



Suffolk Christian Academy

Preschool Handbook

2023-2024

This handbook is a supplement to the Parent-Student Handbook 2023-2024.

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Arrivals & Departures

Arrivals and departures follow roughly the same routine as the rest of elementary school. Morning carpool begins at 8:00am and ends at 8:20am. You have the option to drive through carpool or park in the designated preschool area and walk your child to the office. For safety reasons, parents are not permitted to walk students to classrooms in the morning. Students arriving any time after 8:20am are considered tardy and will need to be walked into the school office, signed in, and will then be walked to class by a staff member.

Afternoon carpool runs in a similar fashion to morning carpool. However, preschool and Kindergarten classes dismiss early at 3:00pm as opposed to a 3:10pm for other elementary classes. Carpool for all students ends promptly at 3:30pm. We request that you prepare yourselves and others you have entrusted to pick up your children to pull away from the carpool area and park in order to secure children properly into car seats in order to keep carpool moving. While this is a great time to say hello to your child's teacher, we advise you to save important communication for less hectic times. We have asked our teachers to remain focused on the safety of students during carpool time.

Attendance

Regular, punctual school attendance is essential in order for preschoolers to develop routines and to build their knowledge of the skills that will help them succeed in Kindergarten and beyond. Our program is designed thoroughly prepare students for academic success, a goal that can only be achieved through consistent attendance. Arriving late, once class is in progress disrupts the learning process and places the child at a disadvantage as their day begins. Children at this level thrive through consistency of routine. They feel the most secure and are best prepared to succeed when their days are predictable. This consistency boosts confidence in young learners and fosters responsibility and independence.

Procedures: Preschool students not in attendance will be recorded as absent for the day. If the absence is unexpected, it will be marked as unexcused. If the absence was pre-planned and notice was given to the child's teacher one week in advance, it will be marked as excused.

Illnesses: When a child has been ill, we request that a note be sent in when the child returns to school. Please follow the guidelines included in our wellness policy regarding notification of communicable diseases.

Consequences: No consequences will be imposed upon students for lack of attendance in our preschool program. Suffolk Christian Academy does reserve the right, however, to reach out regarding regular absences that are disrupting the student's ability to learn. While absences alone in preschool will not prevent a child from moving to the next grade level, please understand that students enrolled in Pre-K4 who have excessive absences may not be adequately prepared for Kindergarten and may be asked to repeat Pre-Kindergarten as a result.

Make-Up Work: Students enrolled in the preschool program are not required to complete make-up work surrounding absences. However, teachers are happy to provide learning materials for students in advance of planned absences when notified one week ahead of time.

Wellness Policy

For the well-being and health consideration of all our students and staff, parents are asked to keep home any student with fevers and contagious illnesses. Decisions about whether to send a child to school should be made with your best interest of the school community in mind. In accordance of Virginia Department of Health and school policy, the following exclusions are required and must be adhered to. A student must stay home or will be sent to the office for immediate pick up with:

- Fever of 100 degrees or above: Student may not return to school until fever-free for 24 hours.
- Vomiting: Student may not return to school until 24 hours have passed since the last vomiting episode.
- Flu symptoms (may include low grade fever with other combined symptoms)
- Diarrhea: Student may not return to school until 24 hours have passed since the last episode.
- Colored nasal drainage when combined with other symptoms such as a low-grade fever or general discomfort or fatigue.
- Strep throat: Student must be on medication and fever free for 24 hours prior to returning to school.
- Pinkeye: Student must be on medication for 24 hours and have a significant reduction in drainage prior to returning to school due to the communicable nature of pinkeye.
- Head Lice: Student must not return to school until effectively treated and nit-free.
- Ringworm: Student must not return until ringworm has been treated and a note from the child's physician has been turned in to the child's teacher. Students will be required to have the affected area covered until it is entirely clear.
- *See Covid Policy at www.cdc.gov*

If your child has been sick or has symptoms of a contagious illness, please do not send him or her to school. In cases where a 24-hour waiting period is required and your child arrives at school, he or she will not be permitted to enter the building. If your child is dropped off with a teacher who has not yet been made aware of the requirement of their absence, you will be notified immediately and required to come pick your child up promptly. Parents will need to make arrangements for students to be picked up within 45 minutes of being notified by the office that a child has developed any of the symptoms described above.

