



PARENT HANDBOOK

Policies, Plans and Procedures

2021-2022

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ST. MARK PRESCHOOL WELCOMES YOU

St. Mark Preschool is a private NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accredited preschool that serves families with children ages 1-5 years old, in Santa Barbara, CA. We have a proud history (57 years!) of progressive practices and traditions.

Our program encourages children to be thoughtful, by giving them experiences that cultivate discovery and reflection through choice, freedom, and hands-on activities. Each classroom encourages and meets developmentally appropriate interests, needs and passions of every child. Teachers and parents work collaboratively to support children in realizing their potential. Families are well known, participate in a variety of ways, and are crucial to our work.

Young children learn best and with the greatest ease through play. Taking risks and making choices is essential for every area of development: social-emotional, cognitive, physical, and creative. It is important for children to engage in meaningful work. Children engage in hands-on “work” every day. Children have access to simple instruments. A large social hall space provides an area for children to develop fine and gross motor skills through movement and physical education classes. Teachers and children are in constant communication. Teachers decipher what is needed for the children to grow and be happy.

Classrooms are designed for discovery and responsibility. Every day, there are opportunities for children to choose the projects they want to work on, the materials they will use, and the big ideas they will explore. Children learn about themselves, their community, and the world around them.

In non-Covid time, the community comes together frequently for discussions, singing, and celebrations. We are finding new ways to “be together” now. We appreciate your interest in our community. Here’s to a happy and healthy year!

--Michele Martin, Director

ST. MARK PRESCHOOL GUIDING PRINCIPLES

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to encourage discovery through hands-on learning and open-ended play, giving children the freedom to explore. Exploration is an essential building block for stirring curiosity and stimulating a love of learning. Children develop cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and creative skills in a safe environment. Discovery based learning offers a sense of ownership, self-esteem and confidence. Together teachers and families create a loving preschool where children thrive!

We embrace childhood by encouraging discovery through hands-on learning and open-ended play, creating a solid foundation and a love of learning. We stimulate an atmosphere of acceptance, in which children develop self-esteem and confidence in their place in the world. Families are supported by our philosophy of respect, resulting in a community where we work together to create a wonderful place for children to learn. Children play with purpose and thrive!

CORE PURPOSE

To embrace childhood in partnership with families, to offer a safe environment for children to discover and grow cognitively, socially, emotionally, physically, and creatively.

PHILOSOPHY

We believe children deserve to learn in safe and nurturing environments that support the whole child cognitively, socially, emotionally, physically, and creatively. Developmentally appropriate learning materials and experiences contribute to the children's sense of self-confidence and independence. Children naturally learn best through play-based experiences. "Play is the highest form of research." Einstein. Collaboration with parents allows teachers to deepen their understanding about children and their preferences. Enrichment lessons and activities extend children's interests. All teachers have ECE units and experience caring for children. They are dedicated, observant, and creative, key ingredients to providing a dynamic early childhood educational program.

We believe:

- Children should have the opportunity to learn in a safe and nurturing environment which promotes and provides support for the whole child including his/her physical, spiritual, social/emotional, speech/language, and cognitive development.
- Children should be provided with a wide variety of developmentally appropriate learning experiences which promote a child's sense of independence, self-confidence, creativity, and diversity.
- Children learn best through play-based experiences offered through an educational collaborative approach, in which the parents are a vital part of the learning process and positive child-child and child-adult interactions are promoted.
- A qualified, dedicated Employee is essential to the development and maintenance of a quality early childhood educational program.

GENERAL INFORMATION

THE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

St. Mark Preschool is an NAEYC accredited program that provides a high-quality experience for young children, ages one to five years old. The staff has Early Childhood Education training and are experienced in developing positive relationships with children and adults. They are skillful at helping children learn how to play, collaborate, and make friends. Respect for family lifestyles, religious beliefs, cultural backgrounds, and values is evident.

The curriculum is developmentally appropriate, allowing children to start learning where they are. Topics are a blend of child-directed and teacher-directed interests that act as a springboard for further learning. Teachers will expose children to things they may not choose and are fascinated by. Daily communication and emails that highlight the week will inform parents of children's delights and progress.

We have an inclusion program for the Hope School District that mainstreams children with delays and/or disabilities into the classrooms. The Hope School District provides Special Education teachers to support and assess these students.

ABOUT OUR TODDLER PROGRAM

Toddlers are sensory-play oriented. They use their senses to explore and discover new things. They are generally highly active during the day. The four primary areas of child development that the teachers address are: physical, social-emotional, and cognitive-including language development.

The Toddler Program creates spaces that are organized and familiar to the toddlers. This encourages them to feel safe and supported. Working towards accreditation in the upcoming years. There are distinct play spaces inside and outside with equipment that is age appropriate and intriguing. There is a separate toddler playground, and they are welcome to visit the older children's playground as well.

Children of all races, colors, religions, gender, national origin, and abilities are welcome.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

St. Mark Preschool is governed by a Board of Directors called the Preschool Advisory Council (PAC). The group includes the director, parents, educators, and church members. The PAC conducts monthly meetings that are open to parents and SMP community members. There are 2-3 parent representatives invited by the director to represent parents in decisions concerning school matters.

Board meetings are usually held the 2nd Tuesday evening of each month. The office has a list of board members and dates, times, and locations of the meetings. Minutes of the meetings will be posted on the outside parent's bulletin board. If you are interested in becoming a parent representative, please speak with the director.

PARENT EDUCATION

SMP offers parents, caregivers, and legal guardians' educational opportunities throughout the year. These topics are a blend of parent and director interests. SMP partners with CALM - Child Abuse Listening and Mediation to offer a variety of child development topics.

INTER-AGENCY SUPPORT

SMP partners with the Tri-Counties Regional Center, Santa Barbara County Education Office, Hope School District, Mariposa, and STAR programs to offer SMP children individual support services. The services are based on developmental eligibility. The purpose of these programs is to improve services through education and additional resources for children and families within Santa Barbara County.

LICENSING INFORMATION

St. Mark Preschool is licensed through the Community Care Licensing. Our facility number is #421700377. The guidelines for the state's licensing requirements can be found on the following website:
<http://ccl.d.ca.gov>

Our local Community Care Licensing office is located at 6500 Hollister Ave #200, Goleta, CA 93117, phone (805) 562-0400.

ENROLLMENT

ENROLLMENT FOR TODDLER AND PRESCHOOL PROGRAMS

All children considered for enrollment for preschool must have a developmental screening and an enrollment application form completed. Children ages one through five are eligible for enrollment at St Mark Preschool, regardless of their race, color, religion, gender, national origin, or disability.

Once your child has been registered, you will receive an enrollment packet via email that contains many important forms that need to be completed and returned to the school before your child can participate.

REGISTRATION

Registration for each new fall session begins in early spring. Currently enrolled families and siblings will have the first opportunity to enroll their children for the following year. Registration forms and fees must be submitted together by the registration deadline. An Annual Child Health Screening or a signed Opt-Out form is also required. After the in-house registration deadline, open registration will begin. The registration fee and the last month's tuition are non-refundable.

