

St. Mark's Nursery School
PARENTS' HANDBOOK



St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church
4200 Londonderry Road Harrisburg, PA 17109
(717) 652 - 6700 Ext. 3
E-mail: stmarknurseryschool@gmail.com
www.stmarksharrisburg.org/nursery
Pamela Baranowski Director



NURSERY SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT:

"The mission of St. Mark's Nursery is to provide a quality Christian oriented affordable preschool education to members of the community without regard to race, color, or national or ethnic origin."

OUR PROGRAM:

St. Mark's Nursery School has a developmental emphasis:

PHYSICAL - to develop the ability to move, see, and hear, using:

1. Large and fine motor skills
2. Outdoor Play
3. Art (cutting, coloring, etc.)

LANGUAGE and SPEECH - to develop the ability to talk and express needs using:

1. Music and instruments
2. Dramatic Play
3. Story time

SOCIAL and EMOTIONAL - to develop the ability to eat, dress, and take care of self through:

1. Responsibility for jobs and property
2. Toileting
3. Clean- Up

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT - to develop an ability to think and learn through:

1. Cooking
2. Science
3. Pre-reading activities
4. Pre-math activities

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT - through Bible stories, songs, and related crafts and games we will teach basic Christian philosophy.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

1. Hands-on learning
2. Age-appropriate activities
3. Play-as-we learn philosophy
4. Structured group time
5. Fence enclosed playground
6. Christian curriculum
7. Secured facility
8. Certified, experienced teachers
9. Emphasis on creativity
10. Inclusive policy
11. Encouraged parent involvement

LICENSED STATEMENT:

Though religiously exempt from licensure we self-regulate to PA state standards and regulations for early education programs.

NURSERY SCHOOL OPERATING HOURS:

Our “**Little Lambs Class**” is for children 2 years of age
Tuesday and Thursday’s, 9:15 AM - 11:15 AM

Our “**Lamb Class**” is for children 3 years of age
Tuesday and Thursday’s, 9:00 AM - 11: 30 AM

Our “**Sheep Class**” is for children 4 through 5 years of age
Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9:00 AM - 11:30 AM

A limited number of **Scholarships** are available to qualifying families.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Our Nursery School calendar is designed to be “friendly” with the Central Dauphin School calendar. Nursery School begins after Labor Day and is completed before Memorial Day.

POLICIES and PROCEDURES:

ADMISSION POLICY

1. St. Mark's Nursery School does not discriminate in providing services to children and their families on the basis of race, color, national origin, political beliefs, or marital status.
2. Children must be class age by September 1.
3. Please provide the school with a copy of any custody papers, which will be kept in the child's confidential file.
4. Registrations for current St. Mark's Nursery School families and active are accepted February 1st - 7th.
5. Beginning February 15th registrations are accepted from the general public.
6. Complete a Registration Form and return it with the registration fee. This fee is neither refundable nor applicable toward tuition.
7. The "Early Bird" registration fee is available between February 1st and May 30th. After June 1st, the regular fee is charged.
8. If openings remain in a class, new students may register at any time during the school year, at the discretion of the Director. The registration fee will be required regardless of when the registration takes place.
9. If a child is registered to start class before the 15th of the month, full tuition will be charged. If a child is registered to start class after the 15th of the month, half a month's tuition will be charged.
10. Families and prospective students shall schedule an appointment with the Director to take a tour of the school to learn about our curriculum, philosophy and policies.
11. Complete all forms and return with the first month's non-refundable tuition due on July 1st.
12. Complete the Emergency Contact Form.
13. Attend Student Play Day and Orientation in September.

TUITION POLICY

1. The first tuition installment is due July 1st and is NON-REFUNDABLE. Beginning in September, payments are due on the 1st of each month (September through April).

2. Checks for tuition should be made payable to St. Mark's Nursery School. A locked mailbox is located outside the Nursery School 3 & 4 year old classroom for tuition payments. Do not give checks to the Director or your child's teacher. NO CASH for tuition or registration will be accepted. If cash is given we can not be responsible for lost payment or making change.

3. A **\$5.00 late fee** (per week) will be added to any tuition received after the 15th of the month (September - April). If your family experiences unforeseen financial burdens and you need to work out an alternative to the monthly tuition schedule, contact the Director immediately. Limited financial aid may be available. If you fail to contact the Director, you are jeopardizing your enrollment as well as accruing late fees.