Parents must inform the school within 24 hours or the next business day after a child or any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease, as defined by the State Board of Health, except for life threatening diseases, which must be reported immediately.

Dress Code

Our preschool program follows the same guidelines for dress code as the rest of the elementary school. We have found the following additional guidelines assists parents in best preparing attire for their preschoolers:

- Undershorts are required for skirts and dresses to assist them in playing with ease.
- Shoes that are comfortable for running and playing in are the best fit for preschool as we spend one hour per day actively engaged in physical activities.
- Shoes that tie are difficult for students in Pre-K3.
- Belts are difficult for students to remove in a timely manner. This can create an unnecessary delay when a student requests to use the restroom with urgency.
- Solid-color sweaters assist students in remaining comfortable around the classroom.
- Please keep in mind that we do sometimes get messy!

Daily Procedures

While there may be slight variations between classrooms as noted in the schedule provided to you by your child's teacher at the beginning of the year, all preschool classrooms follow the daily procedures outlined below.

Students enjoy morning activities until 8:20am. After all of their friends have arrived, they begin their structured learning time. Each day children have a Bible story and other stories read to them. During academic time, students become familiar with days of the week, months of the year, seasons, and pledges to the flags. Students also learn about the letters of the alphabet including their sound and visual shape. Students learn numbers, basic shapes, colors, scissor skills, gluing skills, and more. They are busy each day learning the skills they need to ensure success in the grades beyond.

Students have a mid-morning snack each day. Outdoor play is also a component of our day, as weather permits. In lieu of outdoor time, students have the opportunity to engage in physical activities inside the building. Students are served lunch and then settle down for a cozy afternoon nap. Upon waking, students prepare for afternoon carpool. *Note: Throughout the day, staff will clean and sanitize each toy after a student is finished playing with the toy and prior to another student playing with the same toy.*

Lunch/Snack

PLEASE NOTE: WE ARE A PEANUT-FREE PRESCHOOL.

Teachers use lunch time as an opportunity to help students develop social skills and table manners. To encourage students to learn to balance eating and socializing, we participate in 5 minutes of quiet eating time near the beginning of lunch each day.

Each month, teachers will send the current lunch menu home. This menu is also posted in the front office and on the school's website. Upon arrival, teachers will take a lunch count and order lunches for students who either a) do not have a lunch, or b) have an insufficient lunch in quality or quantity of items. Please send a lunchbox only when it includes a complete lunch for your child, snacks may be kept in a backpack pocket. Students within the preschool program do not have access to microwaves. Please do not send in items that require heating. Please review information given to you by the financial administrator regarding lunch charges.

In order to plan a nutritious lunch for your child, try to include the following:

- Protein
- Fruit and/or Vegetable
- Grain
- Drink

Popular lunches for preschoolers include:

- Protein Choices: Almond butter or sunflower butter sandwich, ham/turkey sandwich or wrap, chicken quesadillas, tacos, burritos, chicken salad, meat and cheese roll ups, etc.
- Fruit Choices: Apples, oranges, bananas, pears, applesauce, fruit cups, etc.
- Vegetable Choices: Carrots, cucumbers, celery, snap peas, etc.
- Grain Choices: Pastas, rolls, pita bread, tortilla wraps, bagels, sandwich bread, etc.

- Drink Choices: water or juice. Please note: no carbonated drinks, color dye flavor packs, or Kool-Aid.

When your child brings a lunch, please send in as many items that they can open without help as possible.

Food safety is important for preschool age children. In addition to being a peanut-free preschool, we are also aware some food items may be a choking hazard, *especially for children under the age of four*. Parents should carefully prepare their child's food each day. All cafeteria meals will be prepared with the same care for preschoolers.

According to the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/infantandtoddlernutrition/foods-and-drinks/choking-hazards.html>), foods that pose a choking hazard are as follows:

Fruits/Vegetables

- Cooked or raw whole corn kernels
- Uncut cherry or grape tomatoes
- Pieces of hard raw vegetables
- Whole pieces of canned fruit
- Uncut grapes, berries, cherries, or melon balls
- Uncooked dried vegetables or fruit, such as raisins

Proteins

- Whole or chopped nuts and seeds
- Chunks or spoonful of nuts and seed butters, such as peanut butter
- Tough or large chunks of meat
- Hot dogs, meat sticks, or sausages
- Large chunks of cheese, especially string cheese
- Bones in meat or fish
- Whole beans