HOURS & DAYS OF OPERATION FOR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Preschool and Toddler Classes are offered Monday through Friday, from 7:45a.m.-5:15p.m. Children can attend either a full or part-time session. Toddler and Preschool classes are offered year-round according to SMP's current school calendar.

TRANSITIONING NEW CHILDREN AND PLANNING

SMP will provide the children visiting opportunities in other classrooms to enable smooth transitions. The preschool will provide families with community information regarding childcare options and work to support smooth transitions into kindergarten. SMP's staff and administrators will make every attempt to work collaboratively with parents and families who need other transitional childcare support on an individual needs basis.

FEES FOR PRESCHOOL PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

SMP charges a monthly fee for preschool services for children. A non-refundable registration fee for newly enrolling children is required at the time of initial enrollment for preschoolers. A non-refundable re-enrollment fee for returning preschoolers will be required in early spring to save a classroom placement for the following school year, which usually begins in the last week of August.

Parents will be required to sign a preschool tuition agreement for preschool services prior to the child's first day of attendance. Preschool services may be denied if parents/guardians fail to meet their financial obligation as outlined in their Preschool Tuition Agreement. If an account becomes past due, the director will contact the responsible party to arrange a payment plan. If an account becomes 60 days old or older, the family may be asked to leave the school.

SMP offers a limited number of partial-pay scholarships to those who financially qualify. The intent of the partial-pay scholarships is to provide financial assistance to families that might not otherwise be able to afford the full cost of a high-quality preschool program. Scholarship applications will be reviewed and awarded to qualified applicants as funds become available.

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, AND GUARDIANS

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

- SMP children will be “signed in” and “signed out” in their classrooms each school day by their parent, guardian, or other parent-designated adult. Any adult, other than the child’s parents who are responsible for signing the child in or out of the preschool, must be 18 years or older.
- Children will not be allowed to leave with anyone who is not listed as an authorized escort. Parents must notify the center if someone not included on the list is to pick up their child.
- Children are not to be left unattended inside or outside at any time. Parents are required to wait with their child until a SMP staff member and or teacher acknowledges, greets, or welcomes their child into the classroom or playground at the regularly scheduled class start-up time before leaving.
- The staff is appreciative of prompt pick up times. If something comes up, please call the preschool, and let us know of your tentative arrival.
- If the child has not been picked up 15 minutes after class has ended, they will wait with the teacher or director. A representative from the center will attempt to contact the parent or guardian to pick the child up. If no response, they will continue to attempt to call the additional contacts listed on the emergency information form.
- There is a fee for late pick-ups.
- All children must be accompanied by a parent while in a vehicle in the parking lot
- Parents must turn their cars off if they are not in them.
- Please always hold your child’s hand in the parking lot.
- Please drive slowly in the parking lot.
- Please avoid the use of any profane language while on the St. Mark Preschool campus.

ATTENDANCE

Parents must call the office, preferably before 10:00a.m., if your child(ren) will not be attending preschool, due to an illness, vacation, or other reason.

PLEASE LABEL EXTRA CLOTHES

SMP offers a variety of activities that are excellent in fostering a healthy well-rounded development. These activities are often messy. It is important to have an extra set of labeled clothes at school in case of soiling. For the safety of the child, please have him or her wear rubber soled, easy to take on and off... comfortable shoes, such as sneakers. Children are requested to wear their shoes while riding bikes, working in the garden and during cold weather. SMP is not responsible for loss of items that are not clearly marked.

TOILET TRAINING

If a child is not toilet-trained, parents must provide diapers or training pants and moistened wipes for their child while he or she is at preschool.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Parents are required to provide a copy of their child’s immunization records at the time of preschool enrollment. This is mandated by state licensing. If you do not immunize your child, a doctor’s note addressing the reasons why is required.

THE STAFF

SMP teachers and assistant teachers are qualified, patient and kind. They work with children at the child's pace. They provide numerous modalities for sensory play and discovery. They are often entertained by what the children say and do. Their compassion and ability to comfort and engage children is exceptional. We are beyond lucky to have such dedicated people caring for the children.

RECRUIT QUALIFIED STAFF AND RETAINING NEW AND EXISTING STAFF

SMP strives to provide the highest quality Early Childhood Services through the retention and recruitment of highly qualified staff. Specific educational requirements and certifications are required for SMP teaching and assistant teacher positions to ensure high quality and care.

All early childhood education teachers have the minimum licensing requirements, an associate degree, a Bachelor Degree and or Child Development Permit. Assistant teachers have a minimum of a Child Development Associate, CDA equivalent, or are enrolled in a CDA class or college classes for Early Childhood coursework.

New and existing staff members are provided opportunities to attend local, regional, and national training as deemed appropriate for their position and are supported in pursuing education goals related to their position.

POLICY FOR SPECIALIZED CONSULTANTS

SMP will work collaboratively with specialized consultants such as: Local preschool professionals in Santa Barbara County; Mental Health Personnel; Community Agencies and Programs; and Child Care Programs to provide services for children. During Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meetings, the center staff will collaborate with parents and other involved parties to provide any necessary special education services for students and their families.

SMP has a staff of specialized professionals that provide services to children. These professionals include speech language pathologists and therapists, early childhood teachers, early childhood special education teachers, physical therapists and physical therapy assistants, occupational therapists, behavioral interventionists, and family service coordinators.

The staff of SMP work collaboratively with the Child Abuse Listening and Mediation (CALM) professionals and Santa Barbara County Education Office to provide services for those children with behavioral concerns. SMP works with other specialized consultants and agencies throughout the County to meet the needs of children.

POLICY FOR MULTI-LINGUAL EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT

SMP makes an effort to recruit staff, substitutes, and interpreters who speak the language of the children served. During the interview process for new staff members, inquiry will be made of knowledge of foreign languages including sign language.

POLICY FOR TEACHING STAFF ASSIGNMENT AND STRUCTURE

SMP teaching teams typically consist of one lead teacher and an assistant teacher who provide ongoing personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision, and immediate care as needed to support the children's well-being.

POLICY FOR MAINTAINING APPROPRIATE TEACHING STAFF-CHILD RATIOS

St. Mark Preschool follows Community Care Licensing and NAEYC guidelines for teacher-child ratios to facilitate adult-child interaction and intriguing activities indoors and outside. There will be one adult with no more than 8 children. In our infant program the ratio is 1 adult to 4 children.

POLICY TO MAINTAIN CONTINUITY OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHING STAFF AND CHILDREN

SMP classes utilize a team-teaching approach which includes a qualified teacher, special education teacher and at least one assistant teacher for each class.

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT

The SMP curriculum is developmentally appropriate, research-based, and focused on the whole child. The curriculum covers cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and creative and development.

