



Precious
Lambs
PRESCHOOL



PARENT HANDBOOK

2026-2027



We have this
Hope as an
anchor
for the soul.
firm and secure.
-Hebrews 6:19

ACHORED IN CHRIST

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WELCOME

Welcome to Precious Lambs Preschool! We are excited to work with every parent to provide the best possible Christian preschool experience for every child. The teachers are hopeful that children's faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior will be nourished and grow. Our prayer is that God's will be done, and His name be glorified.

This handbook has been written to describe our program, policies and the myriad of practical details that go into making each school day as happy and successful as possible. Please review it and keep it for reference, as it will answer many of your questions.

WHO ARE WE?

Precious Lambs Preschool is owned and operated by St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and is under the supervision of St. Paul's Council of Ministry. Our church and school are members of a larger church body called the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, which has been providing quality Christian education for over 150 years. We are one of the largest Private / Christian School Systems in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics) and have:

- 1,243 Churches
- 356 Early Childhood Ministries
- 280 Lutheran Elementary Schools
- 32 Lutheran High Schools
- 2 Colleges
- 1 Theological Seminary

SCHOOL HISTORY

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church was established in 1974. In 1994, the congregation built an addition to the church to serve as an educational wing for a new elementary school dedicated to July 31, 1994. Though at that time, many of St. Paul's members were of retirement age, they were motivated to share their faith with children and their families by following Jesus' words to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). In 1994, the congregation also called the school's first Principal, Mr. John Melso, and began the school year with 17 students in grades K-8.

In 1998, St. Paul's called Miss Sherri Sukow (now Lueck) to teach Kindergarten and part-time Preschool. Preschool was later taught by Mrs. Carole Melso for the 2000-01 school year and by Miss Roberta Mele' from 2001 to 2003. In 2003, Mrs. Kay-Lynn Johnston became the PreK-4 teacher and Director. St. Paul's added a second preschool classroom, and Mrs. Sharon Welfel, the teacher's assistant from 2003-08, was hired to teach PreK-3 and PreK-4 beginning in the fall of 2008. Mrs. Kay-Lynn Johnston and Mrs. Sharon Welfel served together for over fifteen years until Mrs. Johnston's retirement in May 2019. Mrs. Allison Dorn was called by St. Paul's to be the preschool director and preK-4 teacher in 2019. She served for two years until she and her husband relocated to Minnesota in the spring of 2022. In the fall of 2022, Mrs. Sharon Welfel was called to be the preschool director. She continues to teach PreK-4 and three-year-olds in a combined class in the morning. Lucy Siegler was also called the same year to teach preK-4 full-time for morning and afternoon sessions. Mrs. Roberta Opall has been Mrs. Welfel's assistant for ten years, and in 2022, she was hired to take on the extra role of Extended Learning Coordinator, making her full-time. The Fall of 2024 brought more changes as Mrs. Becky Ramsey became the lead VPK teacher, replacing Mrs. Siegler, who now teaches in our kindergarten at St. Paul's. Throughout the years, Precious Lambs Preschool has been extraordinarily blessed with wonderful, loving Christian women. God continues to bless our preschool with dedicated and hard-working staff members.

During the 2003-04 school year, grades K-8 were privileged to move into a new educational unit on the church property. Preschool classes continue to be held in the original educational wing of the church. When the expansion of our elementary school in 2011 allowed for a separate kindergarten class, it remained in the preschool wing of the church for a couple of years. As growth has continued in the elementary school,

adjustments are made yearly for the placement of student classrooms. Currently, kindergarten through third grade, the offices, gym, and kitchen, are in the main building. The remainder of the grade school (4th-8th) is located in the newest modular building at the end of the parking lot. The extra classroom in the preschool was renovated this summer. A wall was opened up to create one, much larger classroom. Currently, our preschool enrollment stands at twenty-eight students.

While we strive to keep our policies and procedures unchanged, we reserve the right to make changes if necessary. If changes are made, we will notify you promptly of the occurring change.

A Note from the Director

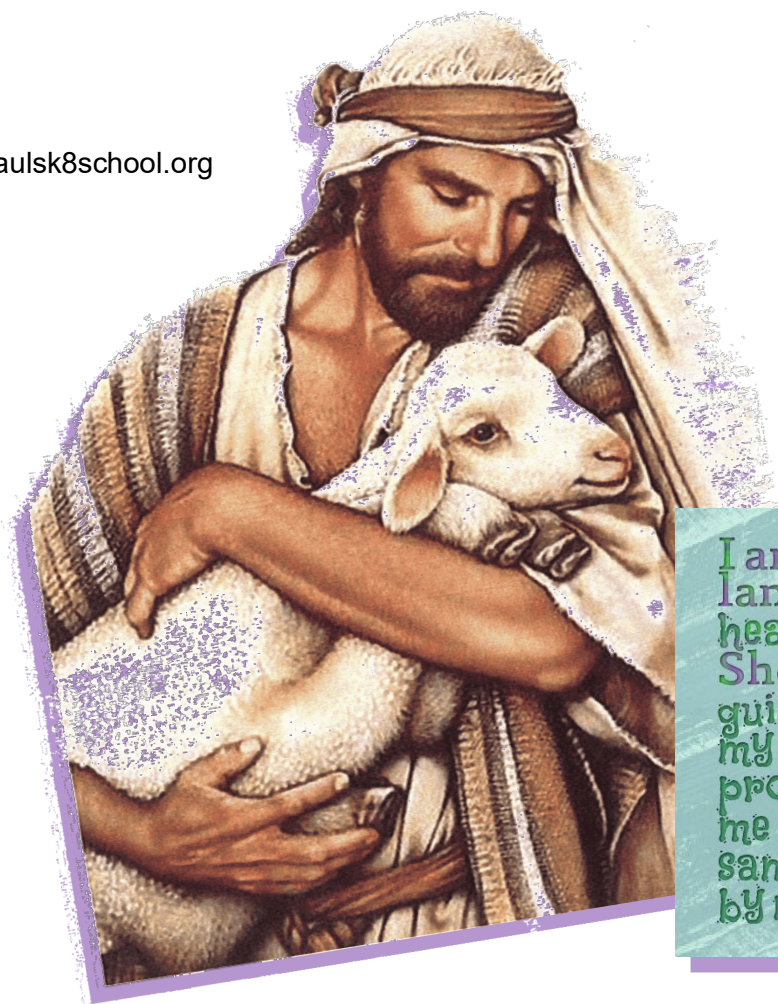
Thank you for giving us the opportunity to care for your child. Our success at Precious Lambs Preschool stems from the close relationships among the school, the child, and the child's family. Working together helps meet your child's academic, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. We are excited to provide your child with an environment where they can grow and thrive.

We look forward to having you and your child as part of the Precious Lambs Preschool family.

Thank you again for taking the time to review this information. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the policies stated in this handbook.

Joyfully in Christ,

Sharon Welfel
Preschool Director
(352) 489-3027
sharon.welfel@stpaulsk8school.org



I am Jesus' little
lamb, ever glad at
heart I am. For my
Shepherd gently
guides me, knows
my need, and well
provides me, Loves
me every day the
same, even calls me
by my name.

SECTION ONE: Foundations

Mission Statement

“Preparing children for this life and eternity by offering a superior academic and spiritual education.”

It is the mission of Precious Lambs Preschool to support and encourage parents in their God-given responsibility to educate and spiritually train their child. We provide young children a safe, loving Christian environment where they are prepared physically, socially, emotionally, and educationally for future learning experiences, and where they are disciplined spiritually to live for Christ. It is our goal that children learn to love others with Christ's love while developing a lifetime love of learning.

Vision Statement

Precious Lambs Preschool is known for its superior spiritual and academic education whose students:

- are well-prepared for kindergarten and the early elementary grades
- show compassion and respect for others
- make God-pleasing choices and decisions
- know and appreciate how much Jesus loves them
- develop individual self-worth in Christ
- appreciate God's gift of health and choose a healthy lifestyle



Philosophy of Education

Precious Lambs Preschool we believe that the Bible is the true, unchanging Word of God and is the final authority in all matters of life. (II Timothy 3:16-17) When all learning and living takes place in light of this scriptural viewpoint, children are prepared to fulfill God's will for their lives and are trained for a life of Christian service in a non-Christian world. (Proverbs 22:6 and II Tim. 3:15)

We believe that God created human life to be developmental and that the educational process must nurture the development of the whole child. The classroom environment must be flexible in allowing children to go through the predictable stages of growth and maturation on individual timetables, and also allow for the unique characteristics, learning styles, and family experiences of each child. Children are active learners and learn best through concrete, quality play experiences which are facilitated through purposeful planning and modeling by caring adults.

