# Parent Handbook

2023-2024

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

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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.

#### 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 parishioners receive priority for admission during registration window. Once our parishioners' needs are met, we open enrollment to Catholics from other parishes and the public. St. Andrew ECC admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin. We follow the North Carolina Public Schools age eligibility 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 (and be walking independently) to enroll in the Toddler class. Our Transition K class consists of older 4's and young 5's. Children enrolled in this class must turn 5 on or before December 1 (and receive teacher/director recommendation.) A Student Health Form and up-to-date Immunization Record are required for enrollment.

# ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL

<u>Arrival</u>: Parents will receive a video to explain the carpool procedure and a tag for the car will be provided. 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.

<u>Dismissal</u>: At dismissal time, you must *be prompt*. Your classroom teacher will provide details on the exact location of your in-person pick up. For the safety of your child, teachers will not release the child to anyone other than the parent unless the person is listed as an authorized pick up. Teachers need to give full attention to children; therefore, dismissal is not the time for a lengthy conversation with staff. Please send a message via the parent communication app/email or ask the teacher to call you, if needed.

If you need to pick up your child early, please notify the preschool office or teacher in advance to make arrangements. In an emergency, please contact the office directly at (919) 387-8656.

# LATE PICK-UP FEE

Should a situation arise that delays your arrival, parents/caregivers are asked to notify the teacher via Brightwheel or to call the office. These notifications do not excuse the tardy pick up; instead, this provides reassurance to the staff that the parent/caregiver is on the way. After the third time a parent/caregiver 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 \$1.00 per minute for every minute after that. This fee must be paid through Brightwheel.

## **ABSENCES**

If your child is sick or will be absent from school, please message the teachers and/or email the 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 which must be posted electronically to Brightwheel. The first is collected in May. Subsequent payments are due on the first of each month, beginning September 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 by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month and will incur a late fee of \$20.00. Should you have a special circumstance that prevents you from making online payments, contact the office to make alternate arrangements.

	Parishioner	Non-Parishioner
Toddlers	\$155	\$180
2-year-olds	\$175	\$200
3 Day 2's (step-up)	\$195	\$220
2 Day 3's	\$190	\$215
3 Days 3's & 4's	\$215	\$240
3 Day 3's (9:30-1:00)	\$240	\$265
4 Day 4's	\$280	\$305
4 Day 4's (9:30-1:00)	\$300	\$325
5 Day Pre-K (9:30-1:00)	\$325	\$350

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

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

#### WITHDRAWALS

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

#### TOYS TO SCHOOL?

Children in 2's through Pre-K are not permitted to bring "luvies" 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 or refer to Brightwheel. News, calendars, tuition rates, and forms are available on the website. Our Instagram/Facebook pages are updated with photos of class activities, on occasion. When necessary, the ECC will send out alerts and reminders via a combination of email/text/social media posts in case of weather or to provide communications.

ECC Main phone line: 919-387-8656 Website: www.saintandrew.org

Facebook and Instagram: 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 contact you to schedule a conference. It is our goal to partner with parents and 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 daily activities through Brightwheel Parent Communication App.

#### LUNCH/FOOD ALLERGIES

Parents should send a nutritious lunch and <u>reusable</u> water bottle for their child each day. Bentgo boxes or similar are recommended as they allow for easier independence. We request that no sweets or "junk food" be included in the lunch. 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 while staying in place securely - <u>no sandals, crocs, or flip flops</u>, 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 must be **labeled** on the <u>outside</u> with your child's name.

# <u>BIRTHDAYS</u>

Birthday snacks are not permitted to be shared with the class. However, parents may choose to 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 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 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.

<u>Biting Policy</u>: For the first offense, the child will be redirected, 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

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

<u>1's and 2's</u>: Children should come to preschool in diapers with tabs, until the final stages of potty training (defined as the child having successfully used the toilet consistently and independently for at least one week.) At this time, he/she may attend wearing pull-ups or underwear. During this newly toilet-trained time, parents should send plenty of extra clothes including socks and shoes in case of an accident. Teachers are willing to support the parents' toilet-training efforts providing it does not become too disruptive or time-consuming.

# <u>LICE</u>

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

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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

<u>General Health</u>: 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.

<u>Allergies</u>: 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 reserves the right to request a written note from the doctor.

