



**St. Mark's Preschool  
and Parents' Day Out**

1267 N. Rutherford Blvd.

Murfreesboro, TN 37130

615-895-1803

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website: [stmarkstn.org](http://stmarkstn.org)

**2023-2024  
FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**St. Mark's Preschool and PDO's building and grounds are a smoke-free, drug-free, alcohol-free, and weapon-free environment.**

Any questions or suggestions about the preschool program should be addressed with preschool administration  
Samantha Daniel, Director,  
615-895-1803  
or emailed to [stmarkspreschool@mail.com](mailto:stmarkspreschool@mail.com).

## **ST. MARK'S PRESCHOOL and PDO STAFF**

<b>Director:</b>	Samantha Daniel
<b>Assistant Director:</b>	Janet Morse
<b>Toddlers Staff:</b>	Meghan Meissner, F 312 Eryn Wilson, MW 312
<b>Two Yr. Olds Staff:</b>	Lori Dean, MW, TTh 310 Abigail Johnson, F 310 <i>Additional Teacher</i> , TTh 312
<b>Three Yr. Olds Staff:</b>	Kellie Craig, MWF 307 Julie Miller, MWF 309 Beth Wilcox, TTh 309 Karleen Wolstenholme, TTh 307
<b>Four &amp; Five Yr. Olds Staff:</b>	Rachel Baldwin, M-F 305 Kristen Horneman, MWF 302 Meghan Meissner, TTh 302 Jess Rimsa, MWF 303
<b>Floating Staff/Helpers:</b>	Lucy Cochran, TTh Lori Gray, MW Rachel Lewis, F

These policies were written to provide a clear description of what families can expect of St. Mark's Preschool and PDO and what St. Mark's Preschool and PDO expects of families.

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## 1. PHILOSOPHY

At St. Mark's Preschool and Parents' Day Out (PDO), we believe that each child should have the opportunity to develop emotionally, socially, physically, and intellectually to his/her fullest potential. We encourage each child to experience the joys of learning and growing. Our purpose is to provide activities that meet the developmental needs of each child and provide a loving, Christian-based atmosphere for group interaction. We believe each child is special and prayerfully respect the trust each family places in our hands.

St. Mark's Preschool and PDO strives to meet the individual needs of each child and provide valuable experiences on his/her road to learning and growing. Our curriculum encourages developmental growth through planned activities and shared information. We share our love and concern as we interact with each child every day. We share our faith as we reach out with love and acceptance, impart attitudes and values, celebrate the Christian holidays, and offer thanksgiving to God through prayer.

## 2. CURRICULUM GOALS

The curriculum is designed to:

- Provide opportunities that encourage physical, emotional, social and intellectual growth.
- Enhance fine motor and gross motor skills, whether outside on the playground or inside each classroom.
- Support the development of social skills such as sharing, cooperation, generosity and empathy.
- Foster positive self-esteem, a sense of self-worth and each student's own unique gifts.
- Support the health, safety, and well-being of each child.

The daily schedules provide for a balance between child-directed and teacher-directed activities, quiet and active time, and inside and outside play. Children have daily opportunities to read books, use a variety of art media, explore math and science materials, experience music and music movement activities, and work alone or together with friends.

Through unit study, each child will be exposed to new information and ideas and will be given opportunities to develop thinking and reasoning skills appropriate to his/her age and developmental level. There will be a balance of enrichment/cognitive knowledge material and readiness skill material using the Tennessee Early Learning Developmental Standards (TN-ELDS) as the framework for these meaningful interactions. Every child will be praised for his/her efforts and accomplishments.