Proverbs 22:6 (NIV) “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not turn from it.”

II Timothy 3:15-17 (NIV) “And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

Statement of Faith

At Precious Lambs Preschool we believe and teach that...

- **God is real**, revealing himself to us through the beauty of nature and the wonder of the universe (Psalm 19:1-2)
- **God is wise**, revealing his wisdom to us in his holy Word (Psalm 19:7-11)
- **God is caring**, taking care of all our earthly needs (Psalm 145:15)
- **God is loving**, giving us Jesus Christ, who gave up his own life that we might have forgiveness from sin and eternal life in heaven (I John 1:7, John 3:16)
- **God is relational**, desiring to have a personal relationship with all people, including young children, in this life and forever (Luke 18:16, Proverbs 22:6)

Statement on Family Values

The faculty and staff of St. Paul's Lutheran School and Precious Lambs Preschool agree with and model to students and other staff Christian principles of morality and family life. Among these is the belief that marriage is a divine institution between one man and one woman.

Core Values

The members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church have established a preschool in order to bring children to Jesus at a young age so they might learn to know His love for them and trust in Him as their Savior. Jesus said, "*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.*" (Mark 10:14) By these words Jesus indicated His love for little children and His desire that they be brought to Him so He could bless them.

Precious Lambs Preschool believes the Bible is the true Word of God and written on its pages is God's plan to save His children. (2 Peter 1:20, 21) Through Bible lessons children learn that by nature we all are sinful (Romans 3:23) and in need of forgiveness. God accomplished this through His own Son, Jesus: "*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*" (John 3:16) God brings all people to this life-saving faith in Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Precious Lambs Preschool believes all children are a gift from God to families, and He has given parents the main responsibility for the nurturing and training of their children. (Deuteronomy 6:4-7; 2 Timothy 3:16) It is our privilege to share in this God-given responsibility with parents. Precious Lambs Preschool loves and values each child and is prepared to support and encourage parents in this most important task.

We believe that God created human life to be developmental, and that children grow and learn in unique ways on individual timetables. (Luke 2:52) Our goal is that children develop their full God-given potential and become lifelong learners. This can best be achieved by providing rich experiences for children and opportunities for age-appropriate play, hands-on activities, problem-solving, and reflection.

We believe that by integrating God's Word into all areas of curriculum and by receiving Christian guidance and positive role-modeling from their teachers, the children will grow in their faith and Christian living and demonstrate this in their own behaviors and attitudes.

Precious Lambs Preschool is delighted to share their faith, love, and knowledge with preschool children and their families.

Religious Exemption from Licensure

Precious Lambs Preschool is a faith-based, license-exempt preschool program and is committed to ongoing self-monitoring that meets or exceeds state licensing regulations.

Preschool Accreditation

Precious Lambs Preschool is a fully accredited preschool through the Association of Christian Schools International, achieving accreditation in June 2007 and reaccrediting in June 2013, April 2018, and, most recently, in December 2023. ACSI is a member of the National Council for Private School Accreditation.



SECTION TWO: Preschool Program

PROGRAM GOALS

Through their experiences at Precious Lambs Preschool, our children will:

Spiritual Development

- know Bible stories
- know who God is and that he cares about us
- know who Jesus is and what he's done for us
- know that they can speak to Jesus in prayer
- understand that there is certainty after death
- know there's never a problem so great that we can't handle it
- know that they are never alone

Social-Emotional Development

- understand their feelings and express them in words
- demonstrate growing independence and confidence in their abilities
- develop responsibility for themselves and their environment
- show curiosity and a desire to learn
- learn to play, work, and communicate with peers and adults
- show love and respect for all people

Cognitive Development

- expand logical and mathematical thinking
- acquire problem-solving skills
- make choices and plans, and bring them to completion
- gain knowledge and concepts about the world
- develop their ability to understand language and to communicate
- develop an interest in books and reading in various ways
- demonstrate writing in various ways
- use creativity and imagination
- appreciate and express themselves in art, music, and movement



Physical Development

- learn to care for their own bodies
- develop good nutrition habits
- observe safety precautions
- use large motor skills with confidence, control, and coordination
- refine small motor skills by using small muscles:
 - to coordinate eye-hand movements
 - for self-help skills
 - to use drawing and writing tools

Family Development

- grow spiritually as a family
- draw closer to other families
- share in maintaining a partnership between home and Precious Lambs Preschool

CURRICULUM

Parents often have questions and concerns about preschool curriculum. Many people tend to equate a school's curriculum with a published set of materials that lead a teacher from one lesson to the next. These may include pre-made materials like worksheets or cut-and-paste activities. Many preschools use such curricula, but research suggests they do not yield the best results for children. We have chosen to use research-based curricula that are flexible and tailored to the unique needs of the children in each classroom, and that use open-ended activities that engage children as active, participatory learners. Our curriculum is based on our Christian faith, our understanding of child development, current research in early childhood education, and our knowledge of each individual child, their interests, needs, abilities, and background. As such, we believe the curriculum of Precious Lambs Preschool is designed to meet the spiritual, physical, cognitive, and social-emotional developmental needs of our children.

"Curriculum" in our early childhood setting is everything that we do throughout the day. In addition to addressing traditional academic subjects, it promotes independence, curiosity, decision-making, cooperation, persistence, creativity, and problem-solving in young children. Our day consists of active and quiet times, individual, small, and large-group experiences, and indoor and outdoor play.

During Bible Time, children learn about Jesus through Bible stories, verses, songs, and prayer. This is a large group activity that also fosters children's listening, comprehension, and verbal skills. By teaching the Bible in a child's language through fun activities, children find joy in learning God's Word. Doing things the "Jesus Way" is how they will want to respond to God's love. We want each child to develop to his full potential to fulfill God's will on earth.

The rich classroom environment allows children to be comfortable and practice skills they have learned, and encourages them to try new experiences. Children will develop the skills, attitudes, and concepts that enable them to make sense of the world, succeed, and therefore develop a true sense of self-worth. Following a daily routine helps children feel secure by giving them a sense of control as they learn what to expect.

The teachers act as facilitators in this child-centered classroom, guiding and supervising play to foster learning. Children are encouraged to make choices, engage in active learning, and build relationships with peers and teachers. The learning centers offer concrete, process-oriented experiences for children. Through supervised play, children become better thinkers and problem solvers and develop creativity.

Other small- and large-group times involve children in teacher-initiated experiences. These are scheduled throughout the day and may include listening to stories, playing a game, cooking, singing, learning a finger-play, experiencing music movement, or planning and sharing.

We believe this curriculum will create capable learners who can think for themselves, solve problems, and live as children of God. Their faith in Jesus, our Savior, will be strengthened through His Holy Word. Children will be challenged to use language and to construct meaning from print. They will stretch their ability to think logically, solve problems, see relationships, and use their senses. It is the integration of a day of preschool experiences that helps children learn and builds a foundation for further education in reading and math.

CLASSROOM INTEREST AREAS

Interest Areas are an essential part of the total curriculum. Although each area helps children meet developmental goals across all areas of development, this list highlights developmental goals particular to specific interest areas.

In the **House Area**, children

- learn about themselves, families, and their community
- take on a role or occupation and imitate behavior
- make-believe and use their imagination
- engage in socio-dramatic play
- develop social skills as they share, negotiate, compromise, and appreciate others
- develop abstract thinking skills by recalling and visualizing experiences to re-create

In the **Construction Area**, children:

- grow in strength and coordination as they carry and place large and small blocks and props
- experiment with construction
- use blocks, animal and people figures, and vehicles for dramatic play
- develop abstract thinking skills as they re-create pictures of the concrete world
- develop math concepts as they count, sort, weigh, match, compare, order, measure, and balance



In the **Sand/Water Area**, children:

- Develop small motor control and eye-hand coordination
- Have tactile experience with a variety of materials
- Engage in dramatic play using props
- Explore science concepts of cause and effect and make comparisons

learn about size, shape, volume, and quantity

In the **Toys and Games Area**, children:

- Use self-correcting toys to build independence
- Use open-ended toys to improve small motor skills and eye-hand coordination
- Use collectibles to practice sorting, matching, classifying, comparing, sequencing, and patterning
- Use cooperative games to develop visual discrimination skills, counting, and numeral recognition
- develop social skills as they share and take turns playing a cooperative game

In the **Reading and Writing Area** children:

- develop an interest in reading
- enjoy stories, poems, rhymes, and music through books, tapes, CD's, flannel boards and puppets
- develop an understanding that written words are symbols and a means of communication
- increase vocabulary

In the **Art Area** children:

- engage in the process of working with art and writing materials
- express feelings and ideas
- have sensory experiences
- develop small motor skills
- experiment with color, shape, line, size, and texture

In the **Discovery Area**, children:

- Develop new vocabulary as they discuss investigations, ask questions, and share experiences
- Use tools and materials to explore and discover how the world works
- Use thinking skills to investigate, explore, discover, make predictions, and solve problems
- Use senses to touch, feel, taste, smell, and see
- Develop dexterity and eye-hand coordination



In the **Outdoor Area**, children:

- Develop large muscle skills of balance, coordination, and spatial awareness
- Develop small muscle skills
- Dig and construct in the sandbox play
- Experience a quiet play area for art, music, games, or dramatic play
- Learn about science and nature

DISCIPLINE

Preschoolers are practicing independence and assertiveness. They are learning to use words to express their feelings, needs, and desires. They are learning how to be part of a group. They are building relationships. Preschoolers are beginning to understand that what they say and do affects others. A healthy sense of self-control over their lives and positive self-esteem come from learning to solve problems, handle social conflict, and make choices.