One curriculum guide we utilize is The Creative Curriculum. The philosophy of this program is that young children learn best by doing and actively exploring their environment. The environment plays a critical role in learning, curriculum, and assessment. The Creative Curriculum offers teachers developmentally appropriate goals and objectives for children within four main categories of interest: social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language used to track the progress of each child.

A second assessment tool used to plan curriculum is the Desired Results Development Profile (DRDP). DRDP assessment instrument is designed for teachers to observe, document, and reflect on the learning, development, and progress of children enrolled in early childhood education programs.

Portfolio assessments are a third method of documentation. Teachers gather student photos, work, take anecdotal notes, and observe children's choices and experiences. The portfolio includes:

- Photos of the child interacting and playing
- Language samples (dictated stories, records of conversations)
- Anecdotal notes (written notes highlighting a child's choices and significant events)
- Writing and drawing samples

Portfolios are visual tools that document and show a child's growth over time. They are shared with parents during conferences. Conference notes, health documentation, child experiences, interests, abilities, and challenges. and semi-annual DRDP reports are included in the child's portfolio. The combination of these assessment tools is meaningful and more accurate than one measure.

ASSESSMENT

SMP believes that an assessment of a child's developmental skills is a key component of a high-quality early childhood educational program. The school provides various methods and opportunities for child assessment which are consistent with the program's philosophy. SMP maintains and promotes high standards in our early childhood program by providing screenings, evaluations, observations, assessments, and documentation for child assessment. The Ages and Stages Questionnaire will be completed by parents within 60 days of the child's first day of school and follow-up will take place as needed. Parents may opt out if desired. Child and classroom assessments help to improve curriculum and adapt teaching practices and the environment for program improvement.

SCREENINGS, EVALUATIONS, AND REFERRALS FOR SUPPORT

SMP follows the California Department of Education rules and regulations governing services for children with disabilities (two to five-year old) regarding the identification and evaluation of such children.

SMP offers free developmental screenings through the Ages and Stages Questionnaire ASQ3 for toddlers and preschool age children. ASQ3 is a tool designed for use by early educators and health care professionals. It relies on parents as experts, is easy-to-use, family-friendly and creates the snapshot needed to catch delays and celebrate milestones. The ASQ-3 screens and assesses the developmental performance of children in the areas of communication, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, problem

solving, and personal-social skills. It is used to identify children that would benefit from in-depth evaluation for developmental delays. The screening helps to ensure timely and effective early intervention services.

SMP offers regular community screenings as well as scheduling individual appointments as needed. The promotion of developmental screenings is through a variety of community supporters:

- Lions Club Vision and Hearing Screenings
- Dental Screenings with Dr. Ruby and Rochon
- Onsite Speech therapists for formal and informal consultation
- Requirement of annual Physician's Report
- Information on the website, newsletters, and brochures for the Preschool, as well as various other public relation events and activities

Children who are receiving Early Intervention Services through the Santa Barbara County Education Office or Santa Barbara School District are assessed using one or more of the following methods:

- Children are screened by Tri-Counties Regional Center Early Intervention staff members.
- If concerns are noted from a screening or from a referral, the child will be evaluated by the Early Intervention Staff through use of standardized assessments, observations, and interviews with parents and/or caregivers.
- Once evaluations are completed, an assessment report is written which documents all testing results.
- If the child qualifies for special needs services based upon the results of the evaluations, a functional assessment interview is completed with the child's parents/guardians.
- Staff and families work together as a team to determine goals and objectives for the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children ages three through five years old or an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) for children under three.
- The early intervention team working with the child provides early intervention services for the child based on the goals and objectives identified on the child's IEP. Early childhood interventionists/teachers observe and document each child's progress regarding their goals and objectives on an on-going basis throughout the year and the child's IEP is updated on a yearly basis.
- Information regarding a child's progress is provided to parents through a variety of ways including but not limited to:
 - Progress Reports/Notes for children
 - Mid-year review of goals
 - Yearly review of goals
 - Parent-Teacher Conferences
 - Meetings with the parents/guardians as needed to discuss a child's progress
 - On-going communication with parents

Early Intervention Services Offered:

- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech & Language Therapy
- Cognitive Skill Development
- Social and Emotional Development

- Family Service Coordination is also provided

PROCEDURE FOR INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

SMP provides comprehensive, quality early childhood services to children and their families in a caring, compassionate, and integrated environment. We follow the Santa Barbara County Education Office's IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) process. An IEP and IFSP are processes and documents. An IFSP is provided if your child is found eligible for early intervention services. An IFSP can help your infant or toddler develop to her fullest potential.

The purpose:

To ensure that toddlers and preschoolers with mental and physical challenges are provided appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment through the development and implementation of the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

When needed SMP will request a referral for:

- A full comprehensive evaluation of the child's skills which includes the following: formal and informal assessments, parent/teacher interviews, and observations.
- An assessment with the family.
- The development of functional goals and objectives based on the results of the assessment and comprehensive evaluation information.
- A review of the assessment results with the parents/guardians of the child and obtain permission for placement and services.
- Integrated therapies and embedded interventions within the classroom setting or a natural environment and or outreach site, using collaborative consultation and interdisciplinary services. Individual time away from the group will be provided only when it has been determined by the multidisciplinary team.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

St. Mark Preschool's teachers reinforce desirable social behavior through positive redirection, reflective praise, and natural, logical consequences. Other techniques used to reinforce positive behavior include modeling desired behavior and encouraging children to express feelings verbally rather than acting out impulsively. Teachers help children to develop self-control, rather than imposed teacher or adult control.

St. Mark Preschool prohibits the following methods of discipline (as stated in Community Care Licensing Rules and Regulations found online at <http://cclid.ca.gov>):

- Punishment associated with food, rest, or toilet training.
- Rough handling of children including hitting, spanking, beating, shaking, pinching, pushing or other measures that could produce physical pain.
- Inappropriate use of language including but not limited to profanity, name-calling, derogatory or demeaning terminology or screaming related to disciplinary purposes.
- Any form of humiliation including threats of physical punishment.
- Any form of emotional mistreatment including rejecting, terrorizing, corrupting, isolating, or ignoring a child. (Children can be removed from a group, but not isolated. Behaviors of a child may be ignored, but not the child.)

COMMUNICATION

PARENT COMMUNICATION

SMP staff communicate with families in a variety of ways such as in person, with parent folders, emails, messages on the bulletin board, a classroom newsletter, teacher notes, and the calendar.

- Parent Folder - Each child will have a cubby and folder in the classroom. Parents are to check the folder daily for school communication and artwork. Private communications must be approved by the director prior to being placed in cubbies and or folders.
- Parent Bulletin Board - The parent bulletin board is located just outside the Busy Bee classroom. It is used for whole school and community events. The bulletin board will display a monthly calendar of school activities.
- Newsletters - The director will publish a newsletter titled the Beachball Press every two weeks containing highlights, events, articles of interest, important dates, etc. An abbreviated calendar will be included.
- Calling the office is the most efficient way to communicate quickly. Emails are ideally answered within 24 hours. (Note: Quick email response may not be possible at certain times during the Covid-19 pandemic. If matter is urgent, please call.)