In accordance with state law, we present a personal safety curriculum, published by the TN Dept. of Human Services Child Care Licensing, to all children beginning in their three-year-old year. "Keeping Kids Safe" takes a holistic approach to the safety of children. The curriculum includes the following units: Self Esteem, Family and Friends, Feelings, Problem Solving, Personal Safety (general) and Personal Safety (4-5 year olds), and Safety Around Me. This curriculum can be viewed on the TN Dept. of Human Services website:

[https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/keeping\\_kids\\_safe\\_content\\_updated\\_wdraft\\_cover.pdf](https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/human-services/documents/keeping_kids_safe_content_updated_wdraft_cover.pdf)

We recognize the importance of adults as models of acceptable and loving behavior. We seek ways to teach values for Christian living: honesty, obedience, love, forgiveness, sharing and

responsibility. In keeping with this, all children beginning in their three-year-old year attend chapel weekly where they actively engage in songs of worship, prayer, and Bible stories.

### 3. CERTIFICATION

St. Mark's Preschool is licensed by the state of Tennessee through the Department of Human Services Child Care Licensing, specifically the classes that meet 3+ days per week.

The Parents' Day Out (PDO) of St. Mark's Preschool is not required to be licensed by the state as a childcare agency. Even though our PDO program is unlicensed, we choose to follow the same guidelines and regulations as our licensed program.

All staff of St. Mark's Preschool and PDO are members of Southern Early Childhood Association and its state and local affiliates.

### 4. ENROLLMENT AND DISENROLLMENT

Our enrollment is open to children of any race, color, national origin, sex, or religion who can participate in a developmentally age-appropriate curriculum. All applications are subject to evaluation according to the specific needs of the child and the ability of St. Mark's Preschool and PDO to accommodate those needs through its program, current staff, and facilities.

All enrollment forms must be fully completed, enrollment fee paid, and immunization form received prior to your child's first day of attendance.

St. Mark's Preschool and PDO reserves the right to request withdrawal of any child if the child or their parent/guardian needs such attention or supervision that the class/preschool is unfavorably affected. Through a process of observation and consultation, the decision will be determined with input from the Preschool Teacher, the Preschool Director, the Preschool Assistant Director, and the Preschool Board. Families requesting withdrawal of their child from the program, for any reason, must give 2 weeks' notice to the director and pay tuition accordingly for the entire month which includes those 2 weeks.

Enrollment reserves a place in our program for your child and subsequent tuition is due and payable if your child is enrolled. ***There are no discounts for days missed due to illness, misc. absences, vacation, or school being closed for holidays, inclement weather, or emergencies.*** If tuition is unpaid for 2 consecutive months, your child may be suspended from the program until a resolution is reached. (Please see #6 re: tuition and fees.)

### 5. IMMUNIZATIONS

Your child's immunizations must be up to date. The Tennessee Certificate of Immunization form must be completed and signed by your child's health care provider. This immunization form is required to be turned in to the preschool prior to your child's attendance. This is a state licensing regulation.

### 6. TUITION AND FEES

Preschool tuition is divided into 10 equal payments, August through May. Tuition is due by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of each month, except for the August payment, which is due the first week of the school year. Tuition is as follows:

- 1 day per week - \$100 monthly, (\$100\*10 mos. = \$1000 per school year)
- 2 days per week - \$200 monthly, (\$200\*10 mos. = \$2000 per school year)
- 3 days per week - \$275 monthly, (\$275\*10 mos. = \$2750 per school year)
- 5 days per week - \$400 monthly, (\$400\*10 mos. = \$4000 per school year)

A late fee of \$15 may be charged after the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month unless prior arrangements have been made with the director for an alternative payment schedule. Enrollment reserves a place in our program for your child and subsequent tuition is due and payable if your child is enrolled. (Please see #4 for details re: enrollment and disenrollment.) **There are no discounts for days missed due to illness, misc. absences, vacation, or school being closed for holidays, inclement weather, or emergencies.** If tuition is unpaid for 2 consecutive months, your child may be suspended from the program until a resolution is reached.

Tuition and other fees may be paid by check, cash, or bill pay through your bank, and turned in to the preschool office or placed in the tuition mailbox. For your convenience there is an online payment capability: [www.stmarkstn.org/pspay](http://www.stmarkstn.org/pspay).