Teachers guide these young Christians in learning about making God-pleasing choices. The Christian teacher's foundation for guidance is having faith in Jesus as their Savior. Children will want to love others through words and actions because of what Jesus has done for them. Teachers guide children through this Biblical perspective using their understanding of child development, their knowledge of the individual child, and by implementing appropriate expectations.

Christian guidance occurs when a teacher develops a positive relationship with each child and interacts with them rather than manages their behavior. Teachers make positive comments about children's experiences. Teachers show love and concern for children by letting them know what is expected and setting appropriate limits. Teachers are consistent, give clear directions, and state rules positively and firmly. Teachers try to anticipate problems and plan accordingly.

Teachers encourage children to think for themselves, correct their own mistakes, and solve their own problems. Redirection and negotiation techniques are used to change children's behavior and support conflict resolution. The teacher may work with all the children involved in a conflict, only the child who needs help, or just be nearby to support children in their own negotiations. Time-out will be used only for behavior that is repeatedly aggressive or unsafe.

Persistent behavior problems will be brought to the parents' attention so that both may work together toward positive changes. Learning to get along with others and accept limits takes time and adult patience.

Teachers' attention will be focused on the problem behavior, not on the child. No one will do anything that could break the spirit of a child, be humiliating, frightening, or abusive. No one will use food, rest, toileting, or physical punishment to manipulate a child.

CALENDAR

The Preschool will be closed for holidays, teacher conferences, and in-service days, as indicated on the Precious Lambs Preschool Calendar. Several dates or daily hours differ from those on the St. Paul's Lutheran School and Citrus County Public School calendars. The Precious Lambs Preschool Calendar should be your go-to calendar for correct dates of closings, early dismissals, and special events.

There is no fee reduction for any Preschool closings. Tuition costs reflect these closings.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Hours of Operation

MORNING 3'S & VPK SESSION

Preschool Doors Open: 8:00 AM

Dismissal: 11:30 AM

Extended Learning: 11:30 AM – 3:15 PM

Early Dismissal 11:00 AM (unless otherwise stated)

AFTERNOON VPK SESSION

Preschool Doors Open: 12:00 PM

Dismissal: 3:15 PM



Sample Classroom Schedule

8:15 Arrival Time

8:20 Greeting Time

8:25 Plan – Work – Clean Up - Recall

9:30 Snack Time

9:45 Bible Time

10:00 Outside Time

10:40 Small Group

11:00 Large Group

11:15 Story Time

11:30 Dismissal

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE ROUTINES

Arrival:

- Be sure you have brought all the belongings your child needs for the day. (See What to Bring/What to Wear)
- Observe speed limit signs and drive slowly as soon as you enter the church property. Turn off your vehicle's engine.
- Walk your child into preschool and help him/her to unpack and put away his/her belongings.
- Sign your child "in" on the daily attendance sheet in the correct binder with the time and your name, which is mandatory by state law.
- Encourage your child's independence, but give the necessary assistance when arriving.
- Upon arrival, help your child follow the posted arrival procedures. Then leave your child with the teacher and make contact to ensure the teacher knows your child is there.
- Check the Family Communication Center at the Preschool upon arrival for important information and lesson plan activities.
- If your child was absent, remember to bring a note to present to the teacher upon arrival.

Departure:

- Children will be dismissed from the preschool porch, one at a time, to their parent or legal guardian, or previously authorized adult. Please wait on the porch until your child is dismissed to you. The teachers will help all children gather their belongings to take home before dismissing them to you.
- Upon departure, you will sign your child "out" on the daily attendance sheet, which is mandatory by state law.
- These procedures have been established for the safety of the child. We need to ensure that children are safely delivered into your hands and that we have the opportunity to convey information about the day.
- Take your child's belongings home daily: daily folder, lunch box, water bottle, and any soiled clothes to be laundered.



DAILY DISMISSAL

- For the children's safety, they will only be released to parents or guardians with legal custody or to a previously authorized adult.
- Notify the preschool director or your child's teacher immediately of changes to authorized adults for Praxi updates. The preschool staff will abide by the authorized adults listed on Praxi only.
- Children *will be released* to people listed on Praxi when the parents give written or verbal (phone call) instructions to do so.

- Children *will NOT be released* to anyone who is not listed in Praxi unless a parent has notified the Preschool in person and has provided a written note in advance.

PLEASE NOTE: Children *will NOT be released* to anyone not listed on Praxi when the parents give only verbal instructions (e.g., by phone).

Teachers must know the adult or must see a photo ID before releasing the child. Be sure the pickup person brings a driver's license for proper identification.

If a parent or authorized adult appears to be under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, the staff will attempt to contact the other parent or authorized adult on the pick-up list. The Precious Lambs Preschool Staff does not have the right to deny a parent access to their child, but the staff will contact the police immediately if the center is unable to contact another parent or authorized adult to pick up the child.

Precious Lambs Preschool Late Pick-Up Policy for AM VPK and AM Three-year-old Program

Parents are to pick up their child on time at 11:30 AM (grace period until 11:35 AM), unless there is an extreme emergency, such as a life-or-death situation (car accident, hospital, etc.). As soon as possible, notify your child's teacher or preschool director by calling the preschool or the teacher's cell phone so that we can assist you.

If you unexpectedly find yourself late (traffic, stuck at the store, lost track of time, etc.), immediately notify your child's teacher by calling the school or the teacher's cell phone. You will be charged for these types of late pick-ups after the first instance.

After the first late pick-up, which Precious Lambs does not consider an extreme emergency or unusual situation, we will give you a verbal reminder of our policy, and you will not be charged a late fee. Subsequent late pick-ups, however, will be billed.

Repeated late pick-ups may result in your child being suspended or removed from the Precious Lambs Program.

Late charges will be billed to your Praxi account, and prompt payment is expected.

Late charges are not allowed to carry over to the following statement. Late fees that go unpaid or into the next month may result in your child being suspended from preschool until payment is made.

Parents shall pick up their child from the morning session of preschool at 11:30 AM. Late pick-up fees shall apply as follows:

- **Late pick up charges will begin being at billed at 11:36**
- 11:36 – 11:40 \$5.00
- 11:41 – 11:49 \$2.00 extra per minute
- 11:50 – 11:54 \$5.00 per minute
- After 11:55 @ the discretion of Precious Lambs Preschool
- Staff will verify the late pick-up time by cell phone clock

DAILY ATTENDANCE

Mandatory Sign-in/Sign-out

Under Florida law, each child must be signed in and out daily by the child's parents or another authorized adult at least 18 years old. Binders for each classroom are on the hallway table for this purpose. At dismissal, a teacher will hand you the binder as your child called.

VPK Attendance Policy Requirements:

Parents of VPK students understand that in order for their child to participate in the Precious Lambs Preschool VPK Program, they are required to:

- Have their child in attendance at the preschool at least one program day per calendar month, or their child will be suspended from VPK services.
- Limit their child's absences to those allowed by the Florida Administrative Code:
 1. Illness or injury of the child
 2. Major illness or injury of a child's family member
 3. Medical appointments of students
 4. Head lice – a maximum of 2 days for each occurrence
 5. Death in the family of the student
 6. Compliance with a court order (e.g., visitation, subpoena)
 7. Special education or related services as defined in 20 U.S.C. 1401 (2004) for the child's disability.
 8. Observance of a religious holiday or service, or because the child's or parent's religion forbids secular activity on the instructional day
 9. Family vacation, not to exceed 5 excused absences per program year; or
 10. Extraordinary circumstances beyond the control of the child and the child's parent.
- Provide written documentation after every absence, including the date(s) and reason for the absence. Text or email is acceptable.
- In the event of excessive unexcused absences resulting in non-payment by the Early Learning Coalition (ELC), parents are responsible for paying for those missed days out-of-pocket. If payment is not made, their child may be terminated from the Precious Lambs Preschool (free tuition) VPK Program.
- Have their child in regular daily attendance during the program hours established by the preschool.
- Bring their child to preschool between 8:15 and 11:30 AM for the morning session or between 12:00 PM and 3:15 PM for the afternoon session. Pick-up for the morning session is no sooner than 11:30 AM and no later than 11:35 AM. Pick-up for the afternoon session is no sooner than 3:15 PM and no later than 3:20 PM every day.
- Verify in writing, each month, their child's VPK attendance during the previous month. This verification will be provided upon the parent's signature on the Florida VPK Child Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate. Children's certificates will be provided at the appropriate time.

