

# *SAINT MARK Early Learning Center*



PARENT  
HANDBOOK  
2021-2022

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# SAINT MARK EARLY LEARNING CENTER

## Mission Statement

At Saint Mark Early Learning Center, we consider it a privilege to guide your child, as they grow and develop through the most important formative years of their lives.

- ✿ We are dedicated to assisting families in all areas of their child's education: spiritual, mental, physical, social and emotional.
- ✿ Emphasis is placed on the whole child, and our goal is to provide experiences that will help the child develop to his/her full potential as an individual.
- ✿ To facilitate the understanding that all people are special to God.

## **SAINT MARK EARLY LEARNING CENTER WEEKDAY CHILDREN'S MINISTRY STAFF**

Director of ELC:	Sandy Jenkins
Assistant Director ELC:	Amy Wykle
Administrative Assistant	Traci Bailey
Senior Minister:	Rev. Drew Clayton
Associate Minister:	Rev. Ryan Karr

# ENROLLMENT

## HOURS OF OPERATION

7:00 AM to 4:30 PM  
Monday through Friday  
Mother's Day Out 9:00 AM-1:00 PM  
Pre-School/Core Curriculum 9:00 AM-1:00 PM  
Before Care 7:00 AM-9:00 AM  
After Care 1:00 AM-4:30 PM  
Kindergarten 8:30-3:30

## SCHOOL CALENDAR

2021-2022 School Year \*Subject to change

August 3 Meet the teacher –  
Students last name A-D 10:00 AM 2 ADULTS PER STUDENT AND A  
MASK IS  
Students last name E-J 10:30 AM REQUIRED WE RESPECTFULLY  
ASK  
Students last name K-R 11:00 AM THAT OLDER SIBLINGS DO NOT  
Students last name S-Z 11:30 AM ATTEND THIS EVENT  
You will be allowed to walk your child to their classroom and introduce them to their teacher on this day and take a first day photo.

August 4 First Day of School- All students will enter through carpool  
August 16 Fundraiser begins – Ends August 30  
September 6 Labor Day ELC Closed  
September TBA School Pictures  
October TBA Children's Theater  
October 8-11 & 12 Closed for Deep Clean  
October 27 Pumpkin Patch Day  
November 11 Veterans Day ELC Closed  
November 18 Thanksgiving Program 9:30 AM-GYM  
November 15-19 Parent/Teacher Conferences  
November 24-26 Thanksgiving ELC Closed  
December 8 Winter Fun Day/PJ DAY  
December 17 Happy Birthday Jesus Party -Early Dismissal at 1:00 PM  
December 18-31 Christmas Holiday's ELC Closed  
January 3 & 4  
January 5 First Day back for Students  
January 17 MLK Day ELC Closed  
January 20 Around the World Day  
February 14 Valentines Celebration  
February 18-21 ELC Closed for Deep cleaning  
Feb. 28-March 4 Dr. Suess Week -More Information to come  
March 28-April 1 Spring Break ELC Closed  
April 14 Easter Celebration  
April 15-18 Easter- ELC Closed  
April 25 Muffins for Mom 7-9 AM Fellowship Hall  
April 26 Doughnuts for Dad 7-9 AM Fellowship Hall  
May 17 Graduation 4K & 5K 6:00 PM

May 25                      End of Year Celebration  
 May 26                      Last Day- Early Dismissal at 1 PM

## APPLICATION

### All application forms must be completed online:

<https://register.runsandbox.com?form=a21ad409-6e17-4057-bc57-d7e51cd0ebf6>

Names on the waitlist are eligible for the school year in which they are accepted. When a vacancy occurs, an administrator will contact the family. Families will be given 5 business days to accept or decline or move to waitlist placement. Application fees are non-refundable. Registration fee of \$175 must be paid online to complete enrollment.

## ADMISSIONS

Applications are accepted throughout the year on a first-come, first-serve basis.

### Registration forms must be completed online

<https://register.runsandbox.com?form=a21ad409-6e17-4057-bc57-d7e51cd0ebf6>

**Please do not ask for exceptions!**

- All payments for Saint Mark ELC are **ONLY** payable online.
- INFANTS ONLY-August tuition as well as first semester supply fee is due July 15<sup>th</sup>. Failure to pay by July 15<sup>th</sup> will result in loss of child's enrollment.
- Toddler, 2K, 3K and 4K August tuition and the first semester supply fee is due July 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Failure to pay by July 15<sup>th</sup> will result in loss of child's enrollment.
- Tuition is due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month and is considered late on the 5<sup>th</sup> a fee of \$50 will automatically be added to your account. You can set up automatic withdrawal in Sandbox.
- A two-week notice is to be given in writing should you need to withdraw. No fees are refundable.
- Saint Mark ELC welcomes all children and does not discriminate children of any race, color, creed, religion or special need. The placement of a child in a class is based on his/her age as of September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year.
- 2K-4K will remain in the same class throughout the school year for which they are registered. They do not move up during the school year. Infants and Toddlers may be moved to the next class during the school year depending on developmental progress, class size and/or at the discretion of the Director. Parents will be contacted prior to moving a child.

