



# **ST. MARK PRESCHOOL**

## **Handbook**

**2023 – 2024**

St. Mark Preschool  
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# Welcome to St. Mark Preschool

We are happy that you are sharing your child with us, and hope that his or her preschool experience will be an enjoyable and meaningful one. Working together we can help your child develop his or her full potential.

St. Mark has a long history of preschool education for young children dating back to the late 1940s. It started as a Kindergarten, then a nursery school, and now a preschool. We renewed our commitment with a new beginning in September 2003 with the opening of a preschool for three and four-year-old children.

**St. Mark Preschool admits students of any race, color, or national or ethnic origin to all of the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, and athletic or other school-administered programs.**

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# Mission Statement

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with information concerning the program(s) in which your child will be participating. Throughout our programs for children ages 3-5 years, we hope to provide you with an experience that will leave you and your child with happy memories as well as provide a basis for future education.

Our purpose is to introduce your child to a friendly, safe, and non-competitive learning environment where each child can become self-confident and enjoy learning. We also stress the nurture of beginning relationships away from the family structure. While providing a learning experience, we plan to give your child opportunities to associate socially with other children and to learn to relate to adults other than his or her own parents.

This preschool is a non-denominational program provided for the benefit of any eligible child. It is a ministry of the people of St. Mark Lutheran Church and is administered by an ad hoc committee (Preschool Committee) of the Christian Education Committee. The school is operated on a non-profit basis and supported solely by registration, monthly tuition fees, fundraisers, and the generosity of the people of St. Mark.



## Preschool Staff

- Allison Wentz** – Co-Director and Teacher 3-Year-Old Classes
- Idonia Klunk** – Co-Director and Teacher 4-Year-Old Classes
- Heather Gorczynski** – Teacher’s Assistant 3-Year-Old Classes
- Mandy Wasserman** – Teacher’s Assistant 4-Year-Old Classes
- Karen Amoss** – Teacher’s Aide 3-Year-Old Tues./Thurs. Class
- Lauren Hammersla** – Teacher’s Aide 4-Year-Old AM Class
- Rev. Kirk Griffin** – Pastor
- Kathy Gates** – Treasurer

## **3-Year-Old Class**

### **(3/4-Year-Old Program)**

**Who is eligible?** Children who have reached the age of at least 3 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current program year are invited to join this program. Children must be toilet trained.

**When does the class meet?** There are two class sessions. One class meets on Monday and Wednesday mornings and the other class meets on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Each class begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 11:15 a.m. The school year begins in September and ends in May.

**How large are the classes?** Class size is limited to a maximum of 8 children for the Monday/Wednesday class. There will be 1 qualified teacher and 1 teacher assistant for the Monday/Wednesday class. Class size is limited to a maximum of 12 children for the Tuesday/Thursday class. There will be 1 qualified teacher and 2 teacher assistants for the Tuesday/Thursday class.

### **What are the costs?**

**Registration Fee:** There is a \$35.00 registration fee. This registration fee is non-refundable and is due at the time you register your child in the preschool. This fee will hold a place in the class for your child for the school year. The fee is used for purchasing supplies, materials, equipment, and to cover other start-up costs prior to the September opening.

**Monthly Tuition Fee:** There will be nine non-refundable monthly tuition payments of \$94 or \$846 per year. The first payment is due **August 1<sup>st</sup>**. The eight remaining payments will be due by the first class of each month thereafter. The last tuition payment is due the first class of April. We accept cash or checks. Please make checks payable to St. Mark Preschool.

**Late Payments:** Since the smooth operation of the preschool is financed primarily through tuition, it is **IMPORTANT** that the payment is made on time. **If tuition is not paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, a late fee of \$10 may be added to the tuition fee.** The late fee amounts paid will be added to our Scholarship Fund.

## 4-Year-Old Class

### (4/5-Year-Old Program – Pre-Kindergarten)

**Who is eligible?** Children who have reached the age of at least 4 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current program year are invited to join this program. The curriculum of this class is geared to children who will enter kindergarten the following school year. Children must be toilet trained.

**When does the class meet?** This class is held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. There are two sessions. The AM Class begins at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 11:45 a.m. The PM Class begins at 12:30 p.m. and ends at 3:15 p.m. The school year begins in September and ends in May.

**How large is the class?** Class size is limited to a maximum of 17 children for the AM class. There will be 1 qualified teacher and 2 teacher assistants for the AM class. Class size is limited to a maximum of 11 children for the PM class. There will be 1 qualified teacher and 1 teacher assistant for the PM class.

### **What are the costs?**

**Registration Fee:** There is a \$35.00 registration fee. This registration fee is non-refundable and is due at the time you register your child in the preschool. This fee will hold a place in the class for your child for the school year. The fee is used for purchasing supplies, materials, equipment, and to cover other start-up costs prior to the September opening.

