

St. Mark's Pre-Kindergarten

Parent Handbook

Serving Children and Their Families for Over 67 Years



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St. Mark's Pre-Kindergarten Directory

Important Phone Numbers

Preschool Office	999-0800
Secondary Preschool Office Line	999-0354
Church Office	994-0400
Church Fax Number	994-5740

School Office Personnel

Director of the Preschool (Monday through Friday)	Lynn Hudson
Preschool Secretary (M/T/Th)	Rita Lin

Our Preschool Board consists of a President, Treasurer, Church Members, Parent Representatives, and a Teacher Representative who governs St. Mark's Preschool.

Preschool Board Members

President	Jane Brown
Treasurer	Clarice Ritchie
Chairman of Trustees	Ken Copeland
Trustee Member	Ken Copeland
Finance Member	Lee Hummel
At Large	Judy Austin
Teacher Representative	Susan Newell

Preschool Parent Representatives

See Preschool Web Site: stmarksprekk.com

Church Board Contacts

Minister	Pastor Michael Roberts
President of the Preschool Board	Jane Brown
Treasurer of the Preschool Board	Clarice Ritchie

Email addresses and phone numbers for the preschool board members can be requested from the preschool director for any parent or guardian needing this information.

Classes and School Hours:

All classes are subject to change

Two Year Old Class (2 days per week) **9:00 to 12:00**

2 Day 2's: Classes are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Three Year Old Class (2 days per week) **9:00 to 12:00**

2 Day 3's: Classes are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Three Year Old Classes (3 days per week) **9:00 to 12:00**

3 Day 3's: Classes are held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Four Year Old Classes (3 days per week) **9:00 to 12:00**

3 Day 4's: Classes are held on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

3 Day 4's: Classes are held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

5 Day 4's: Classes are held on Monday through Friday.

Summer Camp

Summer camp is held for children ages 3 to 5 (preschool age) and ages 6 to 9 (school-age).

The summer camps are two weeks in June (dates to TBD). The summer camp hours are 9

a.m. to 12 p.m. The cost is determined each year. Information on summer camp will be shared through email and applications will be available sometime in March.

St. Mark's Pre-Kindergarten Developmental Domains

St. Mark's Pre-Kindergarten is an outreach of St. Mark's United Methodist Church and serves the surrounding community with a Christian based preschool program. The preschool will not discriminate against applicants, students or families based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran's status, religion, creed or any other category protected by state and/or federal laws. Each family is respected for their own culture and values. Each parent has the right to express their preferences and goals for their child. It is a Christian Educational Program. The school is a place where the child is met as a unique individual at his or her level of development in an atmosphere of warmth, love, and acceptance with understanding teachers who provide opportunities and experiences for the child to learn and grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, physically, and intellectually. From this basic foundation of living experiences, the young child is on his or her way to becoming a person of self-worth.

Spiritual Growth

The children will grow in their awareness of God and the love of Jesus through stories, songs, graces, and holidays. The teachers Christian attitudes help the children learn about "loving one another," which helps them to feel that they are children of God.

Emotional Growth

The teachers and staff at St. Mark's Pre-Kindergarten will help each child cope with different relationships, face reality, develop self-control, and express feelings. Through these experiences, the children will learn to become self-reliant.

Social Development

The children bring behavioral patterns developed within the family circle to school with them. They associate with peers and learn to cooperate with others. Through the process of give and take with peers and others, they learn to share, explore, listen, and grow socially.

Physical

The preschool provides activities and equipment to develop:

- Large muscle control, like climbing, sliding, and running.

- Small muscle control like using art materials, manipulative toys and zipping and buttoning coats.

- Eye-hand coordination, like cutting, gluing, and painting.

- Safety habits.

- Personal hygiene.

All classes attend our physical education program, which meets for 30 minutes once a week. Weekly playground time is scheduled for each class for 30 minutes, and outdoor physical activities are encouraged.

Intellectual

The preschool provides a program of concepts in language arts, math, social studies, science, nutrition, healthy habits, sensory, music and art. The children achieve their potential through experimentation with the use of a variety of materials.

Arrival and Dismissal Information

Arrival Time:

Children need to be accompanied to our “D” by their parent or caregiver. The teacher will sign your child in on the attendance sheet.

Late Arrivals

If you arrive after 9:15, please come to the “D” door (our arrival and dismissal door) and ring the intercom. A staff person will come to the door, or either buzz you into the school and the staff person will walk your child to the classroom.