## REQUIRED FORMS

**We are honored to be a DHR licensed facility** and we adhere to all DHR policies and procedures. DHR requires the following forms be completed for each child. (All blanks must be filled in use N/A when applicable)

### Required by August 1, of each school year:

- Alabama Immunization Form for your child to attend -These can be downloaded on your

sandbox parent portal

- DHR required Enrollment Form
- Signed Parent Agreement- Online
- Flu information sheet
- Permission for use of Hand Sanitizer

## FEES AND TUITION

**We are a self-supporting, non-profit organization and all fees are used to provide the best teachers, equipment and supplies possible. We do not receive funding from any outside sources.**

- **Registration Fee-\$175/yr Non-Refundable Due upon registering**
- **Waitlist Fee-\$175/yr Non-Refundable Due upon waitlisted**
- **Supply Fee-\$200/per semester Non-Refundable Due Summer & January**
- **Tuition Non-Refundable Due by 1<sup>st</sup> of each month**
- **August Tuition Non-Refundable Due by July 15<sup>st</sup> each year**

Class	Days	Monthly Fee 9-1	Monthly Fee 7-4:30	Additional Before Care 7-9	Additional After Care 1-4:30	Monthly Stay & Play 1-2 (3K/4K Only)	Due
Infants/Toddlers	5	\$750	\$950	\$100	\$125		*** All Tuition is due on the 1 <sup>st</sup> .
Infants/Toddlers	3	\$600	\$700	\$75	\$100		
Infants/Toddlers	2	\$425	\$550	\$75	\$100		
2K	5	\$650	\$850	\$100	\$125		
2K	3	\$400	\$650	\$75	\$100		
2K	2	\$300	\$575	\$75	\$100		
3K-4K	5	\$400	\$600	\$100	\$125	\$125	
3K-4K	3	\$325	\$500	\$75	\$100	\$110	
4.5K	8:30-3:30	\$600		\$50	\$50		
Registration			\$175				Upon Registration
Wait List Fee			\$175				Upon Placement
Credit Card Fee (EBT/Debit no fee)			Amount	Bank	Charges		Monthly
Supply Fee			\$200	Per Semester			Due July 15 January 31
Late Paperwork			\$50				After July 1
Change in Service			\$50				Upon Change
Late payment			\$50				After the 5 <sup>th</sup> of the month
Extra Curricular Fee			\$30	*Subject to	Change		Per Month
Late Pick Up Fee			See Late Policy				
Drop In Early Care 7-9	\$25						
Drop In After Care 1-4:30	\$25						
Drop in Day 9-1 only	\$50						
Extra Drop In Day 7:00-4:30	\$75						

### LATE PICK-UP FEES

All children whom are not picked up from care by 4:30 will incur a \$1.00 per minute charge. We respectfully request that you arrive by 4:20 PM our building closes promptly at 4:30

### SUPPLIES

All supplies are covered in the supply fee, other than diapers, lunches or napmats. We ask that you provide at least a 720 count wipes per child. You may bring them both now or one now and one in January.

Or we can charge your Sandbox account \$30 per child.

### MANDATORY CLOSURE

If we must be closed for random inclement weather, medical reasons, facility reasons or any other unscheduled or scheduled days there is NO CHANGE IN TUITION AND DAYS CAN NOT BE MADE UP. For example: we have to be closed on a Monday and that is your regularly scheduled day you cannot send your child on Tuesday to make up that day.

If for any reason any federal, state or local entities require the closure of Saint Mark, parents will be informed of the protocol of charges and payments due during the closure. One set policy cannot be made for every scenario that could or might occur. In all things we try to be fair and equitable in all situations to our families and staff.

### DROP IN DAYS

\*When space is available, we will accommodate "drop ins"

\*This year it will be more important than ever that these days must be scheduled in advance- We are starting the year with full classes so we may not be able to readily accommodate drop-in days as in the past.

\*To schedule a drop in please message us in your Sandbox Portal 24 hours in advance. DO NOT text or ask your child's teacher. This must be done through the office.

\*No drop in's during the month of August.

## **SAFETY**

### STAFF

We require that our faculty be responsible and loving people with a broad knowledge in child development. It is our objective to employ highly qualified staff who love working with children. We seek staff members with a background in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, professional certification, or proven experience teaching preschool children. We require that staff exhibit Christian convictions in everything they do.

Saint Mark has required that all staff be fully vaccinated this including Covid 19.

All staff of Saint Mark are required by law to report any suspected child abuse to DHR

**STAFF BEHAVIORS THAT ARE PROHIBITED:**

- No Saint Mark staff shall discuss or disclose personal information regarding children.
- Physical or aversive punishment
- Withdrawal of food, nap, or bathroom opportunities
- Abusive, profane, or derogatory language, including yelling or belittling
- Any form of public or private humiliation
- Any form of emotional abuse

**STAFF TO CHILD RATIO**

Infants	1-4
Toddler	1-6
2's	1-7
3's	1-11
4's	1-12

**CENTER SECURITY**

The Early Learning Center is located in the Children's building of Saint Mark United Methodist Church. Doors into the ELC require a code for access. For the present time you must call the office for access 205.822.1312. This is our present protocol, no one is allowed to enter the building other than students and staff of Saint Mark.

**ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

- Children must be signed-in daily on the school app.
- We ask that you have your cell phone ready to use to check in/out with.
- Everyone authorized to pick up a child must be entered in the Sandbox portal with complete phone number and e-mail address.
- Saint Mark will not release children to a person who is visibility impaired due to a suspected medical condition, alcohol consumption, substance abuse, prescription drugs or other causes. In the event the parent or legal guardian is impaired, the Director will call someone designated on the release form.