<u>Infectious Diseases</u>: Parents should notify the office if their child is diagnosed with an infectious disease (such as COVID-19 and/or Hand, Foot, and Mouth).

<u>COVID-19</u>: 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. Children/staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 need to stay home and contact their health care provider for guidance.

 Positive COVID diagnosis: Per the CDC update on March 1, 2024, individuals positive with COVID no longer need to isolate for five days. Individuals can return to preschool once symptoms are improving and they have been fever-free for 24 hours without use of fever reducing medications.

# 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 or on the website.

#### 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, 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 to 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 the 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 Brightwheel 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 in the 3s, 4s, and TK classes will communicate offerings for parent volunteers at various times throughout the school year. Other 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 "Sign in/Sign out" clipboard is located in the preschool lobby.

#### IN-HOUSE FIELD TRIPS

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 <u>first</u> 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 oncampus 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

# 2023-2024 Important Dates

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

Aug. 31-Sept. 4	Closed - Labor Day weekend (Thur Mon.)		
Sept. 5	Onboarding Day: Bunny, Panda, Turtle, Koala, Ladybug	, Horse, Owl, & Lion (9:30-10:30)	
Sept. 6	Onboarding Day: Duckling, Bee, Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant (9:30-10:30)		
Sept. 6	First full day: Horse, Owl, & Lion		
Sept. 7	First full day: Bunny, Panda, Turtle, Koala, Ladybug	Extended Day/Discovery Day	
Sept. 8	First full day: Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant		
Sept. 11	First full day: Duckling, Bee	Session 1	
Sept. 22	Closed- Professional Development Day	Oct. 4-Dec. 8	
Sept. 24	Parish Picnic		
Oct. 18 & 19	Picture Days	Session 2	
Oct. 30	Halloween Parade: Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant, Lion	Jan. 3-Feb. 21	
Oct. 31	Halloween Parade: Koala, Ladybug, Horse, Owl		
Nov. 7	Closed for Parent Teacher Conferences	Session 3	
Nov. 10	Closed Veteran's Day	Mar. 6 -May 8	
Nov. 22-24	Closed Thanksgiving Holiday		
Dec. 11	Christmas Party: Duckling and Bees		
Dec. 12	Christmas Party: Bunny, Turtle, and Pandas		
Dec. 12	Christmas Family Social: Koala and Ladybugs		
Dec. 13	Christmas Program: Elephant, Horse, Owl, Lion (12:30 dismissal for these classes)		
Dec. 13	Christmas Family Social: Penguin & Giraffe (12:30 dismissal for these classes)		
Dec. 19	Staff Christmas Luncheon (12:30 dismissal for all classes)		
Dec. 21 - Jan. 2	Closed Christmas Break		
Jan. 15	Closed - Martin Luther King Day		
Feb. 1	ECC Family Night (to celebrate Catholic Schools Week)		
Feb. 19	Closed - President's Day		
Feb. 20	Closed - Diocesan Retreat Day for Staff		
Mar. 13	Spring Picture Day: Duckling, Bee, Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant, Lion		
Mar. 14	Spring Picture Day: Bunny, Panda, Turtle, Koala, Ladybug, Horse, Owl		
Mar. 21	St. Joseph Day: Koala, Ladybug, Horse, Owl		
Mar. 22	St. Joseph Day: Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant, Lion		
Mar. 28-Apr. 5	Closed - Spring Break (Easter is March 31)		
Apr. 17	Spring Music Program: Penguin and Giraffe (11:45am in the church)		
Apr. 18	Spring Music Program: Koala and Ladybug (11:45am in the church)		
Apr. 25	Spring into Bedtime Reading		
May 2	Mother Mary Day: Koala, Ladybug, Horse, Owl		
May 3	Mother Mary Day: Roald, Eddybag, Florise, Gwi Mother Mary Day: Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant, Lion		
May 20	End of Year Program: Elephant, Horse, Owl		
May 20	End of Year Family Social: Penguin & Giraffe (12:30 dismissal for these classes)		
May 20	Last Day of school: Duckling, Bee, Penguin, Giraffe, Elephant		
May 21	End of Year Program: Lions (12:30 dismissal for this class)		
May 21	End of Year Family Social: Koala & Ladybug		
May 21	Last Day of school: Bunny, Turtle, Panda, Koala, Ladybug, Horse, Owl, Lions		
May 22 & 23	Snow Make Up Days (if needed)		
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