Grain Products

- Cookies or granola bars
- Potato or corn chips, pretzels, popcorn, or similar snack foods
- Crackers or breads with seeds, nut pieces, or whole grain kernels
- Whole grain kernels of cooked barley, wheat, or other grains
- Plain wheat germ

Sweetened Foods

- Round or hard candy, jelly beans, caramels, gum drops, or gummy candies
- Chewy fruit snacks
- Chewing gum
- Marshmallows

Safety tips include:

- Cut foods into shorter strips instead of round pieces
- Make sure food pieces are no larger than a fingertip or ½ inch
- Thinly slice cheese, and avoid serving cheese cubes

Nap Time

Preschool students participate in nap time daily, immediately following lunch. Most preschool children do sleep during nap time, but some may not. Children who do not sleep are expected to rest quietly without disturbing others. Please understand, preschool students will be expected to nap in Kindergarten as well and we follow the same policies in preschool used in Kindergarten classrooms.

In order to prepare your child for nap time, please send in a sheet and blanket along with a Kinder-Mat to be kept at school. Sheets and blankets should be sent to school on the first day of each week and will be returned to you for washing on the last day of each week. Please review your teacher's individual policy regarding stuffed toys in the classroom.

Parents occasionally need to pick up their child during nap time. When this occurs, please let us know in advance, even if only a call to the office on your way is possible, so that we may prepare your child to leave. Without notice, children are often sleeping and do not have their daily folders complete.

Communication

When communication between home and school is clear and effective, children are best supported as all parties are aware of important information regarding the child's needs and wellbeing. Teachers involved in our preschool program are eager to communicate with you about these important issues in addition to the fun stories in between! We have found that communication works best when the following guidelines are used.

How Information Comes Home: Your child will be given a folder that will be used for daily communication. Any work your child has completed that day will be sent home in the folder. Please remove the papers and promptly return items on the "return side." Children are often proud of the work they complete at school. Taking the time to allow them to share these activities with you each night is important and will help you maintain an awareness of how they are progressing. Each week, there will be a paper on the return side that will be used for daily notes specific to your child. Please check for messages and initial this sheet daily.

In addition to your child's daily folder, information specific to your child's classroom will be emailed to you. Information regarding school-wide events and programs will additionally come home via email from the school office. Please be diligent in reading through these emails as a great deal of important information is included.

How Information Should Come to School: Please use your child's folder to send any papers, forms, or money to your child's teacher or to the office. Money needs to be placed in an envelope or small plastic bag labeled with your child's first name, last name, and the purpose of the money. Please refrain from allowing your child to carry money in their pockets.

Closings: Information about school closings and delays will be communicated via RenWeb text alerts, email, the official Suffolk Christian Academy Facebook page, and television stations WTKR, WAVY, and WVEC.

Accidents and Injuries: Suffolk Christian Academy takes every precaution to prevent accidents from occurring. Occasionally, children do sustain injuries during the school day. When minor injuries occur, the injury will be

addressed and an accident report will be sent home in your child's folder. When more serious injuries occur, staff members will assess the injury, respond quickly, and reach out to parents via phone.

Potty Training

At Suffolk Christian Academy, we aim to partner with parents to facilitate success in the area of toilet training. We are blessed to have restroom facilities in our preschool classrooms. While we understand that each child is unique in their acquisition of toilet training skills, we do require that children be fully toilet trained prior to entering our program. Our teachers set students up for success by incorporating regular restroom breaks throughout the day, in addition to allowing children complete access when needed.

While we appreciate the unique timeline of each child's toilet training skills, we do reserve the right to terminate a child's enrollment at any point in the year regarding consistent, documented toilet training concerns.

Our Expectations

Students attending preschool at Suffolk Christian Academy are expected to have developed the following skills. Included below each skill is information regarding how you, as a parent, can assist your child in each area.

1. Students must be able to communicate their need to use the restroom verbally.
As parents, we often recognize the non-verbal cues that occur when our children need to use the restroom. If your child does not often ask, but is encouraged to go as a result of these cues, encourage him or her by pointing out those signs. Talk to your child about the importance of communicating their needs to their teacher.
2. Students must be able to undress and re-dress themselves to use the restroom i.e. pull their pants down and back up again on their own. We will gladly assist with snaps and buttons as we understand these are developing skills during the preschool years.
Encourage your child to practice dressing and undressing at home.
3. Students must be able to use the restroom and wipe themselves independently. Teachers will assist children in cleaning up if an accident occurs when needed.
Encourage your child to practice cleaning themselves at home.