**AUTHORIZATION FOR PICK UP**

Parents must list those persons that have permission to pick up their child from Saint Mark. Anyone other than parents must be listed on the registration form along with a telephone number and complete e-mail. The Sandbox system ties names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses together. Any person not recognized will be asked to show their driver's license for identification. It is a good practice for the parent to notify the staff and Director when other persons are expected to pick up the child. We also need to know if anyone is not authorized to pick up for any reason such as the other parent etc. If this is the case, we must have a copy of the divorce decree or custody letter stating that they are not allowed to pick up. This must contain a judge's signature and time stamp. Legally we cannot keep a parent from picking up a child unless we have documentation on site.



- Please end all cell phone calls before entering the campus so that your full attention can be on the parking lot and your child.
- When parking to come to the building, park in a designated parking space only.
- Turn off your car and lock it. Do not leave it running.
- Do not leave children of any age unattended for any reason.
- Saint Mark is not responsible for any personal items left in your vehicle.

Covid- ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE PROCEDURES 2021-2022: (Subject to change)- Protocol as of September 2021

- All parents are to go through the car-pool line. (Teachers will be present to walk your child to their class) There will be no admittance into the building. We are hoping to relax this further into the school year. It will depend on the variant and illnesses once school begins
- Please check your child's temperature before coming to school.
- The parent will sign in their child in with the app, answer any health-related questions and a visual health assessment will be taken on the child and recorded. If the child is suspected of having a temperature we will check. If the child has a temp of 100.4 they will not be allowed to stay at school. If a child has a temperature between 98.6-100.3 parents must have an action plan in case pick up is deemed necessary during the day. **Parents must inform the person in charge at the time of drop off whom to contact in case the child needs to go home. NO CHILD MAY BE GIVEN ANY MEDICATION TO REDUCE FEVER PRIOR TO COMING TO SCHOOL!**
- Morning carpool will be daily 7am-9am. There will be no building access via the front office during this time. All administrative personnel will be assisting with child intake. We will be unavailable to take calls during this time.
- Each day we will intake students at the "CARPOOL entrance- we are going to call this entrance #1" to the school beginning at 7 am. This is a process and the first few days expect delays! We will get faster as the days go by but please make allowances at the beginning. There will be staff there to take your child to their class.
- The children 2 and under will get a free ride in a cool wagon to their classroom where a staff member will take them to their class and sign them into their classroom and give them to their teacher. All 3K and 4K students will be accompanied by a staff member and will take them and sign them into their classroom.
- All wagons will be sanitized between each transportation of a child.
- Upon arrival of every student and staff member hands will be washed.
- All staff members will also be screened daily. Mask are not required of staff due to being fully vaccinated.
- Random checks will be conducted during the day and for anyone suspect of having a fever.

- Wearing of facial mask by adults other than staff is required. Children 2 and older can wear facial mask if parents desire. Please label mask with the child's name. And practice with your child how to put the mask on and to leave it on. We cannot be held responsible for lost mask and constant reminders to keep them on.
- Once the child is signed in make your good-byes quickly and they will be escorted by a staff member to their class. We are to keep contact inside the center to students and staffing only.
- If your child departs for the day at 1PM you will follow the same morning routine. You will go thru the carpool line and your child will be brought to you. We will help get them settled in the car but it is your responsibility to make sure your child is adequately buckled up and ready to travel. You may pull over to a parking space and check prior to leaving. Saint Mark and its staff cannot be held responsible for making sure that a child is buckled in properly this is the parent's responsibility. **STAFF WILL NOT BUCKLE A CHILD IN THEIR CAR SEAT.**
- No child may be placed into a car without a proper car seat. We ask that once your child is loaded that you pull forward to a parking spot and check to make sure your child is restrained properly. Saint Mark is not liable for proper placement in car-seats.
- INFANT PARENTS- if you are comfortable with your infant being taken to their room via wagon, we will be happy to do that. You must leave them restrained in their car seat. Once they can sit up, we ask that they be allowed to be taken out of the car seat so that they can be carried. The child plus the car seat is too heavy.
- If you arrive after carpool is over you will have to walk your child to the main entrance of the ELC and ring and wait for a staff member so they can do your intake outside of the building- no parents will be admitted to the building.
- It is highly recommended that you arrive on time.
- If your child will be leaving at 1 PM they will be brought to the carpool entrance at 12:55 pm supervised by staff. Your child will be brought to you and you will sign your child out for the day.
- If your child will be leaving at any time after that you will check in with the office, we have a bell that alerts us when someone arrives in carpool. A staff member will bring your child to you. You will then sign your child out for the day.
- IF there is torrential rain you will proceed around to the other side of the building and we will receive or depart the children at that entrance that is more covered from the elements. We will call this entrance #2. Please pull as forward as possible so that we can load/unload two cars at a time. You are welcome to get out of your vehicle and make sure that your child is properly restrained, so that you do not get wet!

