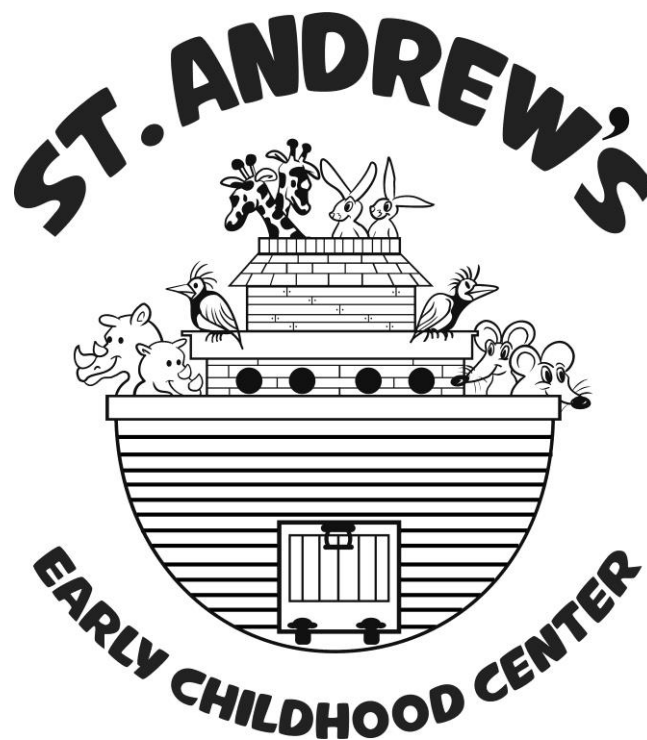


Parent Handbook

2022-2023

Revised September 15, 2022



St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
3008 Old Raleigh Road
Apex, North Carolina 27502

Nancy Wujek, Director
(919) 387-8656
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www.saintandrew.org

St. Andrew ECC Parent Handbook 2022-2023

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Please note the policies/procedures outlined in this Parent Handbook may be altered/changed in response to recommendations from St. Andrew Parish, the Diocese of Raleigh, Wake County Health Department, and/or the CDC. Questions should be referred to the director immediately.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Andrew ECC provides a Christ-centered and nurturing environment where developmentally appropriate, play-based learning opportunities focus on social-emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

PHILOSOPHY

The ECC program strives to provide an environment in which the spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, and physical growth of the child is fostered. Being a Catholic center, we will incorporate Bible stories, prayer, and Christian values into our daily lessons. We hope to emphasize the importance of each unique individual and to promote the value of each child's ideas, feelings, and actions.

Daily activities will focus upon appropriate developmental levels for each age. Intellectual and physical activities (both gross motor and fine motor) will be included each day to challenge and stimulate the growing child. Colors, shapes, letters, and number concepts are taught at your child's level of understanding. Most importantly, the children will learn how to play with their peers in a cooperative manner, learning to share with others and create friendships. We will work together with parents to help each child find happiness and security in his/her ever-expanding world.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

St. Andrew's parishioners receive priority for admission during registration time period. Once our parishioners' needs are met, we open enrollment to Catholics from other parishes and the public. Saint Andrew's ECC admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin. We follow the North Carolina Public age eligibility cutoff date of August 31. Therefore, children must turn the age of their class on or before August 31. (i.e. children eligible for the two-year old class must turn two on or before August 31, etc.) The exceptions to this are our Toddler classes and Pre-K class. Children must turn one on or before May 31 to enroll as a Toddler (and be walking independently.) Our PreK class consists of older 4's and young 5's. Children enrolled in that class must turn 5 on or before December 1. A Student Health Form and **up-to-date** Immunization Record are **required** for enrollment.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

Carpool: Parents will receive a video to explain the carpool procedure and a tag for the car will be provided.

Arrival: To facilitate efficiency, cars will be unloaded from 9:20-9:40. Your child's teacher assistant will walk him/her into the building each morning. **It is imperative for children to arrive on time to avoid interruption once classroom activities have begun.**

Dismissal: At dismissal time, you must **be prompt**. Your classroom teacher will provide details on the exact location of your in-person pick up. Since teachers need to give full attention to children, dismissal is not the time for conferencing with the teacher. Please write a note or ask the teacher to call you, if needed. If some unforeseen emergency should arise that prevents you from being on time at dismissal, we ask that you call the preschool office so teachers may be notified. Should there be a substitute driver, he/she will need to show a picture ID to the teacher. This is to ensure the safety of your child.

If you need to sign your child out before normal dismissal time, please notify the preschool office or teacher in advance to make arrangements. Parents will use the doorbell to signal arrival and your child will be walked to the door. In an emergency, please contact the office directly at (919) 387-8656.