Extended care options are available for additional fees. Early Bird fee is \$3.00 per day and Stay and Play fee is \$10.00 per day. Children will be placed in Stay & Play if they have not been picked up at their scheduled pick-up time and will be charged the regular Stay and Play fee. If the student remains in our care after 2:00 p.m. without proper notification or agreement, you may incur an additional charge of \$10 for the first 5 minutes and \$1.00 per minute thereafter. (Please see #7).

Extended care rates:	2023-24 rate increase
Early Birds 8-8:25a	\$3 per day
Stay & Play 12:30-2p	\$10 per day
Late pick-up fee	\$10 first 5 minutes; \$1 per minute thereafter

## 7. HOURS OF OPERATION AND ATTENDANCE

St. Mark’s Preschool is open from 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. Monday–Friday. Tuition covers classroom hours 8:30 to 12:15 for the toddler and 2-year-old classes and 8:30 to 12:30 for the 3- and 4-year-old classes. Children may begin coming to the classroom no earlier than 8:25 a.m. Extended care is available for all children, preferably 30 months and older:

- Early Birds (with limited enrollment in advance) from 8:00 a.m. until 8:25 a.m., enter at door #7 and
- Stay & Play from 12:30 until 2:00 p.m., with general dismissal from the playground or gym.

Families will be assigned either door #7 or door #8 as their morning entrance and check-in location. All arrivals and check-ins after 8:45 must take place at door #8. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to their classroom. Every child must be signed-in upon arrival and signed-out upon dismissal by their parent or guardian. Upon arrival to your child’s classroom each morning, we ask that you leave your child at the door with their teacher, without entering the classroom and leave promptly. This has proven to be beneficial to children experiencing separation anxiety. Please make every attempt to have your child arrive on time.

Upon arrival each day, all children will be observed for signs of illness and injury (see #10).

## 8. RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children will be released only to a parent/guardian or person authorized by the parent/guardian (as listed on the student’s information form) unless the teacher or director is notified in writing or via phone call by the child’s parent/guardian or authorized person. The St. Mark’s Preschool and PDO staff may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause

to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. If this situation occurs, the St. Mark's staff will take one or more of the following actions as deemed necessary:

- An authorized person (as listed on the information form) will be called to come for the child(ren).
- The child(ren) at risk will be supervised by a staff member until another authorized person comes for the child(ren).
- The Murfreesboro Police Department may be notified of the situation and assistance may be requested.

All children must be transported to and from preschool in appropriate child restraints according to the Tennessee Child Passenger Safety Law.

## 9. **DISCIPLINE**

We believe that discipline and guidance should be consistent and based on an understanding of individual needs and development. A positive guidance technique promotes self-discipline and acceptable behavior. These techniques will include but are not limited to:

- recognizing and encouraging appropriate behaviors
- developing reasonable and clear rules and expectations in each group
- explaining the consequences of inappropriate behaviors
- redirecting children into positive behaviors
- enforcing limits and rules consistently and fairly
- helping children to identify and express feelings in acceptable ways

## 10. **ILLNESS**

One of the most serious challenges facing group situations for young children is preventing illness. We strive to maintain the highest standards of cleanliness. Proper hand washing techniques will be followed and taught to students. The eating surfaces, sinks and toileting/diapering areas will be cleaned and sanitized throughout the day and disinfected at the end of each day.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of disease is to have strictly enforced standards regarding the exclusion of ill children. Upon arrival at school each day, all children will be observed for signs of illness and injury. Sick children may not attend. Do not send a child to school unless he/she is healthy and able to play outside. If your child becomes ill during the school day, we will contact you to pick up your child immediately. Student attendance is not allowed if a child shows any of the following symptoms 24 hours prior to their school day: earache, vomiting, diarrhea, persistent cough, cold symptoms, nasal drainage with color, fever of 100 degrees or higher, or any other symptom of a contagious illness.

Children with impetigo or diagnosed strep shall be treated appropriately for 24 hours prior to readmission and symptom-free.