## ADDDITIONAL PROTOCOL

- All door handles and handrails will be disinfected daily.
- If anyone is found to be positive for any communicable disease you will be informed via the parent portal. If a person knowingly has been exposed to any communicable disease you are to inform the school at once. This does not mean the whole school will shut down unless asked to by health officials.
- This year we are asking for children to use their favorite back pack. We request FULL size no mini's so that their lunch box and all items will fit neatly and be able to be zipped so that nothing will fall out during transportation to school and home! Please label so that it is easily readable/recognizable. This is also important for the older children so that they can learn the school skills of packing and unpacking their own back pack. I would recommend a back pack that can be of heavy-duty material that can be laundered or a vinyl that can be wiped down and cleaned frequently. This will be the responsibility of the parents.
- Our building will be totally cleaned and sanitized prior to the start of school. And deep cleaned every three months. Carpets have been professionally cleaned and a special Covid protectant has been used; the rooms will be cleaned daily in addition to the protocol of the teachers.
- Outside play will be conducted and encouraged. Please send your child in clothing that can get dirty!
- Our DHR/Saint Mark ratios are under what is recommended for children per classroom.
- When possible, within the temperature required by DHR and the health department, -we will open the windows in the classroom. Between 68-82 degrees.
- At any time illness is suspected we will then asses the person for illness.
- Any item/toy that has been placed in the mouth will immediately be placed in the class bucket that will be cleaned and disinfected prior to coming back into the classroom.
- All toys and learning/teaching items will be rotated and cleaned at the end of the day.
- All items will be covered when not in use.
- We will not use the water fountains each child is to bring a labeled water bottle no taller than 7.5 inches tall to keep in their cubby for easy accessibility to water anytime they need or want water during the day. If they run out the teacher will refill it for them. We ask not for just a bottle of water; I ask that it be a bottle that closes and that they can access and recloses. It needs to be clearly labeled with their name. It will go home every day to be cleaned and returned the next day. It would be best if it had a protected top or cover.
- Lunches will take place in the child's classroom as usual.

- Mask for children 2 years and older is recommended but not required. These are to be SUPPLIED BY THE PARENT.
- If your child will be staying for aftercare you will be required to supply a nap mat. We kindly request that it be one that the blanket and pillow are all attached together.

These must fit in the bag provided by the ELC (24"x 32"). This will ensure that they stay clean and sanitized. They will be placed in the bag every day after nap time and no longer stored on the cot itself. Every Friday the mat will be sent home to be cleaned and return them on Monday mornings. Please do not send extra blankets, pillows or stuffed animals.

### **COVID ILLNESS POLICY**

**Our illness policy seems to change each day as more is learned about Covid and its variants. We appreciate your understanding as we try to navigate this illness. We will update you via the portal and e-mail of any changes to this policy.**

### **SAINT MARK EARLY LEARNING CENTER COVID ILLNESS POLICY (Version 9/13/21)**

The Early Learning Center illness policy has been researched and advised by the Saint Mark United Methodist Church Re-Entry Team, comprised of multiple physicians in Birmingham. The goal has been to create a policy that balances *safety* and *practicality*. Due to the shifting nature of Covid-19 and its variants, we appreciate your understanding and flexibility as we navigate this illness. We will update you via the portal and e-mail of any changes to this policy.

If your child has had a **DIRECT EXPOSURE**:

- Direct exposure is defined as 15 minutes of exposure within 3 feet
- You must contact the ELC immediately if exposure was from an outside source
- If your exposure was inside the classroom, you will be called to pick up your child and the classroom will be closed for 10 days
- Your child must quarantine for **10 days** because of Alabama's high rate of cases
- If no symptoms appear, they may return on day 11 without a test
- If Covid-19 symptoms occur, the child must receive a negative PCR test no more than 48 hours prior to return. Child must be fever free for 48 hours prior to return without medication and be able to participate in school activities.
- Siblings do not need to quarantine unless directly exposed themselves

If your child has **TWO OR MORE COVID-19 RELATED SYMPTOMS**:

- You will be called to pick up your child and siblings.
- Without a doctor visit and Covid PCR test, your child must quarantine for a minimum of 10 days as well as siblings.

- However, if your child sees a physician and tests negative for Covid, they must remain home until symptoms from the alternate diagnosis has been resolved. Remember if fever is present the policy is 48 hours without fever reducing medication and the child is able to participate in school activities.
- Proof of a negative covid test and a doctors return to school note will be required.
- If child is on an antibiotic, we need to know the name of the medication (so that we can be aware of any potential side effects of medication), and they must have been on the antibiotic for 24 hours prior to return.
- If the sick child does not have a contagious ailment (ie: ear infection), then the siblings may return to school the next day. We will need the sick's child's diagnosis. However, if the illness is a viral gastro nature, (stomach bug) the siblings must stay home until everyone is well. We usually see a stomach bug go through an entire family.

If your child has a **POSITIVE COVID-19 TEST:**

**Isolate a minimum of 10 days. The child may return on day 11 as long as they are fever free without fever reducers and the other symptoms improving.**

- Siblings must be quarantined as well
- If a child tests positive for Covid-19 and is in class, the class will be closed under the direct exposure policy (above).

### **DETECTING COVID SYMPTOMS**

Due to the recent uptick in Covid-19 cases, especially among children, we will be erring on the side of caution when identifying any signs of illness in the children. It is especially important to be vigilant in our observations because infants and children often cannot clearly communicate the uncomfortable symptoms they are experiencing.

The symptoms of Covid-19 can overlap with indicators of other benign illnesses. Our ELC staff nurse and our experienced ELC leadership will continue to pay careful attention to the differences between typical expressions of being tired/fussy and having the potential for Covid-19 symptoms.

