It is important that we distinguish between sensitivity and allergies. Written documentation of known food allergies must be provided by your physician. Any child requiring a special diet must provide a copy of the physician's order, a copy of the diet, and a sample meal plan for the special diet as documentation in their student file. An allergy list is always posted in each classroom with the names of children and their known allergies.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency and/or accident, we will contact the parents of the child immediately. If we cannot reach the parents/guardians, and medical treatment is necessary, 911 will be called. 911 will be called for all extreme emergency care situations regardless of parental contact. Parental permission for St. Paul's Children's Center to contact 911 and make any emergency medical decisions that may be deemed necessary is part of this agreement.

Accident / Incident Reporting

As children grow and explore, falls and accidents do happen. According to Pinellas County Child Care Licensing Board Regulations, washing the affected area, applying a band aid, and / or using an ice pack are the only first aid procedures that St. Paul's Children's Center may administer. If an injury requires more attention, the child's parents will be notified immediately. All notable accidents and incidents will be recorded in an Accident / Incident Report. The report must be completed by the attending staff member, and parent/adult acknowledgement is required. Parents will be notified by the director of any injuries to the head.

Notification of Changes

Parents/ Guardians are required to notify St. Paul's Children's center in writing immediately of any changes in their home or employment phone numbers, new address, new place of work, etc. Emergency phone numbers are critically important. Two LOCAL emergency contacts must be listed on your Child Enrollment Record. There must be two separate people with two separate phone numbers and reside locally in our area. Only local addresses will be accepted.

We also ask that any changes in routines at home be communicated so that the staff will be prepared to assist each child with new emotions or behaviors that may result in school.

Toilet Training

Toilet training is the parent's responsibility and should begin in the home. We are happy to assist parents with the toilet training process in the classroom, when we observe the child showing developmental signs of readiness within the classroom setting. Official toilet training does not begin until EC2. However, if a child turning two-years-old within an EC-1 classroom shows signs of readiness within the classroom, EC-1 teachers will offer the use of the toilet when the child verbally requests the toilet. Pull-ups and underwear are not allowed in EC-1 unless a child turns two-years-old within the year of being in the EC-1 classroom, shows readiness signs for toilet training, and meets the requirements for being fully toilet trained at home and accident free at home and school for two weeks. EC2 has a Toilet Training Procedure that parents are expected to follow which will help support what your child is working on with you at home.

The following are the initial signs that your child is ready to begin the toilet training process that staff look for at the center to determine readiness for classroom toilet training:

- stays dry in between pull up changes
- can verbalize to an adult when they are wet or have had a BM in their diaper/pull-up
- proactively and verbally requests to use the toilet
- shows a consistent interest in the toileting process and is curious about the toilet

Although children may be demonstrating these signs at home, we must also see them here in the classroom setting. Parent / teacher communication is critical regarding toilet training. Please notify the EC2 teachers when you begin the toilet training process at home. EC-2 children that have begun the toilet training process at home will be offered and encouraged to use the toilet at least every two hours. Extra clothing, including underwear and shoes, should be kept in your child's cubby. We reward children with stickers or other small treats for their toilet training progress at school. We encourage you to share what reward system you are using at home.

Children may not wear underwear to St. Paul's Children's Center until they are fully toilet trained at home and have been accident free at home and school for two weeks. "Pull- ups" provide a lightweight liner to maintain sanitary conditions in the classroom. If a child wearing underwear has an accident at St. Paul's Children's Center, they will be cleaned and put in a "pull-up". If a child wearing underwear has an accident two or more days in a row, they will be required to wear ONLY "pull- ups" to St. Paul's Children's Center for a designated time. Children who are encouraged and allowed to toilet train when they show interest or are developmentally ready, ultimately complete the toilet training process with greater ease and are more successful. Pressure to toilet train before your child is ready can have a negative effect on your child and may cause regression.

Placement and Transitions

The classroom placement of your child is based on the Pinellas County Licensing Requirements according to a child's age, emotional and physical development, and the availability of space in each classroom. Enrollment in St. Paul's Children's Center or St. Paul Catholic School in a particular year does not guarantee the child a place in the Children's Center or in the School in the following year. Enrollment in St. Paul's Children's Center and classroom placement is for the "school year", August through the following July. As your child grows and matures, every effort will be made to move your child up, provided classroom space is available and they are developmentally ready.