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Conferences are scheduled in October for all students and in April for Pre-K children. They can also be scheduled any time throughout the year when requested by the parent or teacher. Parents are encouraged to observe their child at least once per quarter, in the preschool environment.

PARENT VOLUNTEER HOURS

As a non-profit organization, SMP encourages parent participation and involvement to improve the quality of the program. Each family is required to donate 6 hours toward helping to maintain and improve the program. Please contact the director to volunteer during the school year or during special events.

Thank you!

OPEN HOUSE

St. Mark Preschool will host an annual Open House at the beginning of each school year. During this Open House, parents and children will have an opportunity to meet the teacher and assistant teacher in the child's classroom. Information regarding the toddler and preschool curriculum and schedules is provided along with information about the program philosophy, policies, procedures, and regulations.

OPEN-DOOR POLICY

Parents and caregivers with a concern or problem of any kind should bring it to the attention of the Director or the Executive PAC to bring about a solution. The Open-Door Policy is intended to strengthen relationships by providing parents and caregivers access and direction about how to express their concerns. It also allows the director and PAC to respond to concerns immediately.

If you wish to discuss something, seek counsel or guidance, or gain understanding of why things are done as they are, please ask your child's teacher or the director.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. When a disagreement arises, often the best course of action is negotiation to resolve the disagreement. The steps of conflict resolution are as follows:

- Clarify what the disagreement is.
- Allow each party to share their perspective of the problem.
- Each party will then summarize the other party's view of the problem.
- Determine the barriers to the common goal.
- Discuss ways to meet the common goal.
- Agree on an equitable way to resolve the conflict.

Acknowledge the agreed upon solution and determine the responsibilities each party has in the resolution.

GRIEVANCE/PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCEDURE FOR PARENTS

When a family has utilized conflict resolution and a grievance continues with a policy, procedure, employee, or another family served by St. Mark Preschool; or an incident raises an issue regarding the operation of St. Mark Preschool, the following procedures will guarantee the rights of all individuals. It is understood that any issue that represents an immediate health and safety concern will be dealt with expeditiously.

The following procedures provide a sequence for addressing a grievance so that it can be resolved promptly and effectively. In the cases described below, the family has a right to receive verbal or written feedback regarding their grievance.

In addressing a grievance, the family receiving services has the right to:

1. Discuss the problem with the Director. If the problem is not resolved, then:
2. Discuss the problem with a PAC representative. If the matter is not resolved:
3. A formal complaint is forwarded in writing to the PAC. PAC is responsible for responding, in writing, within five (5) working days of the receipt of such a complaint including an outline of the action, which is to be taken. If the matter is not resolved:
4. Contact the appropriate Community Care Licensing representative to discuss the matter or write a formal complaint.
 - Community Care Licensing, 6500 Hollister Ave #200, Goleta, CA 93117
 - (805) 562-0400

The SMP director will maintain a log of all grievances submitted including notes on the progress made toward resolution.

No family served by St. Mark Preschool shall be penalized for filing a grievance or for contacting an advocate. Filing a grievance will not result in retaliation or barriers to services. All such matters are confidential.

Formal "Grievance Procedure Submission" form can be found at the main office.

CONFIDENTIALITY

KEEPING STUDENT FILES CONFIDENTIAL AND OBTAINING PARENT CONSENT

St. Mark Preschool will keep any one or all of the following health and safety information about each enrolled child in a confidential file in a central location:

- Names of family members legally responsible for the child.
- Any information gained about race, home language, religion, culture, and family structure.
- Documentation of any meetings with families regarding Individual Educational Plans or other, observational efforts to respond to challenging behaviors.
- Notes on family practices and how they are incorporated into child's care.
- Any assessment information.
- Results of developmental screening.
- Individual health records, immunizations, current health information, emergency contact information, special health instructions and care needs such as allergies, and list of individuals authorized to have access to health records.
- Parental permission forms.
- Medications provided with administration records.

Confidential information will be reviewed and updated on a quarterly basis or as needed.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND STAFF

In order to protect the confidentiality of children, families, and staff at SMP, please do not post any pictures or information of children, families, or staff in any public area such as social networks such as Instagram, Facebook or Twitter. If you have questions or concerns, please speak with the director. The director can contact the other families for permission to post.

RETENTION OF CHILD FILES

It is the policy of St. Mark in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations 34 CFR 300.573 and Department of Family Services Rules and Regulations to dispose of a child's file at the end of five years after services with SMP culminate. If you desire information from your child's file in that five-year time frame, please notify the SMP in writing to request your child's file.

NOTIFICATION OF PRIVACY RIGHTS UNDER THE HEALTH INSURANCE PORTABILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT (HIPAA)

The following steps are to be followed to inform employees and families concerning their privacy rights under HIPAA:

- Upon intake of a family or employment of a new staff member, provision of a Notice of Privacy Rights under the Health Insurance Portability and Privacy Act (HIPAA) will be provided. Signed acknowledgment of receipt of privacy rights will be obtained.
- Present employees and families will also be provided with the Notice of Privacy Rights under HIPAA which will also include signed acknowledgment of receipt of these Rights.
- Signed acknowledgment will be maintained in each employee's personnel file and the files of all enrolled children.

SMP will continue to follow current practices of confidentiality to maintain confidentiality of staff and families.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

HANDWASHING PROCEDURES

Proper hand washing is crucial to preventing the spread of infection. Proper hand washing procedures include using liquid soap and running water, rubbing hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails, rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, a single-use towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g. by using a paper towel to turn off water).

Children and Adults wash their hands at the following times: on arrival for the day; after diapering or using the toilet; before preparing or eating snacks; after playing in water that is shared by two or more people; when visiting another classroom; and after handling materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals.

Adults also wash their hands at the following times: before and after serving food to a child; before and after administering medication; after assisting a child with toileting; and after handling garbage or cleaning.

Wearing gloves is required when handling blood or body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or touching any mucus, blood, or vomit) that may or may not contain blood. Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur. Staff does not use hand washing sinks for bathing children or removing fecal material. When sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff must clean and sanitize the sink before using it to prepare food. Note: If alcohol-based hand rubs are used in lieu of hand washing as a temporary measure, enough must be used to keep the hands wet for 15 seconds. These hand rubs must be used and stored according to the manufacturer's specifications.

POLICY FOR CHILDREN'S REST PERIOD

Community Care Licensing requires all children to participate in a rest period. Children who do not fall asleep, will rest quietly, and exit the nap room early. Children, who do fall asleep, will be given ample time to rest and gently awakened by 3:00p.m. During the rest time, at least two teachers will stay with the children and assist with trips to the bathroom as needed. Please provide a child-size pillow, pillowcase, and an easy-to-wash blanket. Bedding will be sent home to be cleaned weekly.

NUTRITION, SANITATION, HYGIENE, AND FOOD HANDLING

The SMP program requires that all food for meals and snacks (whether catered or prepared on site), are prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines.