ABSENCES

If your child is sick or will be absent from school, please email the teachers and/or director. You may also call the office at (919) 387-8656 and we will notify the teachers.

TUITION

There are nine (9) monthly tuition payments. The first is collected May 1. Subsequent tuition payments are due the first of each month, beginning Sept. 1 and concluding on April 1. **You may pay tuition in full or in half-year or quarterly installments if that works for your budget.** Tuition is late if not received it by the 10th of the month and will incur a late fee of \$20.00. Payments can be placed in the tuition collection envelopes or mailed to: St. Andrew ECC, 3008 Old Raleigh Rd. Apex, 27502. If you prefer automatic recurring payments; contact the preschool office.

	Parishioner	Non-Parishioner
Toddlers	\$140	\$160
2-year-olds	\$150	\$170
2 Day 3's	\$175	\$190
3 Days 3's & 4's	\$205	\$230
3 Day 3's (9:30-1:00)	\$220	\$240
4 Day 4's	\$255	\$285
4 Day 4's (9:30-1:00)	\$270	\$300
5 Day Pre-K (9:30-1:00)	\$295	\$330

**** Tuition, once paid, is non-refundable. ****

Absences for sickness, travel or holidays cannot be deducted from tuition payments.

RETURNED CHECK POLICY

A **\$35.00 charge** will be assessed for any checks returned by the bank as unpaid.

WITHDRAWALS

Thirty days written notice is required before a child is withdrawn from the program. Our policy remains that refunds will not be made once tuition has already been paid.

LATE PICK-UP FEE

Please arrive promptly for your child's dismissal time. After the **third** time a parent is late (more than 7 minutes after dismissal) he/she will be charged a fee of \$10.00; (per child) as well as an additional \$10.00 for every 5-minute increment. This fee must be taken directly to the ECC office.

TOYS TO SCHOOL?

Children in 2's through Pre-K are not permitted to bring "lovies" or toys to preschool. When children bring extra toys and small items to school or to the playground, there is a tendency for these items to become misplaced, causing distress to the children. At times, the teachers may ask for items that pertain to the theme of the week, at which time we welcome your child's participation.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE OFFICE

Parents are asked to add the main ECC phone number as a contact on your cell phone. Additionally, parents are encouraged to check the preschool section of the St. Andrew website. News, calendars, tuition rates, and forms are available on the website. Our Facebook page is updated often with photos of class activities, on occasion. When necessary the ECC will send out alerts and reminders via text in case of weather or to provide communications. For updates/concerns related to a health situation, we will use email and/or text messages.

ECC Main phone line: 919-387-8656

Website: www.saintandrew.org

Church phone line: 919-362-0414, ext. 121 for the Director; ext. 128 for the Administrative Assistant

Email addresses: Director = ecc@saintandrew.org Administrative Assistant = ecc2@saintandrew.org

Facebook: Saint Andrew Early Childhood Center

CONFERENCES

Parent/Teacher Conferences are in November. On conference day the ECC is closed to children. If you would like an additional conference at another time, you may request this from your teachers. Likewise, should a concern arise in the classroom, the teachers will be in touch with you. We want to work together to do what is best for your child.

LEARNING STANDARDS

We follow the Diocese of Raleigh's Preschool Standards for children ages 2-5. These standards will be taught through a theme-based unit approach in the classroom. For our general themes, teachers draw from a variety of resources in planning their lessons. For the religion lessons teachers use an in-house program focusing upon Bible stories, Saints and related arts and crafts.

DAILY ACTIVITIES

Parents will be kept informed of their child's daily activities through newsletters, teacher notes, and the Bloomz Parent Communication App.

LUNCH/FOOD ALLERGIES

Parents should send a nutritious lunch and reusable water bottle for your child each day. Bento boxes or similar work well and allow for easier independence. We request that no sweets or "junk food" be included. Children will eat between 11:00am and 12:15pm, depending on the schedule of the class. If your child has a food allergy, notify the office. We will work with you to determine if your child's class needs to make modifications during lunch time.

CLOTHING

Please dress children in clothing that is suitable for play. Shoes should have rubber soles and cover the foot - no sandals or flip flops, please. We will go outside whenever possible, so please send jackets, hats and gloves on cold days. All clothing should be **labeled** with your child's last name for easy identification.