When two or more Covid-related symptoms appear in children, they will need to be taken to the doctor to be evaluated.

Our goal is always to keep them in school and healthy. We love each of our children and miss them when they are not here. The staff do not go home early when they are not here. We are here for the duration.

Thank you in advance for your support in making these challenging decisions.

As always, if you have any questions, please reach out. It's a privilege to partner with you. We love your children and are praying for a healthy and happy year to

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### UTILITY LOSS OR FAILURE

Utility failure is the loss or interruption of electrical power, natural gas, water or sewage services to the school. The most common utility failure results from power outages. If power or other utilities cannot be restored in a timely manner and a level of care cannot be achieved then the parents will be informed via the sandbox portal to pick up their child.

### EMERGENCY EVACUATION

If we need to evacuate Saint Mark campus, we will notify parents of our location via the Sand Box parent portal. It is your responsibility to make sure that your phone numbers and contact stay up to date at all times.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER

In case of inclement weather, Saint Mark ELC will make the decision to close. Parents will be notified via the Sandbox portal. We typically follow the lead of Vestavia City Schools however Saint Mark reserves the right to dismiss at its discretion.

Please do not call the office during inclement weather. We are in our designated safe place and there is not a outside line in that location. If we are under a tornado warning and you show up to pick up your child, you must stay until the warning has been lifted.

### LOCK DOWN/SHELTER IN PLACE

Location: In designated areas pre-designated, such as restrooms, classroom in farthest corner of the wall with the door. Turn off lights and lock doors. Use your best professional judgement to keep the children safe.

Code Word is: Hide and Seek

All persons are to stay in the lock down/shelter in place areas until an all clear is given.

### INTRUDER/HOSTAGE SITUATION

Notify Director and/or church staff immediately

Lockdown procedures may be issued if needed by the director

### FIRE

Everyone will exit the building and proceed to the safety area, rolls checked. Director and Asst. will make final check after everyone has exited the building.

## **Health**

### PERSONAL HYGIENE

All possible provisions have been made to assure that children and teachers follow appropriate rules of personal hygiene. Teachers will use gloves at all times when changing diapers or assisting older children in the restroom. Antibacterial soap is used for hand washing before meals and after toilet use. Disposable paper towels are used for drying hands. Saint Mark is a smoke-free and fragrance-free environment/campus.

### CHILD ILLNESS POLICY:

DHR states that a child who is ill should not attend school. "Determination of illness may be based on: the child's inability to participate in school activities, signs of serious or contagious

disease or condition, such as but not limited to fever, diarrhea, vomiting, unexplained rash, scabies, head lice.” Saint Mark reserves the right to send a child home for any reason when illness is suspected.

If your child is sent home at any time during a school day, they may NOT return the entire next day. **Please do not ask to make exceptions to this rule!** Example: If your child leaves on Tuesday at ANY time they may not return on Wednesday. They may return on Thursday PROVIDED they have been symptom-free for 48 hours (without medication) It is recommended that you always bring a doctor’s note when sent home from school.

In addition, we have these guidelines for parents:

- **Fever is considered 100.4 or higher.**
- **Do not give your children medication for fever then send them to school.**
- **Children should be fever free 48 hours before returning to school without medication.**
- **A child with a bad cold should not attend. Green runny nose, coughing and sneezing.**
- **Any child who has vomited or had diarrhea within 24 hours of school time should not attend. They must be symptom free without medication for 48 hours prior to returning.**
- **Any child with a suspected concussion should not attend.**
- **Any child treated for head lice must have no evidence of nits in his hair in order to return.**
- **If your child can not participate in their daily routine of activities such as going outside, they must stay home. There can be no special accommodations of “sitting indoors or with another class”**
- **The ELC reserves the right to send any child home at our discretion based on inability to participate in school activities.**
- **A child may not attend the day after any surgery. We require a return to school form from their doctor upon returning after surgery, being put to sleep etc.**
- **It is best to obtain a doctor’s excuse for return to school.**
- **If there are any contagious diseases reported to us, we will inform the parents of the class. Such as strep, chicken pox, flu, covid etc.**
- **We ask that if your child does contract an illness, please let us know so that we can inform the other parents. We never give names or details of illness to others.**

**The parents must notify the center if they are taking any prescription medication-even over the counter medication. So that we can watch for adverse reactions.**

**If the child has been placed on a laxative or stool softener you are to notify the center before it is administered. We kindly request, if at all possible, this be done on a Friday afternoon due to not knowing how this will affect your child .**

\*If during the school day your child has a temperature of 100.4 (taken in both ears and averaged) automatic home

\*If your child has three diarrhea incidents-automatic home (if your child is on antibiotics or trying a new food, please let us know)

\*If your child vomits-automatic home

#### MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

- It is not our policy to administer medicine. However, if a child has a chronic condition and requires medicine, please notify the Director for the correct procedure.
- **Medicines, bug repellent, hand sanitizer sunscreen, chap stick etc. should never be sent in a child's bag or lunchbox.**
- DHR prohibits us from applying sunscreen, bug repellent, chap-stick or hand sanitizer.
- If diaper cream is required a DHR Medical form must be filled out completely weekly.

#### ACCIDENTS/MEDICAL EMERGENCY

If your child becomes ill at school, we will call a parent or designated caregiver. If you cannot be reached, we will move down the child's emergency list. Please make IMMEDIATE arrangements to pick up your child within one hour.