Parental Concerns

If a concern arises, you may set up an appointment with your child’s teacher. We will try our best to promptly resolve any concerns that may arise. If you have a conference and need additional support, we will provide you with the contact information for the Red Clay Consolidated School District at 302-892-3227 or 302-995-8568 (for developmental concerns), your school district, or The Center for Child Development at 302-292-1334 (social/emotional concerns).

Early Dismissal

Parents who need to pick up children before dismissal time should provide the teacher with a note stating the time and person picking up the preschooler. This note will be forwarded by the teacher to the office. Please come to our “D” door and ring the intercom.

Dismissal Time:

The parent or caregiver must come to the “D” door to get their child. The preschool director will call the child’s name once the parent or caregiver is in front of the dismissal line.

Late Pick-Up

A late fee of \$5.00 will be charged for **every 15 minutes** that a parent is late after 12:10 p.m. Please call the Preschool Office if an emergency is going to make you late to pick-up your preschooler.

Pick-Up (Other than Parents)

Please provide a written note directly to the teacher if your child is leaving school with a person other than a parent, caregiver, or carpool. **All persons permitted to pick up the child must be included on both the white emergency card. The person picking up must have a picture ID. No child will be released to an unapproved person or non-custodial parent.** Children going home with another parent for a play date **will need a written note with the person's first and last name and will need to show a picture ID.** Children will not be released to anyone who is under the influence of drugs, sleeping medication or alcohol, or any other substance that prohibits their physical or verbal behavior at the time of dismissal. In

these situations, the parents or the emergency contact person will be contacted, and the child will remain in the preschool office with the preschool director.

Parent and Guardian Visits and Monitoring of Our Preschool (Open Door Policy)

Parents and guardians are welcome and allowed to visit at any time during the preschool day. After entering the preschool, please come to the preschool office to sign in and get a visitor's badge. If during your visit you need to use the bathroom, you will have to exit the preschool through the church doors and use the bathroom in the church. If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns, please feel free to talk with the preschool director.

Breastfeeding Moms, Guardians or Caregivers

For anyone who needs to breastfeed their child are welcome to use the church nursery, which offers rocking chairs and a changing station. The church nursery (room 6) is located next to the preschool office. If you have other children with you, they are welcome to play with the toys while you breastfeed. When it is time to go, please tidy up the nursery. Any soiled diapers need to be thrown out in the "diaper trash can," which is located in the girls'/ladies' room in the trash bin marked "diapers only".

Curriculum

The curriculum has been taken from Methodist materials, Early Learning Foundations, and children's interests. Curriculum will provide: language, science, gross/fine motor development, reading readiness, listening/auditory discrimination, number readiness, social skills, and many more skills. Teachers use Early Learning Foundations to plan, implement, and document activities. Information and strategies that teachers gain through workshops and courses that pertain to Early Childhood Education are implemented in the classroom. We try very hard to meet the children's needs of whatever Kindergarten they will be attending, whether it is a public, private, or parochial educational setting. Teachers and teacher assistants are required to attend workshops and professional development during the school year to enhance their education. At times, this will require In-Service days for them to attend. The In-Service days are noted on the yearly school calendar.

Daily Schedule

The preschool day begins at 9:00 a.m. with parents bringing their child straight to "D" door. You must arrive on time as activities or circle time begin promptly after arrival time. Each teacher has a daily schedule posted outside the classroom with a detailed outline of each day. Each classroom teacher sets-up their own schedule to accommodate their children, classroom routine and special schedule.

Special Classes

Physical Education class is once a week for all ages (30 minutes) in the lower level. **Children must wear sneakers. If girls are wearing dresses, please have leggings, shorts or pants under the dress.**

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences can be scheduled throughout the school year with your child's teacher if you have questions or concerns. **There is one mandatory conference that is held in February.** **Progress reports are given to parents in November, February, and May.** If a teacher is concerned about your child's progress or development, parents will be advised to contact your child's pediatrician, Birth to Three: Child Development, Child Find, or your local school district for additional support and help.

Monthly Classroom Calendars and Newsletters

Each month, a calendar is sent home with a newsletter on the back with important information, which includes daily activities, special events, academic information, Bible verse, classroom needs, etc. These calendars are sent home in your child's backpack. This information is important for your child's involvement in our program. If you need an extra copy, please contact the preschool office. **Please check your child's backpack every day!!**

Discipline

Children are supervised in a loving and positive atmosphere at St. Mark's Pre-Kindergarten with praise and encouragement. Terms such as "hands are for loving" and "sharing is caring" are tools used by teachers to defuse difficult situations. Inappropriate behavior by the child is discussed with the teacher. Safety of the children and staff is of paramount concern to us. If a child's behavior is inappropriate, teachers will redirect that child towards an appropriate behavior. The preschool **does not** use time-out. A conference with parents may be necessary to achieve appropriate behavior for that child. We expect children to follow the rules of good conduct, which is respect for self, staff, school and other children. Through working together, we hope your child has a positive experience in our preschool.