TOTE BAGS/BACKPACKS

A large, open-top tote bag or backpack needs to be provided by the parent. Bags need to be large enough to hold parent folder, reusable water bottle, and lunch box. The tote bag/backpack should be **labeled** on the outside with your child's name.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthday snacks are not permitted to be shared with the class. However, parents may create a goodie bag with non-edible items that will be sent home with classmates. Teachers will celebrate the child's birthday within the classroom. If your child has a summer birthday, the teacher will work with you to choose a "special day" on which to celebrate. ***Party invitations may not be distributed at school unless the entire class is being invited.***

BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE

The ECC must be a safe place for all children: free of hurtful words and actions. A positive approach to behavior management that respects the dignity of each child will be used in the Preschool. We have been trained in a variety of techniques to support children's development of self-esteem and self-discipline at every stage of development, through positive reinforcement and calm redirection. Class rules, routines, and manners are discussed with the children early in the school year so that behavioral expectations are clear and consistent. Teachers model and reinforce appropriate behavior and encourage positive strategies for resolving conflict. When necessary, teachers may provide the child with a short time away from a group activity to reflect on his/her behavior and to encourage self-control. Parents will be contacted if a child is experiencing behavioral or social difficulties in the classroom.

Biting Policy: For the first offense, the child will be warned, the parent told at pick up time, and a written notice sent home. The second time a child bites, the parent will be contacted immediately to come and either take the child home or stay with him/her for the remainder of the school day. For the next two consecutive school days, the parent must remain with the child the entire morning to help supervise and ensure he/she doesn't bite again. After two parent-supervised, successful days, the child may return to school without parent accompaniment. If the child bites again, the same procedure will be followed. If the behavior continues, the child may be dismissed. For the child who is bitten, the parents will be notified that day and the area will be washed with soap and water.

SPECIAL NEEDS

The Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools acknowledge that there are students who require special services to meet their full human potential. St. Andrew ECC is committed to all students succeeding to the best of their abilities. In the event that a student has a diagnosed special need (documented by licensed medical personnel) accommodations may be offered that can be reasonably made within the normal general education classes and when the school has the resources (academic/staff) available to accommodate the students' needs. However, modifications to academic requirements or alterations in general course of studies will not be made. The Diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools are exempt from the mandate of providing services for IEP's and 504 Plans. If a student cannot be accommodated within the school program, every effort is made to assist with placement in another school program beyond the ECC.

DISMISSAL FROM THE PROGRAM

The ECC has the right to dismiss any child whose needs are not best being served by our program and/or whose behavior seriously affects the welfare and learning of others. Prior to dismissal, parents will have been informed of concerns and efforts to resolve them will have been made.

TOILET TRAINING

3 years and up: All children must be fully toilet trained, including being able to disrobe and wipe themselves. The ECC has extra clothes on hand should an accident occur. Parents should wash and return these items as soon as possible.

2's: Teachers are willing to support the parent's toilet-training efforts providing it does not become too disruptive or time consuming. Children should come to school in diapers with tabs, until the final stages of potty training, and then they may come in pull-ups. Once a child has been using the toilet consistently for several weeks, he/she may come in regular underwear. During this newly toilet-trained time, parents should send plenty of extra clothes including socks and shoes in case of an accident.

LICE

Parents will be notified if a confirmed case of lice is present in your child's classroom. If you find that your child has lice, please notify the ECC so that we can take the necessary steps to prevent it from spreading in the classroom. Parents are encouraged to contact their physician to seek treatment. Students may return to school after appropriate treatment has begun. Nits may persist after treatment, but successful treatment should kill all crawling lice. According to a June 2015 notice from the CDC both the Association of Pediatrics and the National Association of School Nurses advocate that "no nit" policies should be discontinued. "No nit"

policies that require a child to be free of nits before they can return to school should be discontinued for the following reasons:

- Many nits are more than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the scalp. Such nits are usually not viable and very unlikely to hatch to become crawling lice, or may, in fact be empty shells called "casings".
- Nits are cemented to hair shafts and are very unlikely to be transferred successfully to others.
- The burden of unnecessary absenteeism to students far outweighs the risks associated with head lice.

Parents, please understand that lice is treatable and can happen to anyone! Personal hygiene and cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

HEALTH POLICY

General Health: For your child's comfort and out of consideration for the other children in the class, children should remain home if they have had any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours:

- fever over 100 degrees
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- frequent cough
- continuous nasal discharge
- rash
- conjunctivitis (pink eye)

Children must be fever-free (without the use of medication) for 24 hours before returning to school.
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Allergies: Children with chronic allergies with symptoms such as a frequent cough or runny nose, may need to visit their pediatrician to determine an effective way to reduce symptoms. The preschool might request a written note from the doctor.

Infectious Diseases: Parents should notify the office if their child is diagnosed with an infectious disease (including Hand, Foot and Mouth).