Infants to One's

- Infants (2-12 months) will be placed in the infant room. Once a child turns one, they may transition to the one-year-old classroom provided all the following criteria is met and a space in the One-Year-Old classroom is available:

1. They are 1 year of age.
2. They are walking in shoes, are steady on their feet, and able to walk up and down the stairs with some assistance.
3. They have transitioned to 1 nap a day and are accustomed to the one-year-old classroom schedule.
4. They are drinking independently from a sippy cup. No bottles will be given after a child's first birthday in the infant room.
5. They are off baby food and able to feed themselves finger foods.
6. They can sleep on a cot.

One's to Two's

- EC2 is appropriate for mature two-year-olds and young three-year-olds who miss the September 1st cutoff date. One-year olds who turn 2 may transition to this classroom provided all the following criteria are met and space in the Two-Year-Old class is available:

1. They are ready to begin wearing pull ups. Only Velcro Pull-ups are worn in EC2.
2. They can drink from a straw cup (examples in Food/Nutrition Policy). Sippy Cups are not allowed.
3. They can independently feed themselves.
4. They demonstrate maturity to be in a larger classroom with more children.
5. They are ready for more structured learning activities.

Two's to EC3 at St. Paul Catholic School

- St. Paul Catholic School is a separate entity, and families will contact the school directly regarding registering for the EC3 program
- Registered and supporting parishioners and siblings receive priority.
- The child must turn three on or before September 1st to attend EC3 at St. Paul Catholic School.
- Must be toilet trained by June to attend EC3 at St. Paul Catholic School in August.
- Children will not be retained in EC2 due to not being toilet trained. We will recommend parents seek out other schools that accept three-year-old children that are not toilet trained.

Discipline/ Expulsion Policy

St. Paul's Children's Center teaches life skills that will help your children manage and identify their emotions. While we must consistently enforce reasonable behavioral limitations, we are also sensitive to each child's ability to make positive behavior choices and to be responsible for their own choices and actions.

St. Paul's Children's Center uses the "I Care Rules for Little Children" Philosophy:

1. We listen to each other.
2. Hands are for helping, not hurting.
3. We use "I care" language.
4. We care about each other's feelings.
5. We are responsible for what we say and do.

Licensing prohibits children from being subjected to discipline, which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest, or toileting. Childcare personnel never use physical punishment such as shaking or hitting and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion. Childcare personnel never use threats or derogatory remarks and neither threaten to withhold or withhold food as a form of discipline.

Reasons for expulsion, suspension, or dismissal:

Every effort will be made to prevent the expulsion or dismissal of children from our program. However, St. Paul Children's Center reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for reasons, including, but not limited to:

- Non-payment or excessive late payment of fees/tuition.
- Failure to adhere to policies and procedures as outlined in our Parent Handbook.
- The parent/guardian exhibits behavior which is detrimental to the health and well-being of the children and staff in a classroom or negatively interferes with the normal functioning of the classroom and/or program. This includes but is not limited to vulgarity, intimidation, harassment, or violation of childcare licensing regulations.
- Failure of the child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time; the child may not be ready developmentally at this time.
- The child has needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.
- The child's behavior threatens the health & safety of him/herself, other children, or staff.
- Bullying or hurting other children or staff (biting, pushing, kicking, punching, cursing, threatening others physically or with words etc.)
- Other – at the discretion of the Director

Proactive Actions taken by center staff:

- Redirect the child from any negative behaviors which are not safe
- Use positive reinforcement & model appropriate behaviors
- Maintain developmentally appropriate teacher-to-child ratio for close supervision
- Observe and track patterns to identify triggers
- Consistently use positive methods & language while applying consequences for rules
- Celebrate appropriate behaviors

Discipline/ Expulsion Policy (cont'd)

Next Steps:

- The Director will be consulted and may speak with the child if needed
- Confidential incident report is written and signed by parents/guardian
- If inappropriate behaviors persist, the family may be called to pick up their child for the day.
- Staff will partner with families to develop positive behavior support strategies for continuity between home and school.
- If the behavior does not improve upon the child's return to the center, the child may receive a 2-week suspension
- Parent meeting is scheduled to address how to best support the child, through observations, accommodations, and, if necessary, outside agency referrals.
- Should disruptive behaviors persist upon the child's return from suspension, a meeting will be scheduled with parents to discuss the possibility of termination of enrollment in the center.