At the discretion of Precious Lambs Preschool, a child may be removed from participating in Extended Learning for non-payment or regularly paying late (without a payment arrangement).

EXCLUSIONS FROM ATTENDANCE

Reasons a child may be excluded from admission or attendance in the preschool program:

- The child appears ill, overtired, or unable to participate in the daily program.
- Child is not developmentally ready for the preschool curriculum or routine.
- Child is not toilet-trained.
- Preschool cannot meet the needs of the child with reasonable accommodations.
- Parents do not observe the policies outlined in the Preschool Parent Handbook.
- Non-payment or late payment of fees. (See Financial Policies)

Procedure for temporary exclusion:

- Parents will be asked to take an ill child from the Preschool immediately if present, or within one hour of notification if not present.
- Parents will be asked to pick up a disruptive child as soon as possible.
- The preschool director will inform the parents verbally or in writing concerning the reason for the exclusion, the date the exclusion will begin, and the conditions necessary for the child to return to Preschool. There will be no tuition adjustment.

Procedure for permanent exclusion:

- Children who, in the professional opinion of their teacher and the Director or school principal, exhibit behavior
- which is physically harmful to other children; or
- which causes willful or malicious damage to the school or school property; or

- which is unreasonably disruptive of the daily program; or which exhibits disrespect toward adults; or
- which shows willful disregard for the morals and conventions of a Christian school may be subject to, but in extreme cases, not limited to:
 - Notification of parents by the preschool director or principal.
 - A one-day suspension, with notification to parents.
 - A three-day suspension **and** a mandatory conference with the parents if the problem continues.
 - Permanent expulsion from the school if the problem continues. This will be after a review of the case by St. Paul's Council of Ministry. The parents must attend this review; otherwise, the child will be automatically expelled from the preschool.

This policy has been adopted to maintain a healthy Christian atmosphere within our preschool. It also aims to promote the best possible environment for learning and teaching. Any severe case may result in expulsion. If the child is permanently excluded, unused tuition will be refunded. Parents agree not to use social media as a vehicle to air any preschool-related grievances.

ABSENCE POLICY

Notify the Preschool as soon as possible if your child will be absent.

A parental note is required upon the child's return to school, excusing the child from Preschool. Text or email is acceptable. This is a preschool policy. This note shall include:

- Date the excuse is written
- Date(s) of the absence
- Reason for the absence
- Parent's signature

WHAT TO BRING

Bring Daily

- A complete set of extra clothing that includes a shirt, pants, socks, shoes, and underwear in a zip-lock bag with the child's name on the bag. Be sure to update the outfits when your child grows into a larger size or when the weather changes.
- A daily snack in a lunch box with an ice pack.
- A school-age backpack to carry belongings to and from preschool, roomy enough to include a 2-pocket folder, snack container, water bottle, and extra clothing such as a light sweater or jacket.
- The preschool will provide a 2-pocket folder for transporting items to and from home. The teacher and parents are both expected to check these folders every day. Examples of items teachers may send home include Christ Light Bible lessons, newsletters, monthly calendars, field trip forms, and special notices.
- A no-spill water bottle with a closable spout labeled clearly with the child's name. **NO DISPOSABLE** water bottles and **NO** water bottles with a **SCREW CAP** of any kind - disposable or reusable. **NO SIPPY CUPS** or **TERVIS**. Water bottles should contain only water, not juice! Children may use their water bottles in the classroom, especially during snack time, but having one for use on the playground is a **MUST**. The bottle will be taken home daily to be washed and returned the next day filled. Any child who needs to borrow a water bottle from preschool will be provided with one. Repeated occurrences will result in a \$10 charge for a new water bottle provided by the preschool. Charges will be billed on Praxi.

Bring for Extended Care

- Children staying for Extended Care will need to bring lunch in a lunch box with an ice pack.
- Children staying for Extended Care will need a blanket (twin size or larger) stored in a pillowcase. The blanket will be used under and over the child. They may also bring a favorite stuffed animal and a pillow. These items will need to be taken home weekly and laundered. All items (zip lock bag, outdoor clothing, lunch box, backpack, water bottle) should be visibly labeled with your child's name.

Do Not Bring

- Do not bring toys, guns, or money. Teaching children to share when the toy belongs to someone special is more challenging, and toys from home can get broken or lost. Action figures and toy weapons are never appropriate for preschool.
- Do not bring gum, candy, carbonated soft drinks, caffeinated drinks, glass containers, Hugs drink barrels, or pizza Lunchables.

SPECIAL CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays at Preschool

The preschool will celebrate every child's birthday that occurs during the school year. Parents should discuss with their child's teacher when to celebrate birthdays that fall on a weekend or over a break. Preschool does not usually celebrate summer birthdays, as children need to understand time properly, which can be hard for them. Half birthdays are not observed. Preschool parents may bring store-bought birthday snacks. Teachers will provide a birthday crown, a balloon, and a number candle to commemorate the special occasion.

Birthday Party Invitations

No one wants to knowingly disappoint a child. Therefore, the preschool asks parents to be very discreet when sending birthday invitations to classmates. The first names of classmates will be given out upon request. Parents should hand invitations for classmates to a teacher or place them in their child's folder. The teachers will put the invitation in the children's folders to go home to their parents.

Holiday Celebrations

Our Christmas and Easter celebrations will be centered on the true significance of these holidays for Christians. Jesus' birth will be the center of Christmas. Jesus' death and resurrection will be the focus of Easter. On October 31, we will observe Reformation Day and celebrate the gift of God's Word.

EXTENDED CARE & FULL-DAY THREE-YEAR-OLDS

Preschool Extended Care is a separate program from morning preschool and is paid separately from the regular preschool day. The hours of Extended Care are from 11:30 AM until 3:15 PM. During this time, the children will follow a schedule that includes lunch, naptime, and a variety of daily activities. There is no drop-in care.

Children are very active at preschool and, therefore, are required under Florida law to have a nap or rest period during Extended Care each afternoon. The preschool will provide each child with a cot and a quiet setting. Each child will need to bring a blanket (twin-size or larger) from home, in a pillowcase, with their name written on all items. The blanket will be used under and over the child. Plan on leaving all bedding items at preschool for the week. On the last day of the week, naptime bedding will be sent home for laundering. Children may also bring a favorite stuffed animal. Toys are not permitted.

Precious Lambs Preschool Late Pick-Up Policy for PM VPK and EXTENDED CARE

Parents are to pick up their child on time at 3:15 (grace period until 3:20), unless there is an extreme emergency, such as a life-or-death situation (car accident, hospital, etc.). As soon as possible, notify your child's teacher or preschool director by calling the preschool or the teacher's cell phone so that we can assist you.

If you unexpectedly find yourself late (traffic, stuck at the store, lost track of time, etc.), immediately notify your child's teacher by calling the school or the teacher's cell phone. You will be charged for these types of late pick-ups after the first instance.

After the first late pick-up, which Precious Lambs does not consider an extreme emergency or unusual situation, we will give you a verbal reminder of our policy, and you will not be charged a late fee. Subsequent late pick-ups, however, will be billed.

Repeated late pick-ups may result in your child being suspended or removed from the Precious Lambs Program.

Late charges will be billed to your Praxi account, and prompt payment is expected.

Late charges are not allowed to carry over to the following statement. Late fees that go unpaid or roll over to the next month may result in your child being suspended from preschool until payment is made.