3. Tuition will not be adjusted for days missed due to illness, vacation or the first two snow days.

4. Children are expected to remain the full year except in unusual circumstances. Two (2) weeks WRITTEN notice must be given before withdrawing a child from Nursery School. Without this notification, an additional month's tuition will be charged.

5. Limited financial assistance may be available through St. Mark's Nursery School Scholarship Fund. Please contact the Director for more information.

6. If receipt is required, please include a note with your monthly payment. The treasurer will send it to you directly.

LATE FEE: IF A CHILD IS NOT PICKED UP BY 11:30, YOU WILL BE ASSESSED A FEE PAYABLE DIRECTLY TO STAFF MEMBERS UPON PICK-UP OF YOUR CHILD. FEE IS \$10 FOR FIRST 15 MINUTES AND \$1 FOR EACH MINUTE THEREAFTER.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

1. Schedule changes will be dictated by the weather decisions made by the Central Dauphin School District. Please listen to the local radio stations and/or watch local TV stations. We will notify you of school delays due to weather or other emergencies on radio stations (WHP 580, River 97.3, Bob 94.9, Kiss 99.3, and TV Channels 21 WHP and UPN-15. A message can be heard by calling the school phone or receive a message through the Remind Program. Our schedule changes will be as follows.
2. If Central Dauphin Schools are closed, St. Mark's Nursery School will be closed also.
3. If Central Dauphin Schools are delayed 1 hour, St. Mark's Nursery School will begin classes at 10:00 AM and will dismiss at regular time.
4. If Central Dauphin School is delayed 2 hours, St. Mark's Nursery School classes will be held from 11:00 AM until 12:30 PM. This is a modified class schedule.
5. If Central Dauphin Schools are dismissed early, St. Mark's Nursery School will close as soon as possible after Central Dauphin Schools announce early dismissal. Parents are expected to pick up their children as soon as possible after being notified.
6. At any time that inclement weather is a consideration, please pick up your child as soon as you feel conditions warrant it.
7. Days are built into our calendar. After two cancellations per two/three day class or three cancellations per four/five day class, make-up days will be scheduled on days or times that your child would normally be out of school. Make-up days will be noted on the school calendar.

HEALTH POLICY

1. If your child becomes ill during school hours, you will be notified immediately. We expect that you or another authorized adult will pick up the child promptly.
2. Therefore, emergency contact information must be kept current at all times. Please inform your child's teacher or the school office immediately of any changes.
3. Please call the school before 9:00 AM to report your child's absence for any reason.
4. Your child should not attend school if:
 - a. your child has a fever of 100.4 degrees or above. Your child may return after being fever-free for 24 hours.
 - b. your child is experiencing vomiting and/or diarrhea episodes. Your child may return after being free of any vomiting and/or diarrhea episodes for 24 hours.
 - c. the child's illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities that the school routinely offers for well children.
 - d. the illness requires more care than the staff can give.
6. In an effort to prevent exposing other children in our care to communicable diseases, it is requested that you notify the Director and/or your child's teacher if your child develops symptoms of a communicable disease. This would be particularly important if your child attended school during the incubation period for the communicable disease.
7. Each child shall have a copy of their most recent immunization records on file. Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping their child's immunizations up-to- date. Exemption from immunization for religious belief or strong personal objection equated to a religious belief shall be documented by a written, signed and dated statement from the child's parent/guardian. Exemption from immunization for reasons of medical need shall be documented by a written, signed and dated statement from the child's health care provider. Statements shall be kept in the child's record.

SAFETY PROCEDURES

1. Emergency telephone numbers, poison control numbers and emergency procedures are posted by each telephone. If a serious accident occurs, the staff will immediately apply emergency first aid, call 911, and then call the parent/guardians. Families are responsible for all emergency transportation charges and all other charges not covered by insurance.
2. Minor accidents will be handled according to accepted first aid procedure. Parents/guardians may be notified by telephone if the Director or teacher feels it is warranted. An Accident Report will be completed.
3. Regular fire drills are held. Weather emergency drills are held in October and March.
4. Our Child Protection program is designed to protect the children from any potential harm, while also safeguarding the adults who teach and volunteer from potential false allegations of abuse. A copy of the Child Protection Policy procedures can be found in the church office.
5. The staff of St. Mark's Nursery School is required to follow the policy and procedures of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church. They have completed an application and interview, written and/or verbal references; have clear Clearances, and annual training.
6. Anyone who wishes to volunteer as a substitute teacher's aide in the classroom must adhere to the Child Protection Policy. You will complete a Volunteer Form, obtain clearances.
7. The staff is mandated by the state to report any suspicion of child abuse to the Child Line and Abuse Registry and subsequently to the Child Protection Service unit.