COVID-19: Parents are responsible for being knowledgeable of symptoms related to COVID-19. Staying home when sick is essential to keeping infections out of childcare settings and preventing spread to others. Children/staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 need to stay home and contact their health care provider or other available testing sites for diagnostic testing and care. The presence of any of these symptoms suggests the person may need to be tested for COVID-19:

- Fever (temperature 100.4 °F or higher) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting

Exclusion from childcare for people with COVID-19 is required by NC General Statute § 130A-144.

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- **Positive COVID diagnosis:** A child/staff member who tests positive for COVID-19 is not permitted to attend preschool for 5 days after the first day of symptoms or date of COVID-19 test, if asymptomatic. (Day count begins as 0 on first day of symptoms or test collection date.) Individuals may return to childcare after 5 days if they have no symptoms or symptoms are improving and they have been fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever reducing medications but must continue to wear a mask for an additional 5 days to minimize the risk of infecting others (Children under the age of two or those unable to wear a mask must remain out of preschool for 10 days.) The mask can be removed during eating and drinking.
- **Exposure to COVID:** NCDHHS no longer recommends childcare facilities exclude individuals after an identified exposure to COVID-19 (regardless of location of exposure) unless they develop symptoms.
- **Testing:** If your child develops symptoms, he/she should stay home and get tested immediately. At-home and PCR lab tests are accepted. For documentation purposes, a copy of the test result must be submitted to the ECC office. (For at-home tests, a picture of the test serves as documentation.)

FACE COVERINGS

Consistent and correct mask use adds a layer of protection for the wearer and others in their environment. NCDHHS no longer recommends universal mask requirements in schools or other lower risk settings like childcare programs, however

- Children (over two) and staff must wear a well-fitting mask following a COVID-19 infection upon return to childcare after 5-day isolation period until day 10 from the onset of symptoms.
- Children (over two) and staff should wear a well-fitting mask after a known COVID-19 exposure for 10 days after the last known exposure.

MEDICATION DISPENSATION PLAN

The ECC staff is not allowed to dispense medication unless we have a medication authorization form (completed and signed by the doctor) on file. Forms are available in the office.

INJURIES/MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Parents will be informed of any accidents or injuries sustained by their child during the preschool day. A written record of such occurrences will be provided to the parent and a copy kept in the student file. Should a child experience a medical emergency requiring immediate medical care, parents or their "emergency contact person" (as listed on the Registration form) will be notified immediately. The child will be transported to the nearest hospital by ambulance, depending upon the severity of the problem.

It is essential, particularly in relation to sudden illness or suspected case of the COVID virus, that the office have current phone numbers where parents can be reached during school hours in case of illness or emergency. Please update the office immediately if there are any changes in your contact number. If the office is unable to reach a parent or other emergency contact for pick-up of a sick child within 30 minutes, there will be a \$50 fine charged to the account.

PLAYGROUND

When weather permits, children will play outside on the playground each day. In the interest of safety, only ECC children are allowed on the playground during preschool hours.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If Wake County is operating in remote learning status or chooses a virtual learning day due to inclement weather, the ECC will use St. Michael Catholic School and/or St. Mary Magdalene as a guide in deciding about whether to open. The decision will be communicated via text message, Facebook and website. If Wake County announces:

- ❖ **Schools are closed**, we will also be closed
- ❖ **1 or 2-hour delay**, we are open from 11:00-1:00
- ❖ **3-hour delay**, we are closed
- ❖ **An early dismissal**, parents will receive a text message system with details for dismissal times.

On delayed days a lunch is needed.

In the event of excessive closures due to unforeseen circumstances, we will make every attempt to reschedule days missed. However, it may not always be possible to make up each day missed. Make-up days will be determined by the director.

SAFETY DRILLS

The ECC has a comprehensive "crisis plan" to respond to various types of emergencies (ex. fire drills, severe weather, lockdown). Teachers and staff are aware of and practice procedures that are designed to keep children safe. In the event of a true emergency, parents will be notified through text messaging and told where/when to pick up their child. Drills are conducted in a calm and caring way to provide reassurance to children.

- Fire drills will be held within the first ten days of the school year and monthly thereafter.
- Lockdown drills and procedures will be practiced throughout the year.
- Severe Weather drills are scheduled two times per year.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

There are many ways for parents to become involved at the ECC. When volunteering, parents need to make other arrangements for siblings, so that full attention can be given to the preschool students with whom they are working. Teachers will communicate offerings for parent volunteers at various times throughout the school year. Teachers and/or the Director may also email a request with a sign-up genius link. Volunteer opportunities include room parents, playdough makers, class librarian, garden committee, sewing committee, etc. Diocesan policy requires that all volunteers sign "in" when they arrive and "out" when they leave. This helps us monitor visitors for our students' protection. The "**Volunteer Sign in/Sign out**" clipboard is located in the preschool lobby.