Parents shall pick up their child from Extended Care at 3:15 PM. Late fees shall apply as follows:

- 3:21 – 3:25 \$5.00
- 3:26 – 3:30 \$2.00 extra per minute
- 3:31 – 3:40 \$5.00 per minute
- After 3:41 @ the discretion of Precious Lambs Preschool
- Staff will verify the late pick-up time by cell phone clock

SAYING GOOD-BYE AT PRESCHOOL

The first day of Preschool is exciting for your child, but it can also be filled with anxieties regarding separation and new experiences. Let your child know that you are enthusiastic about the coming events, and they will be, too. Dealing with change and new experiences is a lifelong skill that takes practice. Life is filled with hellos and goodbyes! Be kind to yourself, too. Remember, you are also experiencing separation. Here are some ideas that will help to make a smooth transition from home to Preschool:

- Create a routine at home as you prepare for Preschool
- Talk to your child and let them know what is going to happen – “You’re going to stay at preschool while I go to...”
- Follow the same routine each morning when you arrive (put belongings away, use the toilet and wash hands, sign in, wave goodbye from the window). Create a routine for going home when you pick up your child from Preschool, too.
- Allow a few extra minutes to spend with your child on the first few days.
- Talk together with your child’s teacher. Let your child see that you are all friends.
- Getting your child involved in an activity usually lessens anxiety.
- Assure your child that you will come back to pick them up. One of their greatest fears is that you won’t come back. Tell them when that will be. Use an activity for a reference point, such as “I’ll be back when you finish your snack.”
- Don’t sneak away, even if it seems easier for you. Leaving unnoticed will violate your child’s trust.
- Create a ritual for saying goodbye. Ask your child what they want to do. Do they want two hugs, three kisses, or a rub of noses?
- ***Once you start to leave, don’t stop.*** It’s important that you follow through even if your child cries. We will comfort your child.
- Feel free to call later in the morning to see how your child is doing.
- Many children adapt quickly to the routine. However, it is perfectly normal for some children to take several days, or even weeks, to adapt. Some children adjust well at first and then later experience anxiety.

SECTION THREE: Preschool Enrollment

ADMISSION

Admission Requirements

Precious Lambs Preschool is a school-year preschool program for all children who are at least 3 years old and fully toilet-trained and self-sufficient in the bathroom. (*This means no pull-ups or diapers will be worn during the Preschool program*)

Probationary Period

All children will be enrolled for a six-week probationary period. If, after six weeks, there are no reasons to exclude them from attendance, they will be fully admitted. In certain circumstances, a shorter trial period may be mutually agreed upon.

Order of Acceptance

Children shall be enrolled for the school year on a first-come, first-served basis, as space permits, and only after non-refundable registration or enrollment fees are paid in full and, if required, a VPK voucher is submitted.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

In the Bible, God tells us that He "...wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) All children are welcome to enroll in Precious Lambs Preschool without reference to race, religion, national or ethnic origin, or gender.

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT

The registration procedure begins when you inquire on the website stpauls.edu or call the school office.

Once on the website, click **TAKE ME TO SCHOOL & PRESCHOOL**

Next, click **Interest in Preschool**

- Complete the Interest Form.
- The Preschool Director will contact you by email or phone.
- You will receive an email invitation from our Financial Coordinator to complete the registration application and set up an account on Praxi.
- Enrollment in VPK does not guarantee placement in St. Paul's Kindergarten the following school year.

To complete the registration process, you may be required to make a non-refundable payment. You will not be required to make a payment if you are only signing up for VPK. There is no fee associated with the initial inquiry.

Enrollments are accepted in the order in which applications are received.

The preschool director oversees the review of all applications for enrollment. If the preschool director declines to accept an application for enrollment, the registration/enrollment fee will be refunded. However, the non-refundable fee will not be refunded if the applicant retracts the application.

Once the maximum number of preschool students has been reached, your name may be put on the waiting list by notifying the preschool director. Applicants on the waiting list will be notified of any vacancies in the order in which they were received.

By completing the enrollment forms and submitting the non-refundable registration fee or the non-refundable Extended Learning enrollment fee through Praxi, or by submitting the VPK voucher to the preschool director, parents agree to abide by the Preschool's policies.

All parents enrolling their child in preschool must attend a parent orientation before their child may attend preschool. This will enable parents to fully understand the spiritual and academic foundations of our Preschool and to support their child at home.

Complete and submit these forms prior to the school year (before your child may attend).

- **Copy of Birth Certificate**
- **Florida Certificate of Immunization*** - Immunizations must be documented on DH Form 680 and must be signed by a practicing physician in the State of Florida. DH Form 680 may be obtained from a private physician or the local county Health Department.
- **Student Health Examination*** - The Student Health Examination must be documented on DH Form 3040 and must be completed by a person given statutory authority to perform health examinations. DH Form 3040 may be obtained from a private physician or the local county Health Department. The examination is valid for 2 years from the date it was received. However, upon admission, the examination must have been received within the past year.

*Parents may consult their private physician or contact:

Citrus County Health Department, 3700 W. Sovereign Path, Lecanto (352) 527-0068

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Children's records are open only to the Teacher, the Director or Principal, an authorized employee of the Department of Children and Family Services, an authorized employee of ACSI, or the child's parent or legal guardian. Information parents share with the Director or Teacher will be kept confidential. Only pertinent information will be reported to the necessary authorities.

MEDIA RELEASE AGREEMENT

Children may be photographed, audio- and videotaped for use within our Preschool, for educational, promotional, or advertising purposes. Families give permission to St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School and Precious Lambs Preschool the right to record and reproduce on film, tape, print, audio, or web materials the physical and/or vocal image and words of the student without using any children's names.

FAMILY INFORMATION RELEASE

Preschool families understand that their name and contact information have been added to the Precious Lambs database. Families may receive school publications and information (letters, phone calls, etc.) regarding school activities and enrollment.

DRESS CODE

Preschool children need to wear clean, comfortable, and modest clothing. ***They must wear clothes that they can manage independently in the bathroom, and are not concerned about when playing with messy materials.*** Plan for the weather. We will go outside daily, weather permitting. When it is hot, children will be comfortable in shorts and short-sleeved shirts. When it is cool, children will need jackets. Some children will also be more comfortable wearing a sweater or a light jacket in air-conditioned areas.

Children may not wear caps, hats, mittens, or sunglasses indoors, though they may wear them when we go outside. Please use discretion when allowing children to wear jewelry. Large, loose, dangling necklaces, rings, bracelets, watches, and earrings may distract or pose a safety concern and may be removed from the child at the teacher's discretion.

Children need to wear socks and play shoes with non-skid soles (no sandals). Their shoes need to be safe for movement activities, both inside and outside.

Precious Lambs Preschool Dress Code:

- **Pants and shorts**
 - No holes, patched or frayed edges
 - Regular fit: no form-fitting or baggy
 - Shorts must be of conservative length using a fingertip length guideline
 - Pants and shorts must fully cover the buttocks area
 - No belts that cannot be managed independently by the child
 - NO OVERALLS
- **Shirts and blouses**
 - Long enough to cover the midriff
 - Patterns, designs, and emblems allowed
 - No advertising, logos, or commercial interests allowed
 - No slits or open backs
 - Sweaters and sweatshirts may be worn on cool days – NO HOODIES in the classroom
- **Skirts and dresses**
 - Conservative length (fingertip guideline)
 - Girls must wear shorts or leggings under their skirts and dresses to cover their underwear
 - Dresses can have no spaghetti straps that fall off the shoulders or are revealing
- **Shoes and socks**
 - Socks must be worn with shoes
 - Shoes should have non-skid soles, safe for inside and out
 - Shoes must be of a style that stays on the foot while running and active – NO SANDALS, CROCS, OPEN-TOED, or OPEN-BACK shoes
 - Shoes must cover the entire foot (example: sneakers)



SECTION FOUR: Family Partnership

PROCEDURES

Records

For your child's safety, keep their registration information up to date. Whenever you have a change of address, employment, phone number, or emergency information, be sure to inform the Director so that your child's file may be corrected.

Policies

Each parent receives the preschool's policies in the Precious Lambs Preschool Handbook via email, and they can also be found on Praxi by logging in to your account.

Complaints, Grievances, and Questions

At times, parents may have concerns or complaints. God's Word gives us guidance in how to handle these situations (Matthew 18 and I Corinthians 13).

- Speak first to the teacher with whom you have a concern or complaint before speaking with anyone else.
- If the issue has not been resolved, speak with the preschool director.
- If you still feel that your issue is not resolved, speak with the school principal, a pastor, or Council of Ministry (CoM) member.

- All requests to speak directly with the members of the CoM at one of their meetings to express a complaint or grievance must be submitted in writing to the COM chairman at least one week prior to the next scheduled meeting. The written request should include the nature of the complaint or grievance, specific dates and times when previous steps were taken, and the individuals who were unable to adequately resolve the problem.

Any questions you have regarding enrollment, payments, or school policy may be addressed to the preschool Director. Questions involving the regular workings of the classroom or pertaining to your child's time in the classroom should be directed to the lead teacher in that classroom.

PRESCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

We believe that children have the right to play and learn in a supportive, caring, and safe environment. When behavioral expectations are consistent and reasonable boundaries are set by caring and supportive practitioners, the occurrence of bullying can be minimized.