Children or staff diagnosed with COVID-19 must isolate for a minimum of 5 days out of school from start of symptoms and may not return until fever free and symptom improvement for a minimum of 24 hours. The TN Dept. of Health and our preschool recommend masking around others for an additional 5 days following isolation. [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html> [Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19 | CDC](#)]

Children diagnosed with scabies or lice shall have proof of treatment and be free of nits prior to readmission.

A parent/guardian authorization form must be completed if medication is to be administered by staff. (See #11)

When an enrolled child or an employee of our center has a reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Department of Health. We will also notify enrolled families of any exposure so children can receive preventive treatments or classrooms asked to quarantine. These reportable illnesses include:

- Chickenpox
- COVID-19
- Food-borne illness (food poisoning)
- Haemophilus Influenza type B
- Hepatitis A
- Measles, Mumps, and/or Rubella
- Meningococcal Meningitis
- Pertussis
- Polio
- Salmonella
- Shigella
- Any other illness so identified by the TN Dept. of Health

## 11. MEDICATIONS

Our center does not administer any prescription or over-the-counter medications to children without the proper written consent, documentation, and instructions from the child's health care provider and parent/guardian.

## 12. LUNCH AND SNACKS

Snacks will be provided by the preschool. Lunches (finger foods) are to be sent from home consisting of 1 serving fluid milk or milk alternative, 1 serving of fruit and 1 serving of vegetable (or 2 servings of vegetables), 1 serving grains/bread, and 1 serving meat/meat alternative/protein. **To prevent the possibility of choking, all round foods, including but not limited to baby carrots, small tomatoes, hotdogs and grapes, must be sliced and quartered for all children up through the 3-year-old classes.** Children in our 4-year-old classes are required to have all round meats sliced and quartered as a choking prevention. This is a state regulation. Please do not send foods that require warming or other preparation outside of class; we do not have the ability to warm foods in class. Do not send carbonated drinks, red juice, or anything in a glass container. Cold packs should be used to keep your child's lunch at a safe temperature.

## 13. ALLERGY AWARENESS

Families will notify us regarding each student's food and environmental allergies. For children with life-threatening allergies, a written Allergy Action Plan endorsed by the child's pediatrician or licensed medical provider must be provided to our center.

Some classrooms will be mandated as **peanut and/or tree nut free, allergy-aware classrooms** if there is a child in these classes with severe allergies to peanuts/tree nuts. If your child is in an allergy aware classroom, certain food items brought from home will be restricted. You will be notified of these restrictions. As a school-wide precaution, we strongly discourage peanut/tree nut foods in your child's lunch.

#### 14. **CLOTHING**

Dress your child in clothing that is durable, comfortable, allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Many of your child's favorite activities may tend to be messy, like finger painting and digging in the dirt. **Children should wear closed-toe, non-marking, soft soled shoes (such as sneakers). Sandals, flip-flops, cowboy boots, and hard soled shoes are not appropriate for center play and cannot be permitted.** We will play outside as long as it is not raining and the temperature range is between 32 degrees and 95 degrees, after adjustment for wind chill and heat index. A labeled jacket, coat, gloves, or hat may occasionally be required.

All drawstrings should be removed from children's clothes as a precaution to reduce the risk associated with their entanglement in climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm.

All children, regardless of age, must have a complete change of clothing (including socks and shoes) in their backpack or left at the preschool.

All children who are not yet potty trained are to wear diapers, or pull-ups with re-sealable sides, and have additional diapers/pull-ups and wipes for changing.

#### 15. **BRINGING ITEMS FROM HOME**

Children frequently want to share with their class nature items and treasures from home. Such items are especially welcomed with teacher approval and if they support the topic being studied. Specific share days will be scheduled by the teacher.

We do not allow toys to be brought into the classroom from home, although we do occasionally allow items of comfort for the younger children, such as a soft cuddly stuffed animal to ease separation. Please speak directly with your child's teacher concerning comfort items. We will not be responsible for items that are lost or damaged. St Mark's does not allow any toys of violence, such as guns, swords or violent action figures. Cosmetics, candy, gum, and money are also not allowed from home.