All food brought from home is commercially prepared packaged food in unopened containers or is whole fruits and meets the USDA guidelines. Specialized food and beverages brought from home to accommodate a child's special nutritional requirements are labeled with the child's name and date.

Staff takes steps to ensure food safety in its provision of meals and snacks. Staff discards food with expired dates. The program documents compliance and any corrections made according to the recommendations of the program's health consultant that reflect consideration of federal and other applicable food safety standards. Liquids and foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Staff makes sure that food requiring refrigeration stays cold until served.

Staff does not offer children younger than 2 years the following foods: hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds), whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonful's of peanut butter, chunks of raw carrots, or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

For children with special needs who have special feeding needs, program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes and provide families with that information.

For children with special health care needs or food allergies or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider gives the program an individualized care plan that is prepared in consultation with family members and specialists.

If a child has food allergies, the program asks families to give consent for posting information about the child's food allergy and if consent is given, the staff posts that information in the food preparation area and in the areas of the facility the child uses so it is a visual reminder for all those who interact with the child during the program day.

SNACK AND LUNCH

Children bring their lunch in a labeled lunch box. For health and safety reasons SMP does not provide refrigeration or heating of the children's lunches. Parents should take all necessary precautions to prevent food from spoiling (such as providing blue ice). SMP prohibits candy and soda in lunches. If parents send juice, please make it 100% juice as the school encourages healthy eating habits as part of the learning process.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

To protect the health and safety of each child who attends St. Mark Preschool, the program requires that a record of immunization must be included in each child's file prior to the child's start date for preschool. Any immunizations that a child has not received may be obtained at the Public Health Department or at the child's physician's office. This record must be kept current and up to date. Failure to do this will result in termination of preschool services in accordance with the Community Care Licensing requirements. (Exceptions to this policy include: a signed Religious and/or Medical Exemption.)

DIAPERING

Staff will use only commercially available disposable diapers or pull-ups unless the child has medical reasons that do not permit their use. This must be documented by the healthcare provider. For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit. Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.

Staff will check children's diapers every 2 hours for signs that diapers/pull-ups are wet and/or soiled. Staff will document on the "Diaper Changing Chart" that the child's diaper was checked and/or changed. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled. Staff members will always change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility.

When changing a child's diaper/pull-up on an elevated surface, the staff member will always have a hand on the child. Vinyl non-allergenic gloves are always required during diaper changing. Soiled diapers will be put in a plastic bag and placed in designated hands-free containers that are kept closed and are not used by children.

After removing gloves, staff will help the child wash his/her hands as well as wash their own hands. Staff will clean the diaper areas with a bleach solution, then wipe with a clean paper towel so the changing areas will be ready for the next child's use. Staff will wash their hands again after cleaning the diaper area.

POLICY FOR CHILDREN WITH AN ILLNESS OR CONTAGIOUS CONDITION

St. Mark aims to prevent the spread of colds, infections, and communicable diseases. Parents are required to evaluate the health of their child prior to attending each day. When a child has any sign or symptom of illness or contagious condition that requires exclusion from the program, the preschool teaching staff or another designated staff member will immediately inform the parent, legal guardian, or other person authorized by the parent to inform them of the child's condition and ask for them to be picked up by an authorized adult.

If the child exhibits any of the following within the last 24-hour period, they may not attend school that day:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Fever above 99. degrees Fahrenheit
- Rash
- Clear nasal discharge (needs an allergy note from the pediatrician).
- Heavy nasal discharge
- Severe coughing
- Rapid or difficult breathing
- Persistent sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Conjunctivitis – inflammation of the eye
- Excessive fatigue or feeling uncomfortable
- Untreated Head Lice or nits
- Untreated Scabies
- Children suspected of being in contagious stages of chickenpox, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella or diphtheria or skin rashes lasting more than one day

Parents are to notify the school if the child has a contagious disease such as chicken pox, head lice, measles, conjunctivitis, etc. This is important as other families need to be notified of the spread of contagious disease.

If a child displays one or more of the above health conditions and/or St. Mark personnel observe health concerns or behaviors affecting a child's well-being, SMP reserves the right to request parents or guardians to pick up their child from the Center.

If a child does suffer an injury requiring greater medical care than minor first aid, or should they suffer a seizure, become unconscious, choke, have an allergic reaction, or require cardiopulmonary resuscitation, staff will remain with the child and 911 will be called for medical assistance. At the same time, the child's parents or emergency contact will be notified of the situation. Under no circumstances will a staff member attempt to transport a child in need of medical attention.

When an illness prevents a child from participating comfortably in activities or creates a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children, or if a child's condition is suspected to be contagious and requires exclusion as identified by public health authorities, then the child is made comfortable in a location where unexposed individuals will not be exposed and where he/she is supervised by a familiar caregiver until he/she can be picked up by an authorized adult.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

This policy is designed to deal with the problems presented by children who attend SMP and have communicable diseases and who could potentially transmit the disease to other children.

GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

1. A decision will be made on a case-by-case basis as to whether the condition of a child should result in exclusion from SMP and or related activities.
2. This determination will be made by a team composed of: the County Health Officer or his or her designee, the child's physician, the child's parent(s) or guardian(s), and two or more SMP personnel as designated by the director. Other members may be appointed to the team, depending on circumstances as designated by the director.
3. In making this decision, the team shall use the criteria established by the Centers of Disease Control as the basis for decision.
4. The team shall also consider:
 - a. The behavior, neurological development, and physical condition of the child
 - b. The expected type of interaction with others in the preschool setting
 - c. The impact on the child who has the clinical disease and others in that setting
 - d. Risk, if any, to clientele and personnel at SMP
5. SMP does not screen for communicable diseases, however, if the Director has reasonable cause, as agreed on in conference with public health officials, to believe a child has a communicable disease, SMP may require the child to submit to an appropriate medical evaluation.
6. The sexual orientation of a child shall not constitute reasonable cause to request a medical evaluation. No child shall be required to provide information as to his/her sexual orientation.
7. Children who must remain away from school because they have a communicable disease or whose regular services are provided through outreach in another environment will continue to receive an alternative homebound or outreach educational program utilizing qualified staff.
8. The teaching staff will provide information to families verbally and/or in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented within the program and measures that families should implement at home. SMP collaborates with the Public Health Department to provide documentation to families that gives advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur in the community.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Each child will have a completed student health information form on file which lists physician's names, dentist's names, and emergency contact information. In the event of an emergency, staff members will call 911 along with contacting the parent/guardian. In the event of individual children with known medical or developmental problems, individual care plans will be created and implemented with parents and staff.

MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN

St Mark Preschool's medication policy requires that a Medical Release Form or Seizure Plan (with parent signatures for release) is completed for every child who has or may have a need for medication to be administered during the time the child is at St. Mark Preschool. The appropriate training must be maintained and prescription on-hand for a staff member to administer EpiPen or inhaler.