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. No one should have to accept this type of behavior. Only when all bullying issues are addressed will a child be able to benefit most from the opportunities preschool offers. Although bullying in the strongest sense of the word does not generally occur among preschool-aged children, practitioners recognize that preschoolers are still developing their social skills and expanding their understanding of what is appropriate behavior. They are still learning a great deal about how to get along with others—and they're less experienced in solving the problems that arise when playing with others. Thus, they may resort to aggression to solve problems rather than more effective ways of resolving conflict. While all bullying is aggression, not all aggression is bullying.

We acknowledge that children's biological and cognitive development at this age requires nurturing and support, and that very young children do not intentionally cause harm.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING:

Bullying is the willful, conscious, and persistent desire to cause emotional, verbal, and/or physical hurt to another. This hurt may be caused by actual or anticipated actions that put the victim under stress. These actions are accompanied by an awareness of the impact of behavior on the child who is the victim. The characteristics of bullying suggest that the child who is bullying has reached a state of cognitive development where they are able to plan to cause distress in another. But it can be hard for young children to distinguish bullying from hurtful, immature, and inconsiderate behavior. Bullying can take many forms, but in preschool it may look like this:

- Emotional: being unfriendly or unkind, excluding activities or play
- Physical: non-accidental hitting, pushing, punching, pinching, kicking, hiding, taking, or defacing belongings, or any use of violence
- Verbal: name-calling, teasing

ACTION TO BE TAKEN WHEN BULLYING IS SUSPECTED:

Please note that an instance of bullying may fall into more than one 'category' listed above. If a child bullies another child or children:

We will support children by following the six steps of conflict resolution as follows: stopping the child who is being hurtful, and comforting the child who has been hurt:

1. Approach calmly, stopping any harmful actions
2. Acknowledge all children's feelings
3. Gather information from all parties
4. Restate the problem
5. Ask for ideas and solutions, and choose one together
6. Be prepared to give follow-up support.

We equip children with appropriate ways to stand up for themselves during times of conflict. We make sure that children who bully receive praise when they display acceptable behavior; we do not label children who bully.

When children bully, we discuss what has happened with their parents and work out a plan with them for handling the child's behavior; and when children have been bullied, we share what has happened with their parents, explaining that the child who did the bullying is being helped to adopt more acceptable ways of behaving.

PROACTIVE PREVENTION OF BULLYING:

1. Nurture and support children's social-emotional growth through play, story times, and circle time activities
2. Model kindness, empathy, and respect for all children
3. Encourage and equip all children with problem-solving skills
4. Equip children to use their voice and share their feelings to become confident communicators

SCRIPTURE VERSES SUPPORTING KINDNESS, COMPASSION, EMPATHY, FRIENDSHIP, AND FORGIVENESS:

- Ephesians 4:32 - "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."
- Mark 12:30, 31 - "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."
- I John 4:19 - "We love because he (Jesus) first loved us."
- Romans 12:18 - "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."
- Proverbs 17:17 - "A friend loves at all times."

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

God's Word

The Gospel of Jesus as our only Lord and Savior is God's power to create faith and give forgiveness. The Gospel message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ runs like a golden thread through our entire curriculum. Therefore, the Pastors of St. Paul's Lutheran Church lead an informational session explaining the basics of the Bible. In this class, he will introduce you to basic teachings of the Bible, the ones we will be teaching your children. The Preschool encourages all parents to take advantage of this opportunity to learn about or review God's Word. Our pastors or teachers will let you know the dates and times of the sessions, or you may ask to meet with a pastor in person.

Visiting the Preschool

Parents are expected to schedule a visit to the Preschool with their child when considering enrollment. After children are enrolled, parents are welcome to visit their children at any time. The Preschool encourages parents to speak with the Director and take advantage of this welcome at a time that fits their individual schedule.

Conferences

Informal "chats" will be ongoing. Parents may request a conference at any time. However, parents will be invited to two conferences during the school year, as noted on the Precious Lambs Preschool calendar. These conferences are to discuss your child's preschool progress and may take place at the preschool.

Singing in Church and Special Programs

Singing in church and other special programs have been scheduled throughout the year. These dates are available in advance on the Precious Lambs Preschool calendar. All children are expected to be present when their class is singing. Please talk to your child's teacher if this causes any hindrance to your faithful service of the Savior.

Family Programs

Throughout the year, parents will have the opportunity to attend regularly scheduled parent programs. These will revolve around topics of interest concerning different aspects of family life, parenting, and education, and

may include outside speakers, video presentations, and forum discussions. Input from parents will be sought regarding areas of need or interest through parent surveys.

Field Trips and Special Days

Educational and fun *field trips* will be scheduled throughout the school year. These events are on the preschool calendar. Parents will be reminded in advance as the events approach. Precious Lambs Preschool teachers do not transport or chaperone any child on field trips, nor are any other parent permitted to transport or chaperone any child other than their own. Parents are welcome to carpool, but each child attending must be supervised by a family member.

The Preschool also enjoys *Special Days* with the preschoolers and their families. These are activities planned to celebrate holidays and other special occasions. Parents and immediate family members are always encouraged to join in these events.

Helping Hands Volunteers

Parents have many opportunities to volunteer throughout the year. Your help is encouraged and welcomed!

Donations

The Preschool welcomes donations of consumable items, such as boxes of tissues, plastic spoons, and baggies. You may also support the preschool by donating items such as quality toys and books. Please ask us if we can use the item before bringing it to Preschool.

Evaluation of preschool

Each year, families will have opportunities to evaluate the Preschool program through short surveys. Your feedback is essential. It lets us know what we are doing right and what needs to be changed or improved.

Parent Responsibilities at School

Prepare your child in advance for arrival at school: you will leave him at his classroom door and return at a specified time. It is hard for parents to leave a crying child at the door, but be assured that they are usually busy playing by the time you are in your car and on your way. Feel free to call us and check on your child. We want you to feel confident about leaving your child with us.

- Confer with the teacher, but refrain from discussing the child in his presence. They hear and understand what you are saying!
- Realize that arrival and departure times are not convenient times for a teacher to have lengthy discussions with a parent. Their full attention should be on the children in their room, including your own.
- Work with the teacher concerning any problems that may arise.
- Share with us any upsetting experience you think may help the teacher understand your child better.
- Please notify us of any situation at home that could affect your child's behavior. We feel that our preschool is a ministry. We hope that you will feel free to come to us at any time for a listening ear. We have an "open door" policy, and you are welcome anytime.
- Help your child attend regularly and be on time. This is a pattern that is set for the rest of a person's life.
- Help your child understand that his teacher will not ask them to do anything that will hurt them. We are here to teach and have learning experiences in a safe environment.

Parent Responsibilities at Home

- Breakfast is an important beginning to a preschooler's day to ensure they are ready to learn. Please ensure your child has this important meal before arriving at school.
- Preschoolers do best on a regular routine. They do not like surprises.
- A preschooler functions best with a consistent bedtime that is unrushed.
- As a parent, take the initiative to guide your child rather than punishing him for something they did not know how to do.
- Give acceptable choices rather than "no".
- Try using more positive statements than negative. Example: "You are a bad boy." There is no such thing as a bad child, only inappropriate behavior. Encourage your child to make "good" choices.
- Ask your child what they did at school each day, and review the material they bring home. Reinforce what they are taught and help them practice concepts and techniques.



HOME/SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Family Communication Center

A Family Communication Center is in the preschool hallway. Information is updated regularly. Some of the items that will be posted include weekly lesson plans, special events, and sign-up sheets. Parents are asked to check the boards upon arrival.

Backpack Communication

Information for your child will be placed in a two-pocket folder for them to bring home daily in their backpack. The teacher and parents are both expected to check these folders every day. Christ Light messages, newsletters, special notices, and children's work are examples of materials teachers will send home.

Monthly Calendar Email Updates

At the beginning of each month, parents will receive a reminder email about upcoming events.

Preschool Newsletter

Parents will receive the Preschool newsletter, Lambs' Tales. This news may include lyrics to songs and fingerplays that the children are learning, along with a recap of activities enjoyed during the week. It may also indicate upcoming lesson plans and events. The newsletter will be sent to you via email. Your child's teacher may also send a classroom-specific newsletter in your child's take-home folder.

Weekly St. Paul's School Newsletter

Each Friday, parents will receive (via email) the St. Paul's School Newsletter highlighting news of the entire school, which sometimes includes preschool.

Christ Light Bible Curriculum

Each week, parents will receive a detailed explanation of the Bible story the children have learned. It has color pictures and application ideas for parents to use at home. Many families choose to make a Bible Story book from these pages.