Positive Behavior Support

At St. Mark's Pre-Kindergarten children are in a loving and positive environment and given praise and encouragement. Safety of the children and staff is of paramount concern to us. Inappropriate behavior by a child is discussed with the teacher. The child will be redirected toward appropriate behavior. Some of the ways that we can ensure appropriate behavior from the children is through positive reinforcement, redirection, giving choices, singing the directions or expectations to the children, using fun phrases such as "hands are for loving," and open communication with parents. Through working together, we hope to make the preschool a safe, fun, and positive experience for your child.

Ways to Prevent Suspension and Expulsion

St. Mark's Pre-Kindergarten is an outreach of St. Mark's United Methodist Church. As an outreach, our mission is to foster every child's social-emotional development as well as provide each child with a secure and loving environment. As educators we know behaviors change as well as each child's academic development. As changes become more dramatic or disruptive to the class, we as a whole will work together with the parents or guardians to find ways to help the child that does not involve suspension or expulsion. Our goal is to provide ways to help and support the child to improve their behavior, social interactions and to achieve academic success. If we find that a child needs a more appropriate educational setting than what we can offer in terms of special education services, we will work together with the family, school district, special education teachers, and therapist to ensure a smooth transition to a more

appropriate educational setting. Please note that the child will not be dismissed from the preschool until we have a transition date and plan in place for the preschooler.

Safety: Security System

For the safety of the children and staff of our preschool, St. Mark's United Methodist Church and the preschool use a security system during the school day. The doors are automatically locked during the preschool hours and remain locked throughout the day. The preschool has cameras throughout the building, excluding the classrooms and there is an intercom system at the doors of the preschool in the Narthex and the dismissal door. If you need to visit the school, please come to the "D" door and use the intercom.

Handwashing and Table Sanitation

All children will wash their hands with soap and water. At the beginning of the school year, teachers will teach the children the steps to proper handwashing. Children are required to wash their hands **before and after** eating or handling food, water-play, or other sensory table/container with other children or shared play dough or clay. The children are required to wash their hands **after** using the bathroom, handling animals or their equipment, or after coming into contact with an animal's secretions, playing in a sandbox, and outdoor play.

Teachers will wash the tables with soap and water and then wipe with a disinfectant wipe, as well as any water tables and water play equipment at the end of the day. Our in-house custodian will clean all bathrooms from top to bottom, vacuum carpets, empty all trash cans, wipe down the water fountain and the nighttime custodian will mop the classroom floors and hallways.

Daily Snack Needed

Parents will need to supply a healthy snack daily, such as a piece of fruit or vegetables, and a drink (water/100% juice and no soda) for their child. If your child has or develops a food allergy during the school year, please make sure your child's teacher is aware of it. Children eat a snack between 10:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. daily, depending on the class routine of the day. Due to the general prevalence of severe nut allergies, **St. Mark's Pre-Kindergarten is a Peanut and nut-free school**. Any food and drinks brought to the school brought into the school need to be free of nuts and peanuts. Products that say "**may contain peanuts**" or "**made in a factory with peanuts**" are not permitted snacks. If a teacher sees that a product with nuts has accidentally come into the classroom, the teacher will not serve it, but return it to the parent, and an alternate snack will be given to your child. A good guide when sending in snacks is the SnackSafely.com list, which is updated weekly, and all the snacks are peanut-free, tree nut-free, and egg-free.

Backpack

A backpack is needed to carry items back and forth to school. The backpack should be large enough to accommodate 8 1/2 x 11" papers. Please check the backpack daily for important information.

Clothing

Children are to wear comfortable clothing. **Please label items with the child's name, such as their smock, sweater, coat, jacket, hat, gloves, etc.** Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes and pants or shorts are recommended for everyday wear, but are required on gym days. Please keep in mind that we paint and make other messes, and children need to wear clothes that will possibly get soiled with glue, paint, etc. All students are asked to have **an extra set of season-appropriate clothes for their cubbies or book bags.**

Small Blanket

Children in our 2-year-old classes may use a small blanket if quiet time is needed during the day.