FAMILY/SCHOOL INFORMATION

SCHOOL/HOME COMMUNICATIONS

1. Attend Orientation for you and your child in September. You will receive a packet of information about our school at Orientation Day.
2. A Student Directory will be sent home in your child's book bag in September.
3. Monthly Calendars and Newsletters will be sent home in your child's book bag
4. Please check the Parent Bulletin Board (in the dismissal area) for updates, changes, sign-up sheets, etc.) (Car-pool drivers, please tell other parents)
- 5.. You may communicate briefly with your child's teachers during drop-off and pick-up times. However, these are very busy times and are not always conducive to conversations. This is more of an opportunity to briefly touch base and make arrangements for further discussion if necessary.
6. Attend an March Parent Teacher Conference. Your child's teacher will share a portfolio of examples of your child's work and development throughout the school year.
7. Like St. Mark's Nursery School, on Facebook to keep up with news and events.
8. If you need to reach the teacher by phone during school time, call the nursery school number (717) 672 - 6700 ext. 3. The answering machine will pick up calls when the teacher is not available.

OUR SCHOOL DAY

1. Arrive At School

- a. Walk your child into the church (use the back door)
- b. Help your child hang up his/her coat and put book bag in its designated place. Coat and book bag should be labeled with the child's name.
- c. No early arrivals will be permitted. Please wait in the hall until the doors are opened at 8:55 a.m.
- d. Call us if a student will be absent
- e. Tell us on paper your car pool plans.
- f. Prepare your child to say good-bye. Explain what will happen, follow through, reassure your child that you will see him or her after school, THEN GO.
- g. The church has a security system for the church property. For this reason, the nursery school will use the rear door to enter and leave the school.
- h. Our school day will begin at 9:00 a.m. A staff member will be on hand to greet you and your child upon arrival. However, should you arrive later than 9:00 a.m. please just help your child settle in and open the door so that your child may join us.
- i. All visitors and volunteers must sign-in.

2. DISMISSAL FROM SCHOOL

- a. At 11:15 or 11:30 a.m. we will open the classroom door and we will dismiss the children one by one.
- b. Staff must be notified if a child is to leave with an adult unfamiliar to the staff. Please put in writing the person's first and last names; identification will be required before the child is released. Verbal (telephoned) requests for release will only be accepted on an emergency basis.
- c. Please call if you will be late for pick-up. A late fee will be charged.
- d. **LATE FEE: IF A CHILD IS NOT PICKED UP BY 11:30, YOU WILL BE ASSESSED A FEE PAYABLE DIRECTLY TO STAFF MEMBERS UPON PICK-UP OF**

YOUR CHILD. FEE IS \$10 FOR FIRST 15 MINUTES AND \$1 FOR EACH MINUTE THEREAFTER.

e. To exit building, you must press green button on your left and handle bar at the same time.

3. CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

a. We have rules that encourage good manners, being kind to others, sharing, and cooperation. The staff makes every attempt to reinforce them in loving and positive ways.

b. The following behaviors are considered inappropriate:

- Disrespect for other people and property.
- Making or bringing toys representing weapons or violence
- Threats against the staff or other children

c. As part of the learning process a “TIME APART” (sitting in a chair for a short period of time or removing a child from an activity or event) may be used as a consequence of habitual disregard of class rules. This time away from friends helps to give a child a chance to get away from a problem for a while, or gives a child a chance to recover if he/she is over-stimulated or overwhelmed. If a child is given a “time apart,” it does not always mean he/she is being punished.

4. What to Bring to School

a. Parents should bring a positive attitude and pass it on to their children

b. A book bag must be provided for your child. Please bring it every day so that all your child’s papers are brought home. Label it so that the name can be easily seen. Please make sure it is large enough so that it can carry 9”x12” projects home safely.

c. If special items are needed, you will be notified on the calendar or on the bulletin board.