IN-HOUSE FIELD TRIPS

Due to Diocesan policy, students may not be transported by personal cars or vans. Therefore, we will not be leaving the premises. Threes, Fours, and TK classes will experience curriculum enhancement programs twice a year.

CUSTODY AGREEMENTS

The safety and well-being of our students and staff is always our priority. To ensure the protection of all our students, staff and teachers, we request a copy of family custody agreements to keep in our records.

CONCERNS?

Any parental questions or concerns should be **first** directed toward your child's teachers. Most questions can be easily resolved at this level. If further discussion is necessary, parents may then request a conference with the Director to voice their concerns.

If a child should experience any learning difficulties during his/her ECC enrollment, the parents and teachers can utilize Project Enlightenment, a Wake County Schools child/parent/teacher advisory service that specializes in the preschool-age child. With parental permission, Project Enlightenment consultants can observe a child in the classroom (at no cost to the parent) and make recommendations to both parents and staff as to ways to best serve the child's needs. Further testing, parent consultations and parenting workshops are also available through Project Enlightenment.

DISTANCE LEARNING

The ECC has a plan for transitioning to temporary distance learning strategies in the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak or any other circumstances that make it unsafe or imprudent to continue on-campus education. The judgment of the school administration, in consultation with our pastor (where applicable), and in conjunction with the Catholic Schools Office of the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh, will determine when the change to our school's normal instructional model warrants the transition to distance learning. The strategies used for distance learning will be developed by the school administration and faculty.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Annually, parents will have the opportunity to evaluate the program. During the second semester, a survey will be sent home. We welcome your input and encourage you to complete the survey.

2022-2023 Important Dates

Dates subject to change. Check website for most accurate calendar.

Sept. 1-5	Closed - Labor Day weekend (Thur.- Mon.)
Sept. 6	Short day: Bunny, Panda, Turtle, Koala, Ladybug, Horse, Owl, & Lion (9:30-11:00)
Sept. 7	Short day: Duckling, Bee, Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant (9:30-11:00)
Sept. 7	First full day: Horse, Owl, & Lion
Sept. 8	First full day: Bunny, Panda, Turtle, Koala, Ladybug
Sept. 9	First full day: Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant
Sept. 12	First full day: Duckling, Bee
Sept. 23	Closed- Professional Development Day
Oct. 12 & 13	Picture Days
Oct. 27	Halloween Parade: Koala, Ladybug, Horse, Owl
Oct. 28	Halloween Parade: Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant, Lion
Nov. 8	Closed for Parent Teacher Conferences
Nov. 11	Closed -- Veteran's Day
Nov. 23-25	Closed -- Thanksgiving Holiday
Dec. 12	Christmas Party: Duckling and Bees
Dec. 13	Christmas Party: Bunny, Turtle, and Pandas
Dec. 14	Christmas Programs: Elephant, Horse, Owl, Lions
Dec. 21 - Jan. 2	Closed -- Christmas Break
Jan. 16	Closed - Martin Luther King Day
Feb. 2	ECC Family Night (to celebrate Catholic Schools Week)
Feb. 20	Closed - President's Day
Feb. 21	Closed - Diocesan Retreat Day for Staff
Mar. 17	St. Joseph Day: Koala, Ladybug, Horse, Owl
Mar. 18	St. Joseph Day: Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant, Lion
Mar. 22	Spring Music Program: Penguin and Giraffe
Mar. 23	Spring Music Program: Koala and Ladybug
Mar. 29	Spring Picture Day: Duckling, Bee, Penguin, Giraffe, Lion
Mar. 30	Spring Picture Day: Bunny, Panda, Turtle, Koala, Ladybug, Horse, Owl
Mar. 30	Spring into Bedtime Reading
Apr. 6-15	Closed - Spring Break (Easter is April 9)
May 4	Mother Mary Day: Koala, Ladybug, Horse, Owl
May 5	Mother Mary Day: Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant, Lion
May 22	End of Year Program: Elephant, Horse, Owl
May 23	End of Year Program: Lions
May 22	Last day of school: Duckling, Bee, Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant
May 23	Last day of school: Bunny, Turtle, Panda, Koala, Ladybug, Horse, Owl, Lions
May 24 & 25	Snow Make Up Days (if needed)

Extended Day/Discovery Day

Session 1

Oct. 5-Dec. 9

Session 2

Jan. 4-Feb. 24

Session 3

Mar. 1 -May 12