Children at Work

Photos or artwork displays may be found in the classrooms or hallway. Videos and snapshots of children may be texted or emailed to their families or included in the newsletter. Photos of preschoolers at work may also be posted on our Preschool Facebook page and on the St. Paul's website, www.stpauls.edu.

SECTION FIVE: HEALTH AND SAFETY



ENTERING and EXITING THE CAMPUS

The speed limit through the church parking lot is **5 MPH**. This is slow, but it is meant for the safety of all children. Drive the speed limit as soon as you enter the church and school property. Park your car and turn off the engine. **ALWAYS HOLD YOUR CHILD'S HAND WHILE CROSSING THE PARKING LOT** when bringing your child into the preschool or leaving. Always use extra caution when backing out to leave. Children move quickly and can be difficult for drivers to see. **DO NOT** allow your child to run ahead of you in the parking lot – ever!

Preschool (and kindergarten) families are permitted to park in the upper lot by preschool. Please place the yellow car sign on your dashboard so that grade school families can see that you are not “cutting” the car line.

It is advisable that preschool families do not park in the first row upon entering the parking lot. Circle around to the back side so the car line does not block you in and have an easy path to exit the way you entered.

RECORDS

Children entering preschool for the first time must provide the preschool with a copy of the child's birth certificate, an Application for Enrollment, original copies of a Florida Certificate of Immunization (DH 680) showing that all required immunizations have been obtained, and a current Student Health Examination (DH 3040) signed by a licensed medical professional. These health certificates must be on file within 30 days of enrollment and remain in the child's file while enrolled. These medical records are the property of the parent or legal guardian when the child withdraws from the facility and are transferable if the child attends another facility.

ALLERGIES

Doctors and parents will inform the Preschool of the child's allergies on the Student Health Examination form and the Emergency Contact and Medical Information form. If a child has a life-threatening allergy to specific foods, those foods will be banned at the preschool while the child is enrolled to prevent an allergic reaction.

Allergies will not be permitted as an excuse for your child to attend preschool when they have symptoms of illness without a note from your child's doctor stating that your child is not contagious.

ILLNESS

It is in the best interest of your child, as well as the other children and staff at the Preschool, to keep your child at home when they have symptoms of illness. Please understand that this policy is not enforced to inconvenience you, but rather to protect the welfare of students, other student families, and staff.

Preschool Staff members conduct a daily health check of each child as they enter the classroom. A child may not be accepted into the center if staff deem the child too ill to attend or contagious.

Some reasons for a child to remain at home or to be sent home are fever (100 degrees), vomiting, skin rash or sores, inflamed or swollen eyes, diarrhea, dark urine and/or gray or white stool, yellowish skin or eyes, severe coughing, difficult or rapid breathing, stiff neck, sore throat, headache, head lice, lethargic, EXCESSIVE COUGHING or SNEEZING or any other unusual sign of symptom of illness. Children are often ill without a fever. If your child is not acting like they feel well. Keep your child home. ***Fever is sometimes a factor, but staff may determine that a child is not well enough to attend preschool with or without the presence of a fever.***

A child may return to the Preschool when they are **free of symptoms for 24 hours and/or 24 hours after prescribed medication has begun**. 24 hours means that if your child was ill in the afternoon, evening, during the night, or in the morning, it has not been a full twenty-four hours. Therefore, **your child is not permitted to attend preschool**.

A child who has had head lice may return after treatment has removed all lice, lice eggs, and egg cases. However, if any lice, nits (lice eggs), or egg cases are still visible, they will not be permitted to attend preschool.

NOTE: A child with diarrhea may not return to school until they have had a normal bowel movement. A child with a green, thick, or mucous runny nose may not return until the nose is clear. Conjunctivitis (pink-eye) is contagious without fever; therefore, a child must remain at home until symptoms have disappeared.

Should a teacher observe signs of illness in a child at preschool, the parent or a parent-designated person will be notified immediately and asked to arrange **transportation home within 30 minutes**. The ill child will be isolated and supervised until picked up. A written report (FYI or Medical Referral) may be given to the parent upon pickup, depending on the nature of the illness. **Your child is not permitted to attend preschool the following day if they are sent home from preschool for illness – no exceptions.**

NOTE: Because preschoolers will be ill on occasion, it is helpful to have plans for alternate care in case of illness. We understand that the illness of a child is hard for working parents, but these policies are intended to protect all of our children from catching illnesses that can spread through a class. We ask that you help your child and your child's teacher by not sending your child to school when they are not feeling well.

If a child has a *communicable disease*, they may not attend Preschool. The Preschool must be informed of the disease so that notice of possible exposure can be given to all enrolled families and the local county health department. A memo will be posted in the parent communication center. *The child's name will be kept confidential*. A child with a communicable disease will be readmitted to Preschool only after allowing for the longest usual incubation of the disease or with a signed statement from their physician. **The returning child needs to be well enough to participate in all activities, including those outside.** Communicable diseases include, but are not limited to, chickenpox, German measles, infectious hepatitis, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, and meningitis.

Children with EXEMPT immunization status will not be permitted to attend preschool if a communicable disease emergency has been declared by the State/Citrus County for which your child has not been vaccinated against until the all-clear is given by Citrus County Health Services.

MEDICATION

Only when truly necessary will the staff administer doctor-prescribed medication with the written consent of the custodial parent or legal guardian, and a completed, **signed consent form from the prescribing doctor**. Teachers will not administer over-the-counter medication unless prescribed by a physician. The first dose of any medication will not be given at preschool. The first dose of any new medication should be given at home so the parent/guardian can observe the child for any unusual reactions.

The medication must be in the original container with a child-resistant cap. The label must state the child's name, date, name of the medication, the physician's name, dosage, and directions for administration.

The parent must fill out a Medication Administration Record (Regular or "As Needed"). Staff will ensure that the Medication Administration Record is completed correctly using the Medication Administration Safety Checklist. The Medication Administration Record will be kept with the medication in the container and initialed by two staff members when administering it.

The Medication Administration Record must document the child's name, date, name of the medication, physician's name, directions for administration (including dosage to be given, time to be given, and other specific directions as needed), and signature of the parent/guardian.

Staff will log the child's name onto the Child Care Medication Use Log. The child's name will be highlighted on the log when the medication is discontinued. The Medication Administration Record will be put in the child's file after the last day the child received the medication.

All medication is to be stored in a separate container labeled "medication" and kept out of reach of children. Medication needing refrigeration shall be kept in the refrigerator in a separate container clearly labeled "medication". A list of the children's special medication restrictions and allergies will always be kept in the medication container.

Medications that are no longer in use will be returned to the parent. Containers of medication are never to be given to a child to return to the parent or for any reason.

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

Parents will be notified immediately if their child is seriously injured and requires professional medical treatment. Parents will be notified when they pick up their child if their child has sustained a minor injury. Written permission from the parent to call a child's physician or refer the child for medical care in case of injury shall be on file at the Preschool.

A closed container labeled "First Aid" containing soap, Band-Aids, disposable latex gloves, cotton balls, sterile gauze pads and rolls, adhesive tape, tweezers, an ice bag or cold pack, a surface thermometer, and emergency numbers will be available to treat minor injuries. The kit will be accessible to teachers but kept out of children's reach.

Superficial wounds shall be cleaned with soap and water only and protected with a Band-Aid or a bandage. Ice may be applied. First Aid procedures shall be followed for serious injuries.

Suspected poisoning shall be treated only after consultation with a poison control center.

An Accident/Incident report will be written for every accident or incident, regardless of how minor it is. These reports will be signed and dated by the teacher and the parent and kept on record.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Emergency Ambulance, Fire, Police **911** (Non-emergency 1-352-637-4121)

Poison Control Center **800-222-1222**

Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline 800-96-ABUSE (**800-962-2873**)

HCA Florida Citrus Hospital, 502 W. Highland Blvd., Inverness, FL 34452 (**352)726-1551**

Tampa General Hospital Crystal River, **6201 N Suncoast Blvd, Crystal River, FL 34428 (352)576-5600**

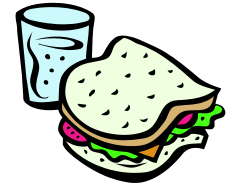
SNACKS AND LUNCHES

Daily Snacks

The **daily morning snack will be provided by the parents**. Children should bring a snack that includes at least two food groups that meet USDA requirements. (Refer to the USDA guidelines in this handbook for those requirements.) Snacks need to be in a lunch box or insulated bag (not a paper or plastic bag) with an ice pack inside for proper storage. Lunch boxes are to be placed in the child's cubby in their locker in the hallway.