5. What Not to bring to School

a. Toys from home. If your child insists, they may bring them as far as the coat rack and place them in book bags. We tell the children we are keeping the toys safe until they go home.

b. Valuables. Occasionally, you may have a special item that is related to a lesson or special activity that you would like to share with the class. Please make sure the teacher knows about the item and agrees to your bringing it. (No surprises please)

c. Sick children do not belong in school. If it is a party day or special event, we'll try to arrange to send home treats with someone.

6. Clothing

a. Casual or play clothes are recommended for school. Choose clothing that could possibly be stained with paint, glue, drink, etc. For your child's safety, please have them wear closed toe shoes and very limited jewelry. Children should have appropriate attire for each season. Articles, which might be left at school, should be properly labeled with your child's name..

b. Children ages 3 and older are expected to take care of their bathroom needs. All children should bring a complete change of clothes (pants, top, underwear and socks) in a zip lock bag in their backpack each day. Children in pull ups or diapers should also include wipes

STUDENT OF THE DAY

1. The student of the day will bring a snack, and show and tell.

2. For show and tell, students are invited to bring a toy, picture, educational item, souvenir, etc. **NO GUNS OR VIOLENT TOYS ARE PERMITTED.** This is in keeping with the Christian values that we stress. No live animals without prior permission from director.

3. **Snack Policy:** We ask each family to provide a nutritious snack for the children and teachers in your child's class. **Snack Procedures:** Your child's snack day will be noted on the monthly calendar provided by the teacher. The school provides the napkins, cups and water. Families should provide any spoons, plates/bowls and serving utensils needed for your snack. A refrigerator is available

Healthy food suggestions:

Fruits/Vegetables - grapes (cut in half), carrot sticks, apple slices (no skin on for 2's)

Milk/Cheese/Yogurt - cheese cubes, string cheese, pudding, yogurt, Ice Cream

Grains - Cereal (Cheerios, Chex, graham crackers, pretzels, popcorn (No popcorn 2's.)

5. The Nursery School is peanut and nut-free. All food should be in a closed original package that includes a label with the ingredients. No foods with peanuts, tree nuts or sesame seeds should be included.

6. It is the parent's responsibility to alert staff if you have not introduced your child to certain foods. Please put in writing the specific foods not to be given.
7. From time to time the nursery school curriculum involves cooking for other activities involving foods. These will be noted on your monthly calendar and newsletter. If there is a problem, please notify a staff member in writing.
8. If your child is sick on his/her snack day, please call and let the school know that you will be unable to get the snack to school. We have a supply of snacks that are used in such cases.
9. We love to celebrate birthday parties. Your child will be assigned a snack day close to their actual birthday. Children with summer birthdays will be assigned a day near the end of the school year. You may send a special birthday snack that your child chooses.
10. Most children in this age group do not eat cupcakes or cake, so no birthday cake, please consider alternative snacks. You may send in a special treat or goodie bag for birthday
11. Invitations to parties may be distributed at school if all students in the class are invited

HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

We celebrate many holidays during the year, both religious (Easter and Christmas) and secular (Trick or Treat, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day) Although our emphasis during the religious holidays is on the Christian aspect of the holiday (teaching the children that Bible stories are true stories), the children will be exposed to Santa and the Easter bunny. During the secular holidays the children will be exposed to the fun of dressing up, inviting grandparents to school, cupids, and hunting the leprechaun. We give children the opportunity to stretch their imaginations through make-believe and fantasy.

At St. Mark's Nursery School we have a costume parade and party at the end of October. We understand that many other customs of Halloween are not in keeping with our biblical nature. At our costume parade and parties we ask that you avoid costumes, games and food that depict scary, evil or violent characters including weapons of any kind.

For Christmas, the emphasis is on the birth of Christ, rather than Santa Claus. Our theme is giving, rather than receiving. Children will be asked to participate in a Christmas donation for two different organizations.

For Valentine's Day the children learn about sharing with friends through a Valentine exchange, party and special art activities.

On St. Patrick's Day the children follow the "foot prints" of the leprechaun in their search for the pot of gold. The reward for their search throughout the building is hearing a story and receiving a piece of "gold".

During Easter, the emphasis is on Jesus is alive and is always with us. We share the idea of "new life" in the form of eggs, baby chicks and rabbits. An Easter Egg Hunt is a favorite part of this celebration.