**Monthly Tuition Fee:** There will be nine non-refundable monthly tuition payments of \$176 or \$1,584 per year. The first payment is due **August 1<sup>st</sup>**. The eight remaining payments will be due by the first class of each month thereafter. The last tuition payment is due the first class of April. **All tuition payments must be paid in full by May 15<sup>th</sup> for your child to participate in graduation.** We accept cash or checks. Please make checks payable to St. Mark Preschool.

**Late Payments:** Since the smooth operation of the preschool is financed primarily through tuition, it is **IMPORTANT** that the payment is made on time. **If tuition is not paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, a late fee of \$10 may be added to the tuition fee.** The late fee amounts paid will be added to our Scholarship Fund.

# Scholarships

A limited amount of money to aid tuition costs is available on a first come, first served basis according to need. An application may be picked up at the church office or you can download one at [www.stmarkpreschoolhanover.weebly.com](http://www.stmarkpreschoolhanover.weebly.com). Applications must be returned to the church office Attn: Idonia Klunk by July 15<sup>th</sup>. The amount awarded will be based on need and the amount of money available. **Late applications may be considered if money is still available.**

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## General Information

**Orientation:** A Parent-Child Orientation Session will be held for each class during the week before school begins.

**School Calendar:** A calendar of events for the entire school year will be handed out at the orientation session.

**Curriculum:** Each preschool program has separate and specific units of study appropriate to that age group. During the year, the units of study include the following:

1. Daily organized lessons on the units planned for each class
2. Crafts and artwork
3. Free play
4. Organized play
5. Storytime
6. Musical activities and finger plays
7. Educational games
8. Activities for small and large motor skills
9. Parties and special programs for the various holidays

**Discipline:** Our program is based on a Positive Reinforcement and Behavior Modification model. Positive Reinforcement is finding and verbally praising actions and skills the child is doing right. In other words, by catching the child behaving correctly and praising the “right” actions and skills, the child will know what is expected of him/her. When other children hear the praise for correct performance, children will modify their own behavior to reach the goal. Therefore, good behavior is acknowledged, and a positive atmosphere is built.

**Clothing:** The children should be dressed appropriately for the weather conditions. Please provide adequate outerwear to keep your child warm during outside playtime. If the wind chill temperature is above 32° and the grass/mulch is dry, we may be going outside for playtime. **For your child’s safety, totally closed shoes with rubber soles are highly recommended.** We encourage you to dress your child in clothing that is easy for the child to manage in the bathroom. **Please, no bodysuits, leotards, bib overalls, or other clothing that is difficult for children to handle alone.**

**Masks:** At this time, we are not requiring children or teachers to wear masks on a daily basis. Parents/guardians may opt to have their child wear a mask. If a parent/guardian wants their child to wear a mask, they must provide their child’s mask and it is the parents’/guardians’ responsibility to notify their child’s teacher in writing stating their wishes. The request should be signed and dated. **Please see our information under Illnesses (Page 9) for when a child or teacher would be required to wear a mask for COVID.**

**Show and Tell:** Show and Tell Days will be assigned to each child. Children should bring in one item to share with the class. Suggested items are things from nature, pictures from a place the child has visited, collections, something the child has made, a favorite book, or items about colors, shapes or numbers.

**Field Trips:** The 4-Year-Old Classes may utilize field trips as part of their curriculum. In order for a child to attend a field trip, an adult must be present. These dates will be announced ahead of time in order for you to make arrangements to be present.

**Social Media:** Please be aware that some parents do not want their child to be pictured on social media. Please be conscious of that if you post any pictures from St. Mark Preschool on your social media. You should only post pictures of your child unless you know that it is ok for the other child/children in the picture to be on social media.

**Fundraisers:** During the school year we will be having fundraisers to help fund the preschool. Costs continue to rise so we have these fundraisers to help keep our tuition prices down. We appreciate are families participating in the fundraisers.

# Arrival/Dismissal of Students

## At Arrival:

- Staff will assist children in entering the building at the appropriate drop-off location. We will open the car door to assist the child out of the car.

## At Departure:

- Children will be dismissed as the parent arrives at the end of the school day.
- If the weather is nice, the parent will pick up the child at the playground.
- If the weather is bad, the parent will pick up the child in the hallway adjacent to the fellowship hall.
- Please be on time to pick up your child. Be sure to inform the teacher about carpools because the children will not be released to anyone other than a parent or guardian unless the teacher has been notified. A license with picture identification will be required when an unfamiliar person picks up the child.