Steps taken prior to expulsion:

Positive Behavior intervention supports include:

- Screenings or Classroom/environment assessments
- Parents reaching out to inclusion specialists, specialized care teams, mental health consultants where available

Transition to another provider

On the rare occasion it is agreed that our program can no longer meet the needs of a child, a student may be asked to withdraw his/her attendance at St. Paul's Children's Center. The recommendation and decision of the Center is final. St. Paul's Children's Center is limited in its human capital resources and will make reasonable accommodations for learning differences when possible, however we cannot accommodate students who have extraordinary learning differences. If after admission, the educational and/or behavioral needs of a student exceed what would be considered reasonable, the student may need to be separated from St. Paul's Children's Center. This decision will be made for the student's educational and/or behavioral needs to be fully met in another educational setting.

Communication: Fostering positive relationships with families

Our families...

- Partner with teachers; communicate regularly with staff to ensure consistency in guidance between home and school.
- Understand and acknowledge that children are learning appropriate behavior skills and that we strive to serve the individual needs of each child while ensuring the safety of all children.
- Know that to best serve children, parents may need to partner with local professionals to help give a child the best foundation for their social, emotional, and academic success.

There are in the end three things that last: faith, hope, and love, and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13 9

Biting Policy

St. Paul's Children's Center strives to maintain a safe environment for all children. On occasion, biting does happen. We understand that biting is developmentally appropriate for young children who are teething and/or do not yet have the verbal vocabulary to express their emotions. St. Paul's Children's Center maintains these guidelines when biting is observed:

- Staff immediately address the child who bit and redirect the child to a safe place.
- Staff will address the needs of the child who was bitten and wash the affected area with soap and water and /or apply ice on the injury.
- Staff will discuss with both children that biting hurts.
- Staff will implement positive redirection strategies to help encourage positive choices.
- Staff will confidentially report the incident /accident for both the child who bit and for the child who was bitten.
- If the skin of the bitten child is broken, the parent will be notified to seek medical care.

St. Paul's Children's Center believes parent /teacher communication and teamwork is best for your child. Staff will monitor all biting incidents for development of a pattern. When the following behaviors are noted, we will schedule a parent conference to discuss alternative positive behavior reinforcement strategies.

- When biting becomes a "first resort" behavior.
- When a habit begins to form. (2 weeks of intermittent biting)
- When biting occurs more than once each day.

If a child bites multiple times and based on the center's Discipline Policy:

- The child will visit the Director's office who will determine if it is in the child's best interest to remain in their classroom.
- If a child uses biting behavior three times or more in one day, the parents will be notified for early pick up and the child will be sent home for the remainder of the day. This is for the safety of the children in the classroom.
- A meeting will be scheduled with the parents/guardians to discuss strategies
- A behavior plan may be implemented, including additional interventions such as suspension or expulsion (see Discipline Policy pages 21 and 22 of Parent Handbook for details)

** Please communicate all major life changes and routine changes to St. Paul's Children's Center. Even the slightest change such as a child not sleeping well through the night or a parent being out of town, may affect your child's behavior at school. **

*Whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God.
1Corinthians 10:31*

Volunteers

All volunteers must be at least 18 years of age and are required to pass a background check, get fingerprinted, and complete Safe Environment, Blood Borne Pathogens, and all required Pinellas County Licensing Board courses. Volunteers may not work more than 10 hours a month. Volunteers who are family members or friends of people who have children in the center are not permitted to volunteer in the same classroom with that child. It is up to the discretion of the director to place volunteers in classrooms based on the needs of the center. For information, please contact the St. Paul's Children's Center director.

Mandated Safe Environment Training

The US Council of Catholic Bishops met in Dallas in November of 2002, to deal directly with the topic of protecting children, youth, and vulnerable adults in our communities. From this meeting, the Bishops issued The Charter for Protection of Children and Young People, which mandates training for individuals who come into contact with children and youth. This training helps individuals recognize, prevent, and report child abuse, including sexual abuse. Attendance at Safe Environment Training is mandated for anyone in ministry – priests, deacons, religious, educators, parents, volunteers, and church staff... anyone who will have a supervisory role with youth. The Safe Environment curriculum at St. Paul's Children's Center is based on the standards and benchmarks of the programs in each classroom.

Policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Diocese of St. Petersburg policy for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults, is available on-line at <https://www.dosp.org/safe-environment> The Diocese of St. Petersburg Code of Conduct for those working with youth is also posted on-line for your reference. Copies may be obtained in St. Paul's Parish Office.