Snacks should not include foods such as pastries, donuts, cakes, cupcakes, candy, gum, soda, chips, or imitation fruit drinks. *Snacks will include* these types of nutritious foods:

fruit	cereals	crackers	muffins	granola bars
fruit juice	bread	vegetables	milk	trail/granola mix
popcorn	jello	pudding	raisins	cheese
yogurt	pretzels	sandwiches		cookies (sparingly)



Snacks that are more than half an inch in diameter and spherical pose a choking hazard and must be cut in half before bringing them to preschool. These include foods such as grapes and hot dogs.

Hydration

Children are to bring a **Reusable Water Bottle** from home each day with fresh water for access in the classroom and outside – *not disposable* and NO screw caps, and no sippy cups or Tervis! The water bottle should be something your child can operate and will not leak if it tips over on the table or in their backpack. Disposable water bottles will be returned home unopened. A reusable water bottle will be provided temporarily in its place. Disposable screw bottle caps are a choking hazard and a spill issue.

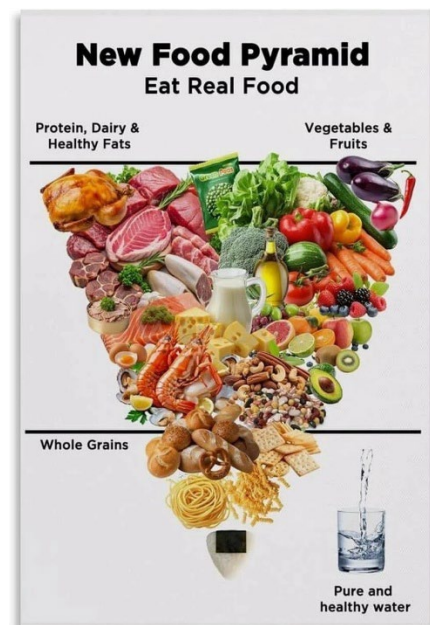
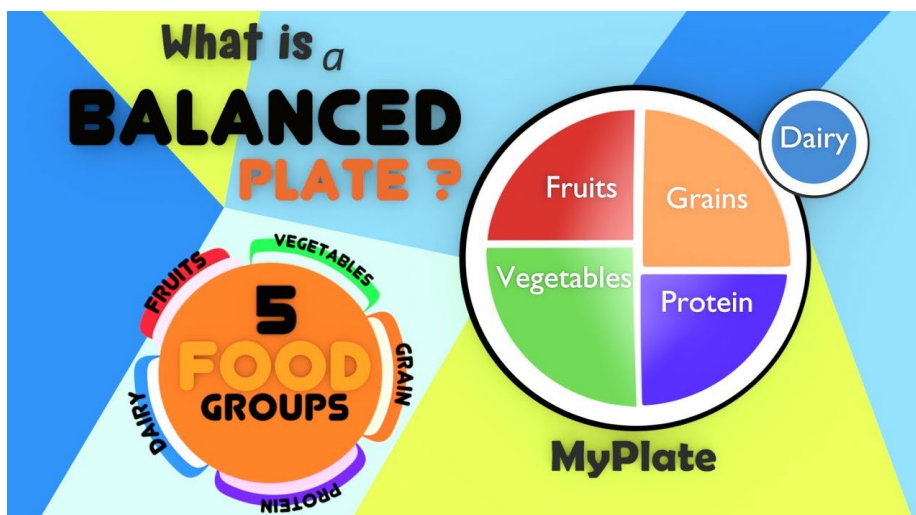
If, on a regular basis, no ice pack is found to be in your child's lunchbox (and items inside could spoil) or no water bottle is provided (or an improper water bottle is provided), one will be purchased for your child, and you will be billed on Praxi.

Food Allergies

In the case of severe food allergy in a child, we will require, for the safety and welfare of that child, that no children in the preschool will bring a snack containing the offending food.

Extended Care Lunch

Lunch will be supplied by the child's family. The child needs to bring a lunch that meets USDA requirements. Refer to the USDA guidelines in this manual for those requirements. Lunches need to be in a lunch box or insulated bag (not a paper or plastic bag) with an ice pack inside for proper storage. Lunch boxes will be stored in each child's cubby.



FOOD PYRAMID for KIDS



EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS

The preschoolers practice fire drills monthly, and tornado and lockdown drills during the school year. In the unlikely event that these are real emergencies, procedures are in place to ensure the safety and care of all children.

Emergency Evacuation of the Preschool

In any situation requiring the emergency evacuation of the Preschool, all Preschool students will, if possible, be relocated to the gymnasium/auditorium at St. Paul's Lutheran School, located across the driveway from the Preschool.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSINGS

The school may close due to bad weather; parents will be notified when school sessions resume. In any other situation deemed an emergency by the principal, the school will be closed, and the parents will be notified. Stay tuned to local television and radio stations for more information. Parents should call their child's teacher if they desire more information.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Anyone working in the Preschool who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been abused, abandoned, or neglected is a mandated reporter and is required by Florida law to contact the Department of Children and Families central abuse hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE).



**Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them,
for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."**

Matthew 19:14 (NIV)

FINANCIAL POLICIES

THREE-YEAR-OLD PROGRAMS

- Must be three years old by September 1st.
- Must be fully potty trained – no pull-ups.
- All Three-Year-Olds - (One-time) Non-Refundable Registration Fee: \$175
- A refundable deposit of ½ months' tuition must be paid prior to starting preschool and guarantees placement in the full-day program. However, the deposit **will not be refunded** for withdrawal from the program prior to the end of the school year.

Three-Year-Old Programs	CHOOSE THE DAYS	HALF-DAY Tuition Rates 8:15 AM - 11:30 AM	FULL-DAY Tuition Rates 8:15 AM - 3:15 PM
		Annual/Monthly	Annual/Monthly
2 Days	Tuesday/ Thursday	\$1,660/166.00	\$3,050/\$305.00
3 Days	Mon. Wed. Fri.	\$2,350/\$235.00	\$4,150/\$415.00
5 Days	Mon. – Fri.	\$3,500/\$350.00	\$6,500/\$650.00

VPK PROGRAMS

- Must be four years old by Sept. 1st.
- (One-time) Non-Refundable Enrollment Fee: \$175
- The above-stated fee applies only to Extended Care students who also attend AM VPK.
- A refundable deposit of ½ months of Extended Care tuition (\$197.50) must be paid prior to starting preschool and guarantees placement in the Extended Care program. However, the **deposit will not be refunded** for withdrawal from the program prior to the end of the school year.

HALF-DAY VPK Morning	8:15 AM - 11:30 AM	FULL-DAY (Morning + Extended Care) 8:15 AM - 3:15 PM Annual/Monthly
	FREE w/voucher	\$3,950/\$395.00
HALF-DAY VPK Afternoon	12:00 PM (noon) - 3:15 PM	
	FREE w/voucher	

THE FINE PRINT

Students are accepted into Precious Lambs Preschool on a first-come/, first-served priority basis and contingent upon paid fees and/or VPK voucher – applicable for any programs in which you are enrolling your child.

- All applicable fees must be paid in full by the first day of preschool attendance.
- The registration fee will not be billed to VPK (only) students per state regulation.
- Self-pay and Extended Care tuition payments are billed at the beginning of each month. Depending on your child's start date, tuition payments and the tuition deposit may be due immediately upon enrollment.
- The *refundable* tuition deposit will be applied to the last month's tuition or any unpaid charges.
- The *refundable* tuition deposit **will be forfeited** if you withdraw your child during the school year.
- Precious Lambs must receive your child's **VPK Voucher Certificate** by the first day of preschool attendance. When Precious Lambs receives it, your child's VPK certificate guarantees placement in the VPK program.
- Extended Care enrollment fee (paid in full) guarantees VPK student placement in Extended Care.
- **ALL PRESCHOOL FAMILIES:** You **MUST** present your child's **BIRTH CERTIFICATE, HEALTH EXAM FORM 340, and IMMUNIZATION FORM 680** by the first day of preschool attendance.
- Failure to present the required documents (listed above) may delay your child's start date.



PARENTAL AGREEMENT OF POLICIES
per Parent Handbook & Orientation Signed Documents

I certify that I will read the Precious Lambs Preschool Parent Handbook and agree to abide by the beliefs, policies, and procedures in this document, including but not limited to:

- Admission Requirements
- Statement on Family Values
- What to Bring – what parents provide so their child is ready for the day
- All Attendance, Illness, Absence, and Late Pick-Up Policies
- Dress Code
- Snack and Meal Nutrition Guidelines
- Complaints and Grievances Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Financial Policies

I understand that these policies are in place for the health, safety and welfare of my child and the other children in care at Precious Lambs Preschool so that children are happy, prepared and able to learn.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

*To read and refer to the Parent Handbook during the year, you will find it on **Praxi**.