Smock

A long-sleeved plastic smock is needed for arts and crafts for all children and the preschool will provide them.

Potty Training

We **strongly encourage** parents of three-year-olds and older to have their children potty-trained before entering school in September. We encourage parents to ensure their child knows how to use toilet paper and take care of issues independently. Also, it is very important to explain and teach your child proper hand-washing methods.

School Closings

A yearly school calendar indicating all closings will be on monthly classroom calendars. However, these dates are subject to change, and parents will be notified of any changes. **Our school policy for days missed due to bad weather or pandemics is that these days WILL NOT be made up at the end of the school year.** Please **do not call** the Church Office to ask if the preschool is closed. Please check our school website at stmarksprekk.com for school closings for bad weather or call the school and listen to the recorded message and Facebook, such as tornadoes or hurricanes or even pandemics. Our school will be identified as **“St. Mark’s Pre-Kindergarten of Stanton” on SnowWatch.**

Parents' Right to Know for the Office of Child Care Licensing

St. Mark’s Pre-Kindergarten is licensed by the Office of Child Care Licensing, and we must adhere to the DELACARE Regulations for Early Care. All families have a right to know our active record, any formal complaints that have been registered against our school as well as any school compliance issues regarding state requirements mandated by the Office of Child Care Licensing. Please feel free to speak to the preschool director, or call OCCL at (302) 892-5800 or visit <https://kids.delaware.gov/occl/search-for-child-care.shtml>.

Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect

Delaware law requires that any suspicion of child abuse or neglect be reported to the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-292-9582. St. Mark's Pre-Kindergarten teachers, staff, or director must report any child abuse and/or neglect to the Delaware Child Abuse Hotline and Office of Child Care Licensing.

Photo Release Policy

Our teachers and staff will take pictures of the children as they participate in classroom activities. Your permission is necessary for pictures to be taken for projects, photo albums, etc. **We do not publish names or post pictures on the internet or Facebook. The preschool director will get verbal or written permission to post any pictures on the school's Facebook Page.**

Monthly Fire Drills

Fire drills are held monthly. When the bell sounds, the children and staff walk quickly in a single file line outside to the specified areas. A head count is taken once they arrive at the designated area. After the drill is over, children and staff walk back to their classrooms. In the event of a real emergency, parents will be called to pick up their children immediately.

Health Issues

If your child is ill, we will first call the parents to come pick up their child from the preschool office (Room 8). If a parent cannot be reached, the emergency contact person will be called. **Parents must give the preschool accurate and reliable phone numbers on the emergency card.** Please report any changes regarding the health record, transportation arrangements, addresses, phone numbers, etc., to your child's teacher and the preschool office. Your child will remain in the preschool office until someone has picked them up.

If your child will be absent from school, please report the absence by calling 999-0800. Parents are asked to keep their child at home if he/she is not feeling well, has an upset stomach, diarrhea, or a temperature of 99.5 or higher, and they must be fever-free for 24 hours without any medication before returning to school. If your child contracts a contagious disease, the school must be notified. If your child has been exposed to any communicable diseases in his/her classroom, you will be notified by a written notice and the written notice will be placed in your child's book bag. Also, if you know your child has been exposed to any communicable diseases, please contact the preschool office to speak privately to the preschool director. If you have a question or concern, please feel free to reach out to the preschool director.

For the children who have contracted diseases such as scarlet fever, pinworms, or conjunctivitis, a written doctor's note stating that they are not contagious to anyone must accompany children when they return to school. Children with head lice must have treatments with a special shampoo, and their head must be checked for nits by the office personnel in Room 8 before being readmitted to the classroom. A note will be sent home in the child's book bag when a communicable disease is reported in your child's classroom. These stipulations are necessary to ensure everyone's protection, especially other children and pregnant mothers.

Accidents/Incidents During the School Day

If a child's injury, accident, or incident requires 911 to be called and the child needs to be transported by ambulance, parents will be called after we have reached 911. We will communicate the name of the hospital to the parent or guardian.

Accident/Incident Forms will be completed by the teachers and then given to parents or caregivers at pick-up time regarding minor bumps, scrapes, cuts, etc. The forms include a description of the accident or incident, teacher and director signatures, first aid procedures taken, and the child's reaction. One copy is given to the parent or caregiver and one is kept in the child's file. Parents or emergency contacts will be called from a staff person in the office when accidents involve anything from the shoulders up.

Serious Accidents and Incidents involving calls to 911 or poison control are reported to the Office of Childcare Licensing, along with an accident report required from OCCL.