#### 16. **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Birthday refreshments are welcome and should be prearranged with the classroom teacher. Cookies are preferred over cupcakes. *Balloons are prohibited.*

#### 17. **LABELING**

Please label all items brought to preschool including clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes, share toys, etc.

#### 18. **PARTICIPATION**

We welcome your participation in and observation of activities in our program. Please prearrange such a visit or consultation with your child's teacher. Volunteer help with special events is often needed and arranged by teachers and preschool administration.

#### 19. **COMMUNICATIONS**

St. Mark's offers numerous methods of communication and engagement: Visiting/Orientation Day prior to the start of school; Open House in the fall, other special events throughout the year. We post basic school-wide information on the bulletin board to the left of the lobby entrance, by the clock. There is also a parent information exchange, or PIE, on the bulletin board between the entrance and the copy room. Lost and Found items are sometimes pinned



to the PIE bulletin board. Current events can be viewed on our Facebook page at St. Mark's Preschool of Murfreesboro. Each month the Director will send a newsletter to your email account which will include information pertaining to the month. You may also receive other announcements and reminders during the year by email. Your child's classroom teacher will send out monthly calendars and lesson plans, as well as offer conferences in the fall or spring. Additional conferences can be requested. To speak with the Director or to leave a message with a teacher, please call the office at 615-895-1803. Voice mail messages are checked regularly throughout the day. After hours communications may be by email, calling the preschool office, or calling the director at 615-424-1389. Please send all e-mail correspondence to [stmarkspreschool@mail.com](mailto:stmarkspreschool@mail.com).

## 20. WEATHER CLOSINGS

For weather-related closings, we follow the decision of the Murfreesboro City School System (not Rutherford County School System). If the city opens 1 hour late, the preschool will open 1 hour late also. **However, if the city opens 2 hours late, preschool will remain closed.** Families are encouraged to pick their children up early on days when a severe weather warning is issued or when the city schools dismiss early.

- For weather-related closings, please check:  
[www.cityschools.net](http://www.cityschools.net), [@MCScommunicates](https://twitter.com/MCScommunicates), local news, or WGNS radio.

## 21. SAFETY/EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Fire and/or tornado drills will be held monthly to acquaint your child with evacuation procedures. When complete evacuation of the St. Mark's UMC premises is necessary, children and staff will relocate to Belle Aire Baptist Church. School administration and teachers will communicate with parents or emergency contacts as listed on the student enrollment form. We are updating our emergency preparedness plan (EPP) and will provide a copy when it is complete. A copy of our current detailed EPP is available in our lobby for your review.

Safety is a major concern in early childhood programs; daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area to prevent injuries. Simple first aid will be administered by a trained staff member in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. The center is equipped with first-aid kits which meet state requirements.

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

## 22. CHILD CUSTODY

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

## 23. SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse or neglect

might have occurred. The TN Dept. of Children's Services (DCS) will determine appropriate action and may investigate. It then becomes the role of DCS to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect.

#### **24. PHOTO RELEASE**

We will share photos of preschool events and activities with our friends on the St. Mark's Preschool Facebook page and with the congregation of St. Mark's United Methodist Church during Sunday morning announcement slide shows. Parents have the option to sign a photo release for their child's/self/family's image to be used. No names and no child's photo will be used without the signed photo release.

#### **Local Emergency Contacts:**

**911 for EMERGENCY**

**Murfreesboro Police: Non-  
Emergencies**  
**(615) 849-2670**

**Rutherford Co. Emergency  
Management**  
**(615) 898-7764**

**Murfreesboro Police: Dispatch**  
**(615) 893-1311**

**Ambulance Service**  
**(615) 896-2151**

**Sheriff's Department**  
**(615) 898-7770**

**St. Thomas Rutherford**  
**(615) 396-4100**

**Murfreesboro Fire Department**  
**Business calls (615) 893-1422**  
**Fire Marshall (615) 849-2605**

**TN POISON Emergency**  
**1-800-222-1222**

**Child Care Complaint Hotline**  
**1-800-462-8261**

**Child Abuse Reporting Hotline**  
**1-877-237-0004**