If you plan to be unavailable while your child is at school, notify someone on your emergency list and send a message through the parent portal. If a parent cannot be found in an emergency, it can be frightening for your child.

In the event of an accident or illness requiring immediate emergency care, we will call 911, followed by the child's parents. If the child requires ambulance transportation an ELC staff member will accompany the child. Accidents and emergencies will be documented with an Incident report. A copy will be sent home to the parent, and an additional copy will be filed.

For all general scrapes and bruises we will send home an ouch report so that you know what happened. Most times some TLC, popsicle or ice pack does the trick!

#### HEADLICE

The Jefferson County Department of Health has issued the following advisory concerning treatment for head lice:

*"Even though it is sometimes difficult and time consuming, all nits must be removed to insure complete treatment. Lice products do not kill all the nits (do not be fooled by manufacturer's claims to the contrary) and survivors will hatch into crawling lice within 7-10 days. This causes a continuing cycle of lice infestation."*

If your child needs head lice treatment, he or she may not return to school with nits in evidence in his/her hair. Following nit removal, a daily check is advisable for at least 10 days following treatment. We will work with parents to keep all children lice free.

If a child is found to have head lice, we will send a letter home to each parent in the child's class.

We find this more prominent during sporting seasons when children share caps and helmet's.

#### FOOD AND SNACKS & POLICIES

We ask that you try to make your lunches as healthy as possible. No fast-food deliveries are allowed. **Saint Mark is a nut free facility.** This includes tree nuts, peanuts, and hazelnuts.



Some of our children have severe allergies, and it is our policy that we do not permit the use of peanut butter or nuts of any kind for lunches, snacks, crafts or in-class cooking. If sending Lunchables for your child, be sure to remove any peanut butter candy/cookies that may be included. If you use a peanut butter substitute, it must be labeled otherwise it will be assumed it is peanut butter and a substitute lunch will be provided.

**If your child has a food allergy you must have a written report from their pediatrician with a written plan of action in case of an allergic reaction.**

The school provides mid-afternoon snacks and water for children that are in after care. Please send only one dessert in your child's lunch. Our policy is that one dessert is eaten last after eating a healthy lunch.

- If your child arrives by 7:30 am you may bring your child's breakfast to school. Breakfast ends at 7:45 am.
- Jefferson County Department of Health requires that "potentially hazardous" foods be refrigerated until lunch. These foods will not be refrigerated after lunch. There is a refrigerator in each classroom.
- Under direction of the Fire Marshal, we are not allowed to heat food for children.
- When sending a sandwich, please cut it in fourths or in half so they can handle it easily.
- All foods need to be cut prior to sending them to school. (Veggies, cheese, meat, fruit)
- We do not allow carbonated drinks of any kind. If your child has a "lunchable" please remove any carbonated drinks and desserts that contain peanut butter. According to the USDA food guidelines, a child must have milk with lunch. We request that you provide milk (ex: milk box). We will place your child's milk box or Sippy cup of milk in a refrigerator.
- Please practice with your child what goes back home and what is ok to throw away. For 3K AND UP We encourage them to clean up after themselves. They can do it I promise! But work with them at home, my least favorite thing to do is go dumpster diving for a cup or container, yes, I have done that before.
- Please plan for your child's lunch to be as convenient and neat as possible and easy for them to open. If they need forks or spoons, please supply them. If you send food in a thermos, please send a small bowl or plate, so that they can have easy access to it. No glass containers are allowed.
- Opportunity for drinking water is provided throughout the day.
- No candy, gum, popcorn or medications should be in a child's lunchbox or school bag.

Cooking for instructional purposes IS allowed and will be conducted as part of Saint Mark curriculum and activities

**PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING!** Please make sure your child's name is clearly marked on their lunch box and each container. Saint Mark is not responsible for any lost items.

**NAP/REST TIME**

DHR requires to have a designated nap or rest time, the child does not have to sleep however, they are required to rest.

Toddlers-4K are required to provide a "Nap Mat/Napper". You will be provided a large plastic bag that closes. You are required to take the Nap Mat/Napper home every Friday and wash and

return it to school on Monday where it will be placed in the plastic bag. Children are allowed a blanket if there is not one attached to the nap mat and must remain in the bag as well as a special lovey they need for nap. These items will only be available during nap/rest time.

Naps:

Toddlers & 2's – 1:15 to 3:45

3K & 4K 2 – 3:30

Children will be required to keep their shoes on during nap for quick exit if an emergency arises. Snack is served after nap.

### CLOTHING/SHOES/ACCESSORIES

Children are required to wear play clothes. We are not responsible for any damage to children's clothing during the day.

We encourage independence in our children and a child can better attend to their own bathroom needs in garments that are easy for them to handle alone.

Children that are toilet training should wear bottoms that can easily be pulled up and down by the child. (no bubble suits, overalls, belts, long dresses or tights). When toilet training, we require pull ups with the side access Velcro. We cannot wash any soiled clothing. Please check your child's back pack daily especially if they have on different clothes!

Put your child's name on all clothing, coats and other belongings to help ensure their safe return. All children will play outside each day that weather permits, so dress them accordingly.