All medication is required to be "checked in" with the director and properly stored in the director's office. Any medication required during field trips or outings will be transported and stored in an emergency backpack. The medicine(s) will be kept with a trained teacher or the director during outings. Any medication remaining at the end of the medication cycle will be disposed of properly.

Medication will be administered ONLY by staff members who have had specific training regarding medication administration and have an annual written performance evaluation by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration which include:

1. Verifying that the right child receives
2. The right medication
3. In the right dose
4. At the right time
5. By the right method with documentation of each "right" every time the medication is given.

The staff member administering the medication will sign or initial after each specific administration of medication.

The following requirements must be met for a trained staff member to administer medication to a child:

- All medications (prescription and "over the counter" medications) must be prescribed by a licensed health professional and must be accompanied by a Medication Release Form that is signed by the parent or legal guardian and a Physician Permission for Medication Form that is signed by the physician or a prescriptive authority.
- All medications must have the original label and stored in the original container.
- Medications must be labeled with the following information:
 1. The date that either the prescription was filled, or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider.
 2. The name of the licensed health care provider.
 3. The expiration date of the medication or the period of use of the medication.
 4. The name and phone number of the pharmacy.
- All medications must be accompanied by the manufacturer's instructions or the original prescription label that details the name and strength and dosage of the medication and

instructions on how to administer and store it. Medication requiring scoring must be scored before being brought to the Center.

- All medications are kept in the office. (During evacuation of the building, the director will be responsible for making sure that medications are transported safely to the correct destination.)

FIRST AID KITS AND MAINTENANCE

First-aid kits are in the following areas: in classrooms, on playground entrances, the school office, and in the designated field trip backpack. Classroom staff takes at least one portable first aid kit to the playground/big room area with the class and makes sure that first aid kits are with them when they are on field trips or outings.

First-aid kits that are located in classrooms are maintained by teaching staff on a continual basis. All of the other First Aid Kits are checked for contents by the maintenance staff throughout the year. All staff re-stocks first aid kits as items are depleted.

ALLERGIES OR OTHER HEALTH CONCERNS

Staff will maintain areas used by staff members or children who have allergies or any other special environmental health needs according to the recommendations of the health professionals.

An updated allergy and cautionary list is posted in the snack prep area as well as in each classroom.

PROCEDURES FOR UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS AND INFECTION CONTROL

Due to the increase in Hepatitis B and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infections, the Centers for Disease Control have recommended "Universal Blood and Body-Fluid Precautions." These measures are intended to prevent transmission of Hepatitis B, HIV, and other infections, as well as to decrease the risk of exposure for care-providers and students. As it is not possible to identify all infected individuals, these precautions must be used with every student regardless of his/her medical diagnosis.

The Centers for Disease Control identified the following as potentially infectious materials including : (1) The following human body fluids: human blood, semen, vaginal secretions, cerebrospinal fluid, synovial fluid, pleural fluid, pericardial fluid, peritoneal fluid, amniotic fluid, saliva in dental procedures, any body fluid visibly contaminated with blood, and all body fluids in situations where it is difficult or impossible to differentiate between body fluids; (2) any unfixed tissue or organ (other than intact skin) from a human (living or dead); and (3) HIV-containing cell or tissue cultures, organ cultures, and HIV-or HBV- containing culture medium or other solutions; and blood, organs, or other tissues from experimental animals infected with HIV or HBV.

The single most important step related to decreasing the risk of exposure and transmission of any infection is anticipating potential contact with infectious materials in routine as well as emergency situations. Based on the type of possible contact, the caregiver should be prepared to use the appropriate precautions and techniques prior to providing care. Diligent and a.) proper hand washing, the b.) use of barriers, c.) appropriate disposal of waste products and needles, and d.) proper decontamination of spills are essential techniques of infection control.

Using common sense in the application of these measures will enhance protection of both the caregiver and the student. Information related to proper cautions and techniques includes the following descriptions:

1. Proper hand washing is crucial to preventing the spread of infection. Proper hand washing procedures include using liquid soap and running water, rubbing hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails, rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, a single-use towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g. by using a paper towel to turn off water)
2. Barriers are crucial when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (wearing gloves is required). Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
3. Staff does not use hand washing sinks for bathing children or removing fecal material. When sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff
4. must clean and sanitize the sink before using it to prepare food. Note: If alcohol-based hand rubs are used in lieu of hand washing as a temporary measure enough must be used to keep the hands wet for 15 seconds. These hand rubs must be used and stored according to the manufacturer's specifications.
5. Appropriate disposal of waste products and needles is an essential technique of infection control. After appropriately cleaning the contaminated area the waste products will be disposed of in an enclosed container away from the children and adults outside the classroom/ school area.
6. Proper decontamination of spills is an essential technique of infection control. Wash the contaminated area immediately with soap and water and dispose of the waste products appropriately. After cleaning, staff will sanitize nonporous surfaces immediately.
7. Rugs and carpet will be cleaned by blotting, spot cleaning with a detergent-disinfectant, and shampooing or steam cleaning.
8. Staff is required to dispose of contaminated materials and diapers in a plastic bag with a secure tie that is placed in a closed container.
9. Any toy that a child has placed in his or her mouth or that is otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion is to either be: 1) washed by hand using water and detergent, then rinsed, sanitized, and air dried, or 2) washed and dried in a mechanical dishwasher before it can be used by another child.

Pregnant women are at no higher risk of infection than other care-providers, if appropriate precautions are followed. However, due to the possibility of in utero transmission of viral infections such as cytomegalovirus (CMV) or (HIV), as well as the potential for adverse outcomes with these congenitally acquired infections, pregnant women should be especially careful to follow the universal precautions. (For more information, please refer to SMP's Policy Handbook for "Exposure Control Policy and Procedures and Body Fluid Pathogens.")

PROCEDURES TO PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS

The following policies and procedures are implemented to minimize occupational hazards:

1. St. Mark Preschool pays for Hepatitis B vaccines for staff members.
2. Staff members and children follow hand washing policies.

3. Teachers provide informational flyers to families about outbreaks of infectious diseases.
4. Staff members educate other staff on how to lift and help children safely (to help in preventing strains and injuries).
5. Staff members follow the “Policy for Outdoor Environment” to ensure both children and staff’s safety.
6. Staff members follow the “Building Maintenance Policies” (as stated in this handbook) to ensure children and staff’s safety.
7. Teaching staff are provided planning time away from the children and breaks after a four-hour time period.
8. Staff participates in blood borne pathogens training to respond to any first aid or clean up situation safely.
9. Staff members follow the “Medication Policy” (as stated in this handbook).
10. Staff follows the policies for supervising children (as stated in this handbook).
11. Space is provided away from other children for children to rest comfortably while waiting to be picked up due to illness.
12. Children and staff are provided with nutritious snacks according to program policy.
13. Appropriate sanitation, hygiene, and safe food practices are carried out according to program policy.
14. Maintenance of SMP’s building and playground is provided by the maintenance staff of SMP on a monthly basis or as needed.
15. Smoking and Firearm Policies (as stated in this handbook) provide protection from these hazards for children and staff.
16. Staff members provide information to families regarding local and community resources to promote child, family, and staff wellness.
17. SMP offers an Employee Assistance Plan that promotes wellness through counseling services for staff members and their immediate family members. These counseling services provide support for prevention and treatment of depression, stress management and other concerns.