Accidents

In preschool, we are aware that occasional accidents do occur. The following sections outline differences in types of accidents and our response to those incidents.

1. **Sleeping Accidents**
Children can have occasional difficulty waking themselves to use the restroom. Preschool teachers at Suffolk Christian Academy facilitate success in this area by taking all children to the restroom prior to nap time. When this occurs, teachers will walk students through the process of cleaning themselves and changing into clean clothes. Teachers will assist students in this area when needed.

2. Waking Accidents

It is uncommon for children who are fully toilet trained to have accidents during class times and play times. If these accidents do occur, teachers will walk students through the process of cleaning themselves and changing into clean clothes. Teachers will assist students in this area when needed.

Responses

Suffolk Christian Academy uses the following guidelines to respond to accidents.

We do reserve the right to terminate a child's enrollment at any point in the year regarding consistent, documented toilet training concerns.

Response	Circumstances
Document the incident and notify parents.	This will occur for first accidents and may be the response for additional, rarely occurring accidents.
Require a meeting between parents, the teacher, and an administrator to prepare a plan of action.	Excluding special circumstances determined by teachers and administration, we will require a meeting following the second accident a child has within a two-week period of time or third accident within a one-month period of time.
Allow a student to wear a pull-up during nap time for one 30-day period of time.	When a student displays successful toilet training during waking hours, but struggles to wake themselves to use the restroom during nap time. This will be considered an appropriate response when the child is able to put on and take off the pull-up independently <i>and</i> as long as they do not show an immediate change of dependence on the pull-up (i.e. begin going in the pull-up daily). This provision is available only in the Pre-K3 classroom.
Require the student to be picked up from school.	More than one accident in a single day. Please understand, if your child is successfully toilet trained and this occurs, we would be encouraging you to seek out a medical evaluation to screen for any potential concerns.
Allow a student to wear a pull-up during class time for one 30-day period of time. This is an option during the first semester of school alone.	More than three accidents in one week or more than four accidents in two consecutive weeks. Please note, this provision is conditional on the child's ability to put on and take off the pull up, their ability to display progress rather than regression while wearing the pull up, and an overall reduction in the amount of disruption to the classroom. This provision is available only in the Pre-K3 classroom.
Terminate Enrollment or exclude a child from attending for a specified period of time.	At any time the teachers and administration agree that a child's inability to consistently use the restroom properly is negatively impacting the classroom he or she attends. Circumstances include, but are not limited to, multiple waking accidents per day or more than three accidents in one week for a two-week period of time.

Grace

During the first 30 days of school, especially for Pre-K3, we understand that students are adjusting to a new environment and routine and are more likely to have occasional accidents. During this time, we will do our best to partner with you and help your child adjust.

Please note, that daily accidents consistently during this time signal to us that your child is not developmentally ready for our program.

Behavior Policy

Proverbs 10:17 tells us “He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.”

Key components of the preschool program at Suffolk Christian Academy include helping children develop an understanding that God both loves and cares for them, learn how to become active participants in their educational experience, enjoy being with other children, and follow the direction of adults other than their parents. Our goal in the area of discipline is to help children develop self-control and a sense of responsibility for their actions.

Our Foundation

In our preschool classrooms, we aim to give students the tools they need to successfully navigate the classroom experience. Our students are taught that God created all of us with the ability to make choices. Some choices honor God and are best for us, while other choices dishonor God and are harmful to others and ourselves. John 13:34 instructs us, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.” Through the example of Christ, students are encouraged to treat others and themselves in a way that makes love the priority of their lives. Teaching about sin, its consequences, and God’s love and forgiveness is a foundational part of what we teach and how our behavior policy has been formed.

Initially, the rules are discussed in the classroom and are reviewed often, with limits that are consistent and communicated in a loving way. The expectations for obedience are made clear and are outlined for you in the following section. The classroom experience is designed to enhance the learning of acceptable behaviors and minimize conflicts. The child’s age and emotional and social development are taken into account, recognizing the difference between childish immaturity and willful disobedience. We consider the commitment to discipline to be a partnership including parents, teachers, and administration.