PARTY HELPERS

We ask that each parent sign up to help with at least one party or special event, (Clearances are needed in order to volunteer.) Scheduled parties are:

- Halloween
- Christmas
- Valentine's Day
- Easter Party
- Carnival Day
- End of School Party

Siblings are NOT permitted to visit during parties (exceptions would be non-mobile infants in infant carriers).

FIELD TRIPS

Parents/Guardians will be informed of trips and permission slips will be sent home for each trip. For class field trips, teachers will arrange for one additional chaperone per class (must have completed Clearances). For family field trips, parents/guardians are in attendance at the site. For class field trips, parents/guardians drop off children at the site. All transportation to and from the field trip site will be provided by families.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

BOOK CLUB ORDERS

Approximately each month during the school, we offer the opportunity to purchase books from Scholastic book clubs. Participation in this activity is entirely optional for you. The school makes no profit, but we do receive free books based on the amount of books purchased. These free books are placed in the classrooms for the benefit of your children. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO Scholastic Books.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR

Volunteers organize and run the annual book fair. The school earns books and money towards equipment.

FUNDRAISING PROJECTS

R&K SUBS (Sub & Pretzel Sale)

Each each year (fall) St. Mark's Nursery School has a sandwich sale. Families can sell subs, and help distribute subs on pick-up day.

Butter Braids

Each each year (fall) St. Mark's Nursery School has a pastry sale. Families can sell pastries, and help distribute on pick-up day.

School Pictures

Each fall we offer families the opportunity to have their children's pictures taken, along with a class picture. There is no obligation to purchase the photo package.. The school receives a portion of the sales.

Bird Dog Program

Each fall and spring we participate in teaching poison/medication safety. They teach the children a "promise on poison safety" and talk about what to do if finding different poisons. The school receives an incentive.

Bunny Breakfast

A pancake breakfast with the Easter Bunny held the Saturday two weeks before Easter.

EMERGENCY GUIDE FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF St. Mark's Nursery School

These procedures are to assure you of our concern for the safety and welfare of children attending our school. Our Emergency Plan provides for response to all types of emergencies. Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

1. Modified Operation: May include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or building problems (such as utility disruptions) that make it unsafe for children but may be necessary in a variety of situations. For severe weather delays we will follow Central Dauphin delay or closing:

- CD closed: St. Mark's Nursery School is closed
- CD on a one hour delay: St. Mark's opens at 10:00 AM. Dismissal at 12:00 PM.
- CD on a two hour delay: St. Mark's opens at 11:00 AM. Dismissal at 12:30 PM.
- CD has early closing: No after school activities.

2. Immediate evacuation: Students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility (playground) in the event of a fire, etc.

3. In-place sheltering: Sudden occurrences, such as weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response. Students will be moved to hallway by two year old classroom.

4. Building Evacuation: Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area.

In this case, children will be taken to the following location:
UPMC Community Hospital (Front Lobby)

- Parents/Guardians will be notified of the situation through television and radio stations.
- If possible, parents/guardians will be called personally by telephone with
Therefore, it is essential that you provide telephone numbers where you can be reached, and keep your Emergency Contact numbers current.
- Parents/Guardians or others authorized on the Emergency Contact sheets will pick children up at the Relocation Site. Remember to bring a picture ID.

5. Community Evacuation: In the event that an evacuation of the Harrisburg area is designated by government officials.

- Radio & television stations will be informed of the evacuation.
- If possible, parents/guardians will be notified personally by telephone.
- Parents/Guardians or other persons authorized on the Emergency Contact sheets must pick children up at the School immediately.
- The Director will remain at St. Mark's Nursery School until all children have been picked up. Remember to bring a picture ID.

We may contact the following local television stations about any of the emergency actions listed above.

WGAL - Channel 8 - School Watch

WHP - Channel 21 - Storm Watch

WHTM 27 - Channel 27 - Snow Watch

We ask that you not call during the emergency. This will keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information.

A copy of the Emergency contact form that includes those authorized to pick up your child, is a part of our emergency and evacuation kit. We urge you NOT to attempt to make different arrangements during an emergency. This will only create additional confusion and divert staff from their assigned emergency duties.

In order to assure the safety of your children and our staff, I ask for your understanding and cooperation. Should you have additional questions regarding our emergency operating procedures please feel free to contact the Director, Pamela Baranowski, 717-652-6700 Ext. 3 or stmarknurseryschool@gmail.com