AIR POLLUTION

In the situation of an air quality alert, the teaching staff will bring children in from the playground and follow local authority’s recommendations.

In the situation of any environmental hazard or threat in the area, the teaching staff will bring children in from the playground and follow local authority’s recommendations.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED FOR CLEANING TOYS WITHIN THE CLASSROOM

Toys are cleaned on a regular basis as needed. Any toys contaminated by body secretions will be removed from the child play area and will be sanitized by either using a water and detergent or bleach solution at the classroom sink area or washed in a mechanical dishwasher and air dried. Staff will follow standard blood borne precautions when cleaning toys or items. Toys are sanitized before they are again offered to children for play.

Any toy, classroom furnishings, items, etc. that cannot be easily cleaned by classroom staff will be removed from the child play area until it can be cleaned. Custodial assistance will be requested for special cleaning needs.

COMMUNAL WATER PLAY

During communal water play, precautions are taken so that no child drinks the water. During communal water play, children with sores on their hands are not permitted to participate in the communal water play. Fresh potable water is used, and the water is changed before a new group of children comes to participate in the water play activity. When the activity period is completed with each group of children, the water is drained. Children will wash hands when finished playing before moving on to the next activity.

SAFETY AND WELFARE OF CHILDREN IN OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT

Children will have daily opportunities for outdoor play (when weather does not pose a health risk). Weather that poses a significant health risk includes wind chill at or below 15 degrees and heat index at or above 90 degrees. Children should be dressed each day for the appropriate weather. It is recommended that children dress “in layers” during the cold weather season so that children can be comfortable during both inside and outside play. Children are requested to wear their shoes while riding a bike or working in the garden and during cold weather.

During the sunny months of weather, it is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to apply sunscreen at home before bringing their child to preschool. It is the policy of SMP that staff do not apply sunscreen because of the possibility of allergic reactions unless a signed authorization is on file. SMP staff members will then apply broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher as needed throughout the day to prevent sunburn.

If it is appropriate for a child to wear insect repellent, it is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to apply the insect repellent at home before bringing their child to preschool. It is the policy of SMP not to apply insect repellent to children because of the possibility of allergic reactions.

SMP will notify parents when Public Health Authorities recommend use of insect repellents due to high risk of insect borne diseases. Staff will monitor the playground area for any insect infestations and report any concerns to an administrator. SMP staff perform monthly safety checks of the playground. Any required corrections are done in a timely manner.

SAFETY & SECURITY

Safety is the highest priority at SMP, and as such, helps to maintain the sustainable development of our preschool. It is essential that the following priorities have the highest priority.

ACCESS TO SMP FOR FAMILY MEMBERS AND AUTHORIZED ADULTS

Family members are welcome to visit SMP’s facility anytime during hours of operation (7:45 a.m.-5:15 p.m.). All family members and authorized adults for preschool children visiting the facility are required to check in with the office staff. The family member or authorized adult is responsible for signing the child “in or out” in the classroom. Any adult (other than the child’s parents) who is responsible for signing the

child in or out of the preschool, must be 18 years or older. Family members/authorized adults may be asked to show proof of identification when picking up a child.

If a parent or family member is not allowed to visit their child due to court ordered or legal documents that are in place, the office staff will address this issue with the individual if he/she should attempt visitation while the child is at preschool.

If needed, a member from the administrative team will help to address the issue with the unauthorized adult and/or if needed, law enforcement will be called to enforce the court documents. Only authorized individuals as designated by the child's parents/guardians will be allowed to pick the child up from preschool.

All visitors and family members/authorized adults will be required to follow safety procedures with staff and children. (For example: fire drills, lock down situations)

VISITOR ACCESS TO THE PRESCHOOL

Visitors are only allowed on property with prior approval from the Director. Visitors must "sign in" and "sign out" at the Director's Office and wear a visitor's tag. Visitors are always required to be accompanied by an employee. Visitors must abide by the St. Mark Preschool safety policies.

SMOKING, VAPING AND TOBACCO PRODUCTS

In the interest of public health, SMP prohibits the use of products containing tobacco or nicotine, including, but not limited to, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew, and clove cigarettes, on St. Mark United Methodist Church property or SMP property, and in school vehicles always. This prohibition also applies to electronic nicotine delivery systems, such as electronic cigarettes, electronic hookahs, and other vapor emitting devices, with or without nicotine content, that mimic the use of tobacco products any time. This policy applies to all students, employees, and visitors. This section does not prohibit the use or possession of prescription products, or other FDA-approved cessation aids such as nicotine patches or nicotine gum. Student use or possession of such products must conform to laws governing student use and possession of medications on school property.

Smoking or use of any tobacco-related products and disposal of any tobacco-related waste are prohibited on our property, except on a public sidewalk located within 25 feet from the playground.

PROHIBITION OF FIREARMS, WEAPONS, AND OTHER HAZARDOUS RISKS

Firearms, weapons, and any other hazardous risks to children or adults are prohibited in any building or on the grounds of the SMP campus. The only exception is for law enforcement personnel who are required to carry firearms.

Possession or use of dangerous or deadly weapons in the buildings or on the preschool grounds, or at any preschool sponsored activity is prohibited. No person shall possess, handle, transmit, or conceal any object that could be used as a weapon, disrupt the educational process, or cause harm to another person. This weapon definition is not limited to the obvious, but includes any item that can be construed as a

weapon, such as guns of any type and toy guns that resemble guns, Ninja stars, screw drivers, ball bats, slingshots, bludgeons, knives, or any pocketknife where the blade is carried in an opened position.

The possession or use of any weapon will result in suspension with possibility of expulsion of the child involved. Any adult violating this policy may be banned from access to the building. Any exception to this regulation requires the approval of the director, PAC, or an appointed designee.

HARASSMENT

St. Mark Preschool has a strict policy that prohibits harassment or “abusive conduct” in any form. Conduct that produces a discriminatory, intimidating, or offensive school environment will not be tolerated. To report or resolve such problems please contact the director or a member of PAC. The director will immediately conduct a confidential investigation of the complaint. A report of findings and recommendations will be discussed for resolution and action if necessary.

Definition - Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal Harassment – For example, epithets, derogatory comments, or slurs based on race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, disability, medical condition, marital status, sex, or age.
- Physical Harassment – For example, assault, impeding or blocking movement, or any physical interference with normal work or movement when directed at an individual based on race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, disability, medical condition, marital status, sex, or age.
- Visual Forms of Harassment – For example, derogatory posters, notices, bulletins, cartoons, or drawings based on race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, disability, medical conditions, marital status, sex, or age.
- Sexual Harassment – Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, made by someone from or in the work or education setting, under any of the following conditions:

If you believe that you have been the victim of harassment or if you have witnessed harassment, please contact the director, and fill out a report.