Child Abuse Reporting

If you are a victim of abuse, or you suspect that a child or a vulnerable adult is being abused by anyone, Call law enforcement (911) or the Florida Abuse Hotline (Department of Children and Families) at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873) or report abuse online at the Florida Department of Children and Families website. To report abuse within the Diocese of St. Petersburg involving church personnel (clergy, a church employee or volunteer) or a contractor/vendor, you may also call our Victim Assistance Coordinator, John Lambert, L.C.S.W., via the diocesan Victim Assistance Hotline at 1-866-407-4505 or via email to jl@dosp.org. Please include your first and last name, your contact information and how you would prefer to be contacted. Or you can write to: Bishop Gregory L. Parkes, P.O. Box 40200, St. Petersburg, FL 33743 (Mark "CONFIDENTIAL- FOR THE BISHOP ONLY" on the envelope) For more information on reporting, visit <https://www.dosp.org/safe-environment/how-to-file-an-abuse-complaint/>

Department of Children and Families

The State of Florida requires all staff of any childcare facility to be on the lookout for, and report any and all suspected cases of child abuse to the State of Florida. St. Paul's Children's Center staff members are mandated reporters and are obligated to report any suspected cases of child abuse and / or neglect to their Director or other designated supervisor immediately.

St. Paul's Children's Center will reasonably cooperate with regard to any investigation by the Department of Children and Families ("DCF") pertaining to allegations of child abuse. Since the school is on private property, DCF will be precluded from reasonable access to students at school unless consent of a parent or guardian is obtained. Absent such consent, the school will cooperate in allowing DCF to have access to students if DCF obtains, according to law, an appropriate court order or other legal authority, such as the presence of a police officer or deputy sheriff.

Safe Sleep Practices/ Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma) Policy

All childcare personnel, including substitutes and volunteers of St. Paul's Children's Center shall review the training regarding guidance on safe sleep practices, preventing shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma, as well as take the DCF Safe Sleep Practices for Child Care course prior to working with any children in the center. Our goal is to maintain safer sleep environments and to prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome/ AHT by taking proactive steps to reduce the risk of SIDS and prevent abuse in our infants and toddlers. To do so, St. Paul's Children's Center will implement and follow all guidelines as listed in our Safe Sleep Practices Policy.

St. Paul's Children's Center's Safe Sleep Practices/ Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome (Abusive Head Trauma) Policy is available for review in the Director office by request.

Universal Safety Precautions

To comply with federal law attempting to control the spread of disease by exposure to blood and other bodily fluids, the staff, faculty, and students receive training on a yearly basis in the use of those health practices of good hygiene and protection that significantly reduce or eliminate the exposure to blood borne pathogens. These practices are called "universal precautions."

Asbestos Management Plan

The Facilities/Maintenance Department maintains the St. Paul's Children's Center, St. Petersburg Asbestos Management Plan, which is available in the Maintenance Office for review upon request.

Emergency Procedures

St. Paul's Children's Center will work closely with St. Paul Catholic School and the Diocese of St. Petersburg to determine any emergency closing procedures and communicate any changes to parents/ guardians.

Inclement Weather Procedures

St. Paul's Children's Center is committed to protecting the safety of our students and staff. During times when severe weather and/or lightning is in the immediate area, all efforts are made to help ensure the safety of students and staff. Due to the unforeseen circumstances in inclement weather, we may delay the process of dismissal if there is an imminent danger in the area or may keep children at school beyond regular hours if threatening weather is occurring, such as a tornado warning. If St. Paul's Children's Center experiences extreme weather conditions causing power failure, we may contact parents for early pick up. We cannot operate if conditions do not comply with Pinellas County Child Care Licensing Rules and Regulations, such as power outages causing extreme temperatures.

Pre-Hurricane Procedures

St. Paul Children's Center will follow the decision of the Diocese of St. Petersburg in regard to school closings in preparation for a hurricane.

Post-Hurricane Procedures

St. Paul Children's Center will assess our situation and make a decision by 3:00 p.m. for the following day.

Parents will be notified of any emergency closings of our center via email or by direct phone call or text from the director's personal cell phone.

Emergency Drills

St. Paul's Children's Center conducts monthly emergency drills with our staff and students using our written plan of Emergency Procedures. The specific drills practiced are:

Fire Drills:

Students are taught where and how to exit the building in case of fire. For fire drills or fire emergencies, the fire alarm will signal to evacuate the building. Teachers regularly instruct students regarding specific procedures.

Inclement Weather/ Off-Site Emergency Drills:

For Inclement Weather Drills including Tornados/ Tropical Storms/ Hurricanes and other serious Inclement Weather OR Off-Site Emergency Drills such as Toxic Fumes, Bomb Threats, and Chemical Evacuations; Students are taught to exit the classrooms to the designated meeting spot. Teachers regularly instruct students regarding specific procedures.