Dr. Karen Kelly is our Health Care Consultant.

Allergies/Asthma

If you know your child has allergies or asthma, this must be indicated on your child's school medical forms, and you must get an Action Plan from your child's primary care doctor before your child starts preschool in September. If you discover your child has an allergy or asthma during the school year, an Action Plan must be in place before your child returns to school. This will enable us to provide the best care possible for your child. If your child requires medical supplies such as Epi-Pens or Inhalers, these may be kept at St. Mark's Pre-Kindergarten. Parents provide these if needed and all medical supplies must be kept current.

Medication Policy

No medications are permitted in your child's book bag. If your child requires medication such as an Epi-Pen or inhaler, these items will be kept with the classroom teacher in a designated location during the school day and a medication log must be filled out and given to the preschool director for review and after the preschool director reviews the medication log the log will stay with the medication. All Epi-Pens, along with a copy of the Action Plan and medication log will stay with the classroom teacher in a designated place. Wherever the child goes, the Epi-Pen goes too. Any oral medications, along with a medication log, will be locked up in the medicine cabinet which is located in the preschool office and is marked "medications" on the outside. Preschool children with an identified disability will have medication administered with specific directions and training from the parent or doctor. Medication will be administered only by staff that has successfully passed the medication training and test.

Special Events

Special activities occur a few times during the school year. Detailed notices are sent before these events and will be noted on the monthly calendar and/or newsletter. Examples of special events are Special Person Day, which is held in April, and closing programs and end of the year of gatherings.

Classroom Celebrations

When we have classroom celebrations for the holidays or other special events, parents are asked to contribute items. The teacher will create a Sign-Up Genius or email the parents. **All items must be store bought and must come to the school in its original packaging and this includes any food items. Food items should not be cut or re-bagged at home.**

Birthday Parties Invitations

Birthday party invitations can be passed out by your child's teacher **only if all children in the class are invited; otherwise, it will be the parents' responsibility to hand them out before or after school.**

Church Property

Parents should always be aware of other vehicles in the parking lot and preschool families walking in the parking lot. Proceed at a **slow, cautious speed** while driving on church property. Please do not allow your child to run on the road. Please keep children out of the trees and off all railings and walls, mulched areas, and flower beds. It is our goal to respect the property of the church.

Handicap Parking Spaces

Please do not park in the blue-marked handicap spaces unless you have the required tag on your license plate or inside the dashboard of your vehicle.

Parking Lot Precautions

Children should be supervised at all times while in the parking lot. In order to assure a safe and secure environment for our children, after parking your car, please escort your child while holding their hand to the door. Do not leave your child or children unattended in your car. Please drive slowly when entering or exiting the parking lot.

Church Funerals

Occasionally, the church has to schedule a funeral during school hours; therefore, arrival and dismissal schedules will have to change to accommodate the church. Dismissal times may be changed in the event of a large funeral. The preschool will give you as much notice as possible when this will occur; however, sometimes it will not be possible to notify you until the morning your child arrives for school. Please notify anyone who may be dropping off or picking up about these changes. Out of respect for the deceased's family, please **do not enter the Narthex Area of the church on this day.**

Playground Use

Please do not use the playground until 1:00 Monday through Thursday, and then after noon on Fridays. Please do not permit children to climb the fence or trees, pick flowers, etc. **Please supervise your children at all times when they are on church and school property**

Lost and Found Items

If you have found an item or you have lost an item, please contact the preschool office.

Tuition Payments

Tuition payments are to be made monthly, or one payment may be made for the entire school year. Tuition payments are due in the Preschool Office by the 1st of the month. **Payments, which are not in the office by the 15th of the month, will be charged a late fee of \$10.00. When payments are made late, the \$10.00 late fee must be paid with the late tuition payment. If payments for the current school year have not been made, registration for the following year may be denied. It is school policy that when a check is returned to the preschool all future payments must be made in cash or a money order.**

We are not responsible for payments sent in your child's book bag. All payments are to be made by mail or in-person in the preschool office.

If you find it necessary to withdraw your child before the end of the year, a written notice, one month in advance if possible, stating the reason for withdrawal which then must be given to the preschool director. No refunds will be given for early withdrawal.

Fundraising

Fundraising is done throughout the school year and is completely on a volunteer basis. Money that is raised through the fundraisers is used to purchase equipment and activities for all the children. Again, participation in the fundraisers is optional.

**Thank you for choosing St. Mark's Pre-Kindergarten!!
God Bless**