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IS A MANDATED STAFF RESPONSIBILITY

Under the law, staff and parents have an obligation to report known and suspected incidents of child abuse and are a mandated reporter.

Section 11166 of the Penal Code requires any child care custodian, medical practitioner, non-medical practitioner, or employee of a child protective agency who has knowledge of or observes a child in his or her professional capacity or within the scope of his or her employment whom he or she knows or reasonably suspects has been the victim of a child abuse to report the known or suspected instance of child abuse to a child protective agency immediately or as soon as possible by telephone and to prepare and send a written report thereof within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

Your duty to report is individual, and no administrator or supervisor may impede or inhibit your duty to report, although you may also report to your administrator, supervisor, or the school nurse. Failure to report may risk loss of license or credential.

Common practice is for you to refer any known or suspected incidents of child abuse to the school principal so that these individuals, who are familiar with the procedures, can assist you. You must make the appropriate report to a child protective agency yourself, however. You can report by calling: 1 (800) 367-0166

STAFF MEMBER ACCUSED OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

If a SMP staff member is accused of abuse or neglect of a child in the program, the aforementioned staff member will be subject to the policies and procedures according to the Department of Family Services or local law enforcement agencies. The staff member may be subject to administrative leave with or without pay, based on the discretion of SMP management, and in compliance with any requirements of DFS or law enforcement authorities.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

St. Mark Preschool and personnel will follow Santa Barbara County's Emergency Procedures Plan in the event of an emergency or crisis. This plan provides for regular evacuation procedures practice and the practice of other emergency procedures.

WEATHER CLOSURE

St. Mark Preschool will follow the school closure policy of the Santa Barbara and Hope School Districts. When primary schools are closed due to weather, SMP will likely also be closed. If the local schools have a late start time due to weather, SMP will more than likely have a late start time for the day. Parents are encouraged to check the radio and television stations for confirmation or call SMP - after 6:45 AM - to see if the phone message indicates an updated status regarding preschool classes.

EMERGENCIES

The St. Mark Preschool facility has plans covering possible emergencies including communications, evacuation routes, safe areas, and other considerations as appropriate. Parents may request to see these plans. Each employee should check with the director for the directions and specifics of these plans for their individual work areas.

CLOSURE DUE TO EMERGENCIES

In the event of a school closure that is announced and is implemented prior to the beginning of the school day, you are not expected to report to your school site. School closure would be announced on local radio and television stations, and occasionally by means of a phone call, text message or email from the director or PAC.

If a school closure is announced or implemented following the opening of the school day, or that a disaster or emergency occurs during the school day, children are expected to remain at the school site until children are released to parents. Parents should not come to SMP to pick up their child until they have been told that they may do so. Parents may be requested to pick up their child at the evacuation site.

EVACUATION PROCEDURE

If it becomes necessary to evacuate staff and children from the center, the following evacuation site has been secured:

- The primary evacuation points for 3942 La Colina Road will be Hope School which is located at 3970 La Colina Road. As a backup location, Trinity Lutheran located at 909 N La Cumbre will be utilized.
- Parents and Guardians will be notified of the evacuation and children will be released to an authorized escort at the evacuation site.

LOCKDOWN POLICY

Lockdowns are a response to any external incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of children and adults in the setting.

A lockdown may be activated in response to any number of situations, but some of the more typical might be:

1. A reported incident or disturbance in the local community (with the potential to pose a risk to children and adults in the setting)
2. An intruder onsite (with the potential to pose a risk to children and adults in the setting)
3. A warning being received regarding an environmental risk locally, of air pollution (smoke plume, gas cloud etc)
4. A major fire in the vicinity of the setting
5. The close proximity of a dangerous animal

PROCEDURES FOR THE CLASSES

Sea Turtles, Dolphins Ladybugs, Butterflies, Dragonflies, Grasshoppers and Honey Bees:

- Lock doors
- Close and lock windows
- Turn off lights

- Close Blinds (unable to do this step until blinds are replaced)
- Grab sign-in clipboard
- Push table under windows
- Have all students hide under tables
- “Shhhhhh” - have students remain quiet
- Wait for “All clear” to be posted on Slack

Busy Bees:

- Turn off lights
- Grab sign-in clipboard
- Have all students hide in bathroom
- Lock bathroom doors
- “Shhhhhh” - have students remain quiet
- Wait for “All clear” to be texted.

What a teacher may say to the children: “Boys and girls, Miss Michele is locking down the school to make sure everyone is safe. Let’s play the quiet game until Miss Michele says it’s “All clear.”

When there is a lockdown, parents:

- Will NOT contact the school during lockdown as this could block telephone lines needed for contacting emergency services.
- Will NOT come to the school during a lockdown as this may place you and the staff and children in danger Wait for SMP to contact you about when it is safe for you to come and get your child(ren).

THE BUILDING & GROUNDS

BUILDING AND GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- Walls, floors, furnishings, the outdoor play area, and equipment are kept in good repair and are safe with no sharp edges, splinters, protruding or rusty nails, or missing parts.
- All areas, both indoors and outdoors, are free from glass, trash, sharp or hazardous items, and visible soil, and are in a clean condition.
- Staff observes all areas of the facility, both indoors and outdoors, and takes steps to correct or avoid unsafe conditions.
- Program staff will protect children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock by having child safe covers on all outlets.
- Children are protected from burns and scalding liquids by staff following the policy of children having no access to liquids or foods of temperature higher than 110 degrees.
- Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping or slipping.
- Fully equipped first-aid kits are readily available and maintained for each group of children. Staff takes at least one kit to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.
- Fully working fire extinguishers and fire alarms are installed in each school site and are tagged and serviced annually. Fire alarms are tested yearly, and a written log of testing dates is maintained and available.
- If the building has areas that have been recently painted, carpeted, tiled, or otherwise renovated, those areas are ventilated before they are used by children.

In turn, the SMP teacher or staff member must wait with the child until the parent or guardian “signs out” the child for the day. This procedure provides for adult guidance at all times and the safety of SMP on our campus.

PARKING

There are three parking lots at St. Mark United Methodist Church. Preschool parents can park in the small parking lot to the right of the entryway drive (for the toddler program). The primary parking lot is located at the back or north side of the building.

Some parking may be reserved for St. Mark Church purposes. Advance notice will be issued, and parents must not park in these reserved areas. All who use St. Mark Preschool parking facilities do so at their own risk. St. Mark Preschool is not responsible for damage, fire, or theft of or from the vehicles parked on its property. The speed limit in parking lots is 5 miles-per-hour unless posted otherwise. Accidents in SMP parking lots must be reported in the same manner as those occurring on public accesses. SMP is not liable for accidents in its parking lots.

**PLEASE SIGN ‘ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT & COMPLIANCE OF PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES’
FORM AND RETURN WITH ENROLLMENT PACKET
THANK YOU!**