What We Expect

From Students

- Be kind to themselves and others.
- Use words to appropriately express their needs and feelings with adults and peers.
- Follow simple instructions.
- Recognize and respect the existence of their own and others’ personal space.
- To demonstrate an understanding that harming others with unkind words and/or physical force is unacceptable.
- Play safely both in the classroom and on the playground.

From Parents

- To partner with teachers and administration to reinforce limit setting.
- To communicate your child’s needs along with any concerns in a timely and appropriate manner. Email is the most efficient method for communicating with teachers regarding behavior.
- Students often reflect on the conversations they have with their parents regarding discipline. Positive communication that reinforces behavior expectations is appreciated.

Responding to Unacceptable Behaviors

When unsafe or unkind behaviors occur, teachers use the following strategies:

- Encourage children to use their words when having a disagreement with another student. We facilitate attempts for children to resolve their own disputes.
- Redirect behavior when this seems potentially effective.
- Separate the child from the group (Time-Out).
- Counsel the child individually regarding their choices and behaviors.

These strategies assist teachers in addressing undesirable behaviors immediately at school. This will not always require a note to be sent home. Please know, you will always be contacted regarding any concerning behaviors. When a child disobeys, one of the first tools used is a “Behavior Think Sheet.” Behavior Think Sheets uses pictures to allow students to evaluate their actions and discuss more appropriate choices.

When behavior escalates and becomes disruptive to the classroom environment, additional steps may need to be taken. Disruptive behavior distracts from the full benefit of the preschool program. The following behaviors are considered to be disruptive:

- Behavior requiring constant attention from teachers and staff.
- Behavior that endangers self, peers, and/or teachers.
- Consistently disobeys the rules of the classroom.
- Uses materials or objects within the classroom in a destructive manner.
- Verbally threatening self, peers, and/or teachers.

We want to ensure parents that we will address such behavior immediately using the following guidelines:

First Incident	Teachers will communicate with parents in writing and document the incident.
Second Incident	A parent-teacher conference will be scheduled to discuss the behavior and establish a plan of action.
Third Incident	Parents will be called and another conference will be scheduled with the teacher and potentially administration to further evaluate the behavior. A referral for outside advice will likely be suggested at this point.

Suffolk Christian Academy reserves the right to suspend or discontinue a child's enrollment if a fourth incident occurs or any of the following conditions exist:

1. The school cannot meet the child's needs.
2. The parents are not able to work with the school to find and/or implement an acceptable solution.
3. The continuing behavior endangers the well-being of other children and/or the child engaging in the behavior.

Birthdays

We will recognize each child's birthday with a song, a birthday crown, and a choice from the treasure box. Treats to share with the class are welcome. However, we do require that you notify your child's teacher of the day you would like to send treats in. Treats that work well for preschool celebrations include mini cupcakes, cookies, brownies, etc. Please send in only one treat. If your child has a summer birthday, you are welcome to choose a day in May to celebrate.

No birthday parties will be permitted at school, as we must ensure each child is treated the same way at school on their birthday. If you would like to include your child's school friends in a birthday party outside of school, teachers are happy to send home invitations sent to school. If invitations to an outside party are sent to school, we ask that all children in the class be invited. If you wish to invite only several of your child's friends, please make other arrangements for invitations.

Opportunities for Parent Involvement

There are many opportunities throughout the year for parents to spend time volunteering in the classroom. Opportunities include serving as a room parent, attending fieldtrips, volunteering with the Parent-Teacher Fellowship, assisting with class parties through attending or sending in items, assisting with bake sales through attendance or donations, assisting with and/or attending special events such as Grandparent's Day, Christmas Bazaar, Sustaining the Vision, Cat in the Hat Day, Scholastic Book Fair, and any other exciting school events.

Reminders

- Please do not send hand sanitizer to school with your child due to Virginia Department of Social Services regulations.
- Please note that only solid-color socks, solid-colored leggings, and closed-toe shoes are permitted. Socks are required at all times. These items are more likely to be forgotten.
- It would be helpful to your child to have a solid-color sweater in the classroom in case they become cold.

- In the event of a change in your child's pickup routine (i.e. a grandparent will be picking the child up in carpool or early pickup) please place a note in your child's folder to alert the teacher of the change early in the day. Teachers are not always able to view emails prior to nap time. If a note has been forgotten, please call the office.
- Please alert your child's teacher and the office immediately if your child has any allergies.