- Parents are required to furnish the school with a "change of clothes", including socks, underwear, shirt and pants. These also need to be upgraded as they grow throughout the year. All clothes will be returned at the end of the year.
- Extra shoes would be nice if they are toilet training.
- It is recommended that all girls wear shorts underneath their dresses.
- **Children must wear athletic shoes. This is a Mrs. Sandy Rule!**
- Children are not allowed to wear any jewelry, scarves, sunglasses or other accessories.
- We are not responsible for children's hair bows, personal items or face mask

### POTTY TRAINING POLICY

Children in 3K and 4K are required to be potty trained. This is a Saint Mark Policy and the policy of most preschools.

The policy concerning the 3K & 4K:

- Children are never allowed to wear pull-ups or diapers.
- Any preschooler can regress for a short time because of life changes, emotional concerns or physical problems.

- If a child that we know has been successfully potty trained begins to have accidents, we will work with the parents to help the child find success again.
- If a child must return home to potty train, monthly tuition must be continued to be paid. If a parent wishes to hold a place for the child at Saint Mark while he/she is not in school, the parent must continue to pay tuition monthly.
- Children may be asked to leave Saint Mark if they are not potty trained. Every effort will be made on our part to ensure success.
- Our 3K and 4K rooms are not set up with proper equipment or staff to accommodate changing of diapers.

### ADJUSTMENT PERIOD

Starting school for the first time often causes anxiety for children. We will work with you and your child to make this adjustment period a positive experience. We recommend that you give your child at least one month to adjust to the early education center experience. It is usually the parent who has the hardest time adjusting, please do not linger, the longer you do, the longer it takes them to calm down. This is a huge reason carpool works so wonderfully. Please be assured that we will call you if your child cannot be consoled.

If there is any major life event, please let us know, it does affect your child. They listen and hear more than you they think they do. Some things we need to know:

Parent Travels for work, a family member is ill, recent death, recent move, divorce- all these can cause potty issues, behavior issues and mood swings. Please let us know if anything is amiss so that we can care for your child when they are experiencing these situations

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## **PROGRAM**

### CURRICULUM

Our goal is to provide young children with a program that is developmentally appropriate. Children learn best through exploration at their own pace. The program is designed to meet their cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs through a balance of structure and discovery. Children need opportunities to explore their environment and to be guided by teachers who understand child development.

Along with letter and number recognition, literacy, colors, and shapes, our program also considers mealtime, outside time and rest time as parts of the curriculum. Opportunities for learning happen when children interact with each other, use their imaginations, complete a task, follow directions, and use good manners. Learning happens all day, every day in many different ways. We want the children to be fully engaged in their world by asking questions and sharing their thoughts and ideas in a safe nurturing environment.

Saint Mark incorporates a balance of planned activities designed to help children progress toward meeting developmentally appropriate goals, as well as improvised activities that emerge from the children's interests or from unexpected experiences. Throughout the day, our teachers observe and document the children's learning to create plans that will continue to meet each individual child's needs and encourage them to explore and meet new goals.

Our goal is to give children a foundation that will foster a love of God and learning.

#### ASSESSMENT

All children are assessed through observations of peer interactions and play, developmental checklist, and portfolios of their work. Areas of assessment include: socio-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, math, science, technology, social studies, creative expression, and health and safety. This information is shared formally twice a year during parent/teacher conferences. This process encourages parents and teachers to develop a plan that will best meet the needs of the child. It will be sensitive to the family's values, culture, identity, and home language.

If, through the above-mentioned process, teachers suspect a developmental delay or other special need, the teacher will communicate the concern to the Director. The administrator will observe the child, document the findings, and meet with the teachers to discuss the concern. A meeting will then be scheduled with the family to share the concern in an honest and supportive manner. We will suggest future steps and assist the family by providing information and resources for further assessments. If we feel that we do not have the best environment for the child's learning we will work with the family in providing resources and information of other centers in our area that will best fit the needs of the child.

#### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

We love to offer these things however there was not enough participation for dance or karate to come to our school for this year.

#### DISCIPLINE POLICY

Child guidance has an important place in the program at Saint Mark. Parents and teachers will work together to be consistent and effective in training children to make appropriate choices in a classroom setting. We have developed a formula that is appropriate in shaping and encouraging responsible behavior. First, we will communicate to the child, by name and about the choice they made, and try to redirect their focus. Secondly, a hand on the shoulder is a gentle reminder of choices. The time out will be either in the class, or if the behavior has warranted, the child may be in time out, in the office. If needed, the parents will be called for a conference.

#### DISMISSAL

Saint Mark reserves the right at any time to suspend or permanently expel a child from enrollment.

#### BITING

In the case of biting, every effort is made to ensure the safety of every child. Biting is typical for toddlers and children whom are not yet verbal. When biting occurs, the following steps will be implemented:

- When a child bites they will be isolated. The bitten child will be given First Aid. Also, a report of what action was taken will be provided to the parent of the biter and to the parent of the child that was bitten. If the bite breaks the skin, the parents will be notified. A report will

be given to the biter and child that was bit.

- If the biting persists, we will then have a mandatory conference with the parents and a prevention plan will be set in place.
- If the biting still persists the parents will be required to attend a parenting class on biting. (The fee for this class is \$50.00)
- If the biting still persists, it will be at the discretion of the Director but may result in dismissal of the child.

#### HITTING/ROUGH PLAY POLICY

No child should ever be afraid to come to school because he fears another child. Therefore, we have a hitting and rough play policy.

- During the day if a child has been corrected 3 times for hitting or playing roughly, they will then be removed from class to the office.
- After the child returns to class if the behavior continues the parents will be contacted.