Lockdown / Lock-in (Shelter in Place) Drills:

Students are taught procedures for taking shelter in the building in the event of a potentially dangerous person, active shooter, or weapon on campus. Students are taught the procedures for modified lockdown in the event of a dangerous situation or person in close proximity to the school. Teachers regularly instruct students and practice drills regarding specific procedures for what to do or where to go in the event that we evacuate the building.

NOTE: St. Paul's Children's Center may not let anyone, including parents/ guardians, in or out of the building during a lockdown, lock-in drill OR any true emergency event.

*St. Paul's Children's Center's Universal Safety Precautions including all Emergency Planning and Response Manual is available for review in the Director office by request.

*Give thanks to the Lord, who is good, whose love endures forever.
Psalm 118:1*

Technology Policy

Blogs: Engagement in online blogs such as, but not limited to, Facebook®, Instagram®, Twitter® or other social media platform may result in disciplinary actions (including expulsion) if the content of the student's or parent's blog includes defamatory comments regarding St. Paul's Children's Center, St. Paul Catholic School, the faculty, other students, or the parish.

Cell Phones: At no time during business hours are parents and staff to communicate with each other via cell phone, this includes texting. Teachers have strict cell phone limitations, and parents are required to call the office to leave a message. It's very important that the staff is not distracted while caring for the children.

Cyberbullying: St. Paul's Children's Center attempts to provide a safe environment for all individuals. Threats made against the physical or emotional well-being of any individual are taken very seriously. Any students or parents making such threats (seriously or in jest online) face suspension and/or expulsion.

Social Media/ Instagram/Facebook/Other:

Engagement in online social media such as, but not limited to, Instagram®, Twitter®, Facebook®, etc. may result in disciplinary actions (including expulsion). Negative or defamatory comments, photos, or captions on a student or parent's Instagram/Facebook/Other online account that depict the children's center, the faculty, other students, the school, or the parish in a negative or defamatory way may result in the children of the parent being separated from the school. If a student is involuntarily separated from the school, there will be no reimbursement for tuition and/or fees. Parents should refrain from creating a class/grade social media page without the written authorization of the Director.

Right to Amend

St. Paul's Children's reserves the right to amend this Handbook at any time. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via e-mail communication.

In Closing

The staff at St. Paul's Children's Center is looking forward to providing a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment where learning and fun go hand in hand!



Parent Handbook and Policies Acknowledgment Form

All parents/ guardians are required to review and return a signed copy of this form.

1. I/We agree that my child's health records are shared with St. Paul's Children's Center teachers and staff, as applicable to my child's involvement in the program.
2. I/We understand that the notarized Emergency Medical Release, which includes any allergies my child may have, would be shared with emergency medical personnel in the event of an accident or health concern related to my child and we give permission to consult child's physician/health resource in case of emergency if parent/guardian cannot be reached.
3. I/We understand that while we do not accept Religious Exemptions with regards to immunizations, an enrolled child may be under immunized if we have a doctor's note confirming their pending appointment.
4. I/We agree to provide all instructions from my child's medical professionals for any special health needs such as allergies, chronic illness (e.g. asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes).
5. I/We consent to visibly posting my child's food allergy information, his/her medical plan (steps the physician has outlined in the event of a reaction), to ensure that all staff are aware of his/her special needs.
6. I/We agree to notify the center in writing upon any change to the family's address, phone, email or emergency contacts.
7. I/We have read "The Flu, A Guide for Parents" brochure (included in Registration Forms and posted on our website).
8. I/We have received a copy of the center's Discipline/Expulsion Policy. (Located in the Parent Handbook and posted on our website).
9. I/We have read and understand the center's Admissions and Registration Policy. (Located in the Parent Handbook and posted on our website).
10. I/We have read and understand the center's Harassment Policy. (Located in Parent Handbook/ posted on website).
11. I/We have received and read a copy of the center's Food and Nutrition Policy, which addresses food safety, food allergens, and appropriate nutritional guidelines for infants/toddlers with regards to lunch and snack requirements (Located in the Parent Handbook and posted on our website).
12. I/ We understand that twice a year in September and April, we will receive a copy of & will be required to sign an acknowledgement form for the "Distracted Driver" Flyer developed by the Prevention Unit of the Office of Family and Community Services.

I/We have read the 2026-2027 Parent Handbook and agree to abide by all guidelines of St. Paul's Children's Center Policies and Procedures as stated. St. Paul's Children's reserves the right to amend this Handbook at any time. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via e-mail communication.

SIGNATURES REQUIRED – BOTH PARENTS AND/OR GUARDIANS

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____