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# Snacks

Each family will be asked to provide a snack on a rotating basis. While sweet snacks are acceptable on special occasions, please bring a healthier low sugar snack on regular days such as

- |                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Small pretzels             | Yogurt Tubes      |
| Crackers                   | Teddy Grahams     |
| Granola bars               | Goldfish Crackers |
| Apple slices, grapes, etc. | Fruit Gummies     |

Remember this is only a snack so you only need to send in one small snack per child.

**If your child suffers from any food allergies, please let the teacher know. We recommend that you send in some alternate snacks for them to have if the snack provided to the class is not appropriate for them.**



# Illness

- If you answer yes to any of the following questions, your child should stay home from school.

<b>Within the past 48 hours, has your child experienced any of the following?</b>	
1. Persistent cough	Yes / No
2. Shortness of breath	Yes / No
3. Difficulty breathing	Yes / No
4. Sore throat	Yes / No
5. Fever greater than 100	Yes / No
6. Have you given fever reducing medicine for a fever within the last 48 hours? ( <b>Children may not receive any fever reducing medication 48 hours prior to their arrival to St. Mark Preschool.</b> This policy is necessary to be able to detect any sign of illness that may be masked by the medication. If your child is receiving fever reducing medication, ie. Tylenol, Motrin, Ibuprofen, etc. for teething, ear pain, etc, they must be monitored at home.)	Yes / No
<b>Within the past 24 hours, has your child experienced any of the following?</b>	
7. Nausea and/or vomiting	Yes / No
8. Diarrhea	Yes / No
9. <b>Within the past 5 days, has your child tested positive for COVID-19 or had close contact* with a known COVID-19 patient?</b> (*Close contact = spending longer than 15 minutes less than 6 feet away from the person in question.)	Yes / No

- Should a child become ill while in school, parents will be required to pick up the child immediately. The child will be isolated from the other children until the parent arrives.
- In case of an emergency where no one can be reached, the child will be taken to Hanover Hospital, with all expenses the responsibility of the parents. **A completed Emergency Authorization form with two signatures is required and can be returned no later than the Orientation Session.**

**The following is a list of specific diseases and the time the child must remain out of school.**

**COVID-19** – If your child tests positive for COVID-19 or has been in close contact with a “Known COVID-19 Patient” (KCP), then your child must quarantine (stay home) a minimum of 5 days after testing positive or being in contact with the KCP (the day the child tests positive or has contact with a KCP is considered day zero). The earliest your child may return to school is on the 6<sup>th</sup> day after testing positive or having been in contact with the KCP provided your child has no new symptoms and has been fever free for 48 hours without fever reducing medication. Your child must wear a mask in school on days 6-10. If your child will not wear a mask for any reason, your child must remain home for days 6-10. \*Close contact = spending longer than 15 minutes less than 6 feet away from the person in question.

Parents/guardians must **immediately** notify St. Mark Preschool if their child or anyone in your household tests positive for COVID-19. Please call or text your child’s teacher immediately using the number provided at orientation.

Staff members who are unvaccinated will follow the same guidelines as the children.

Staff members who are vaccinated will follow the same guidelines as the children except staff members who are vaccinated do not need to quarantine after contact with a KCP unless they have symptoms. Staff members who are vaccinated will wear masks on days 1-10 after contact.

If a child or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, families will be notified via text. St. Mark Preschool/St. Mark Lutheran Church will contact the PA Department of Health and follow the procedures they recommend.

**Chicken Pox** – 6 days after the appearance of the last crop of vesicles (6 days from the last pox occurring).

**Strep Infection and/or Tonsillitis** – You must provide written documentation from a doctor clearing them to return to school.

**Head Lice** – You must provide written documentation from a doctor clearing them to return to school.

**Pink Eye** – 24 hours after institution of appropriate therapy prescribed by a doctor.

**Skin Infections** – Impetigo (crusty sores), Scabies (itch), Ringworm – You must provide written documentation from a doctor clearing them to return to school.

**Whooping Cough** – 4 weeks from onset or 7 days from the institution of appropriate therapy prescribed by a doctor.

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## **Inclement Weather Policy**

In the event of inclement weather, your child’s teacher will text you about closings or delays.

### **3-YEAR-OLD CLASS SNOW POLICY**

- If we delay classes due to weather, the 3-Year-Old classes will start at 10:30 a.m. and end at 12:15 p.m.

### **4-YEAR-OLD AM CLASS SNOW POLICY**

- If we delay classes due to the weather, the 4-Year-Old AM class will start at 10:30 a.m. and end at 12:30 p.m.
- If we delay classes due to the weather, the 4-Year-Old PM class will start at 1:15 p.m. and end at 3:15 p.m.

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## **Parent Cooperation**

- The successful operation of St. Mark Preschool will depend on open communication with the families and staff.
- All procedures and protocols are designed to help maintain the safety of our families, children, and staff.
- All updates and changes to any of our policies will be sent out via email or text.