## **PARENT/STAFF RELATIONS**

#### CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

All children's records shall be kept confidential not to be discussed with anyone other than the parent or administration.

#### SMOKING POLICY

Saint Mark United Methodist Church is a non-smoking campus. Smoking is never permitted on the grounds or in the building.

#### FIREARMS POLICY

No firearms are allowed on the campus of Saint Mark unless you are a member of the police department.

#### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY

Children will have an opportunity for appropriate amounts of active play each day. Children who are here for 4 hours will have at least 30 minutes of active outdoor or gym play daily. Those who are here from 7:00-4:30 will have at least 60 minutes of active play daily.

#### COMMUNICATION

- Daily reports are available online through the Sandbox portal.
- Each child is to bring their full size back pack to school each day along with their folder(for the older children) to carry art papers, notes, etc.
- The teachers will send home a weekly newsletter containing specific class information for each class. Most classes do this electronically now.
- One of the most important forms of communication is through your Sandbox portal. You may

send messages to the teachers and or the Director.

- However, if you send a communication after 4:30 it will not be answered until the next school day after carpool. If you send a message over a weekend you probably will not receive a reply until Monday morning after carpool.

## OFFICE COMMUNICATIONS

The optimal way to communicate with the administration is through the parent portal. You may also call during program hours with any questions or concerns. The office number is 205.822.1312. If you leave a message after hours it will be returned the next school day after 9AM.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### INFANTS

Because breast milk is recommended as the best source of nourishment for infants, breast feeding is encouraged and supported by Saint Mark. We have a nursing room provided for convenience and privacy. It is highly advised that infants receive their first feeding of the day at home before center arrival. According to Health Department regulations bottles must be identified with the child's name. Stored breast milk must also include the date of storage and the child's name. All bottles must be pre-made at home. We are not allowed to mix bottles. We **do not** warm bottles in a microwave. We use a crock pot for this purpose. Infants will be held for bottle feeding. Once they can hold their own bottle that is allowed. Infants will not be placed in a crib with a bottle. If not consumed, formula will be discarded within one hour unless refrigerated and any leftover will be discarded at the end of the day. If baby food is provided by the parent, all containers shall be labeled with the child's name. No previously opened containers can be accepted. All opened containers will be sent home or discarded at the end of the day. Remember no glass containers are allowed.

Each infant has their own crib to sleep in. Sheets are changed weekly or when soiled. We feed and nap based on the infant's individual schedule.

Parents should provide Infants and toddlers with bibs for feeding and a spoon for feeding.

### BABYSITTING

Saint Mark hires employees based on their education and expertise within a supervised and managed environment. Center management, therefore, cannot be responsible or held liable if parents hire Saint Mark employees for privately arranged child care outside the scope of its employment. Staff are allowed to transport children enrolled in the program only if they are listed on the parents designated list. While parents may feel comfortable approaching their classroom teachers to babysit, it is prohibited that your child's actual teachers be asked to babysit as this often diminishes the student/teacher relationship that teachers work so hard to establish in the classroom.

## BIRTHDAY PARTIES

All the children enjoy sharing their birthdays with the class. Please discuss with your child's teacher an appropriate time to celebrate. Please keep refreshments simple. Small cupcakes or cookies are best. No homemade items are allowed all food items must come from a bakery such as Publix, Edgars etc. NO GIFTS! Due to Covid policies no parents are allowed.

Children cannot go to another class party for any reason during the school year. This includes sibling birthday parties.

Please do not bring or send party assistants to the classroom (i.e. clowns, Elsa/Batman impersonator, etc.) These disrupt the class schedule and often frighten young children. These should be reserved for your own personal parties outside the school setting.

## VISITATION:

- Due to Covid-19 protocol this may be limited or not available at a given time. Call the office for further verification.

## VOLUNTEERS:

- Due to Covid-19 protocol this may be limited or not available at a given time. We are hoping to have parent events again this year. Mask will be required.

## SOLICITATION

Saint Mark ELC may not be used as a setting for solicitation.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Many young children do have an object of special attachment, such as a blanket or stuffed toy. This can help to ease the transition from home to school. Teachers will help other children to understand and respect such feelings, and once a child is settled the item will be placed in their cubby. Teachers will do their best to keep up with children's belongings, but cannot accept responsibility for loss or damage of personal possessions. Labeling of all personal belongings helps to avoid loss.

Children are requested to leave toys, gum, candy, money or other valuables at home. We also ask that you refrain from sending your child with special jewelry except those of religious purposes. These are a potential choking hazard to them and the other children. Please discourage your child from bringing toys or other "prized" possessions to school except on special occasions planned by the teachers. Such highly valued items are often difficult to keep up with, may get broken and are very hard to share. We cannot be held responsible for any personal items that are lost or damaged

## NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Our program complies with non-discrimination laws covering hiring of staff, enrollment of children, and termination of staff and children.

If anything in this handbook is unclear to you or if any of your questions have not been covered, please call or come in to see the director. We want to make sure that you feel comfortable about your child's safety and well-being while he/she is at school.

I Have read and understand all the above policies and procedures of Saint Mark ELC and will abide by those items listed therein.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Mother



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Date \_\_\_\_\_ Father \_\_\_\_\_

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Date \_\_\_\_\_ Director \_\_\_\_\_





