

Governance

The vestry of St. Peter's Episcopal Church is ultimately responsible for the governance of the School. Although the Vestry delegates the responsibility of daily operations to the Head of School (Rector), and the Director of the Preschool, it remains active in school affairs.

Members of the parish and the Vestry serve on the Preschool's Advisory Board as liaisons between the school and the Vestry and as treasurer. The Rector of St. Peter's and the Director of the Preschool are also members of the Board. St. Peter's holds the right to make changes to this handbook at any time but will give sufficient notice to families.

Contents

Philosophy; Objectives	2
Cognitive Skills, Curriculum	3-5
Policies & Procedures:	
• School Contact Information	
• Admissions.....	5
• Enrollment/The School Day/Arrival/Dismissal.....	6
• Starting School/Potential Crying/Toys from Home	
• Closings/Weather.....	7
• Dress	
• Class Sizes	
• Insurance	
• Transportation	
• Field Trips	
• Parent Participation	
• Parent/Teacher Conferences.....	8
• Newsletter	
• Access to Records	
• Emergency Cards	
• Health Regulations.....	9
Discipline Policy	10
Snack and Lunch Program	11
Tuition, Fees	12-13
Registration	14

Philosophy

At St. Peter's Episcopal School we believe that early childhood is a critical period in the development of the intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual growth of children. We strive to provide a rich environment that prepares each child of God to live a creative, humane, and compassionate life and become a contributing member of our society.

Young children need opportunities to learn by exploring their world. Our program provides a rich and varied environment and the opportunity to interact with that environment, as they observe the wonders of nature and the inventions of society. Our school provides the time and resources for our children to express these experiences in their own terms.

Our program goal is to create a warm, loving atmosphere in which a young child may experience the Christian ideal of his and her uniqueness and worthiness as an individual. In a concerned and supportive community children discover the wonders of their world, created by a loving and generous God, and their ability to interact with and learn from this world.

The development of self-confidence and positive self-image are major goals of our program. We emphasize self-sufficiency and problem-solving to aid in achieving these ends. Each child is unique, and we evaluate each child's progress by measuring his or her own increments of learning during the year, rather than by comparing a child's progress to that of other children in the class.

Encouraged by the example of our staff, children learn to respect the uniqueness of others. Teaching staff offer praise and assistance, when needed, and help children express their feelings in an honest and constructive manner.

Although young children operate on a concrete level, we believe they are capable of becoming aware of God's love. Through our acceptance and love of the children, we hope to reflect God's acceptance and love. Our chapel time is a joyous celebration of this relationship through song, story, prayer, and the traditions associated with the Church.

Our program seeks to encourage the intellectual, emotional, physical, social, and spiritual growth of each young child by providing an enriching environment where the child feels accepted and where she or he can participate in a variety of stimulating learning processes.

Objectives

Our program seeks to encourage the development of the whole child. The question, "What should be taught?" is crucial because it determines the quality and appropriateness of the learning experiences planned by our staff. This makes a nursery school different from the experiences a child may devise for him or herself in other contexts.

We are aware of the expectations for children once they enter elementary school. Preschool, however, is not meant to be "junior elementary school". What is developmentally appropriate for a child in kindergarten is not what is appropriate for a toddler (2-year-old) or preschooler (3 or 4-year-old). The focus for 2-year-olds is achieving 2-year objectives, and preparing to become 3-year-olds. 3-year-old children focus on 3-year objectives, preparing to be 4, and 4-year-old children focus on 4-year objectives, while preparing to be 5.

Through thematic units we develop important background knowledge as we introduce information to children, make alterations to the learning areas to encourage discovery, and provide learning experiences that include math, science, literacy, art, social-emotional, and motor skill activities and development. These activities help to encourage development of future skills.

Fine motor development is critical to future writing ability. Handling play dough, small building materials and art supplies, manipulatives and puzzles develop the fine muscles critical for pre-writing and writing skills. Listening to stories, exploring books, exploring environmental print, asking questions, sharing information and playing with language and sounds are critical pre-reading skills. Math and science skills are developed by hands on exploration, and observation. Social skills are developed through everyday interactions, like cooperation, sharing and engaging in discussion. Art activities develop creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Cognitive Skills

Language Arts:

We present appropriate and varied selections of rhymes, finger plays, songs, and stories that help children develop their pre-reading skills, including memory, rhyming, and listening skills. We read stories appropriate to the age and development of the children, and books are always available for independent reading. We encourage children to express their thoughts and feelings and to listen to each other. Interesting experiences, pictures, puppets, stories, and role play stimulate verbalization among the children and between children and adults.

We encourage children to write their own names on their work. Teachers may help children write their ideas down in order to help them understand the relationship between speaking, writing, and reading, and to help learn that writing is "talk written down". A variety of writing materials are available to the child who wishes to experiment with drawing, copying, and writing. Name recognition and letter knowledge activities acquaint the children with written symbols.

Mathematics:

There are opportunities daily for the children to discover and to use mathematical concepts. A variety of toys and materials (unit/attribute blocks, Duplos, counting objects, etc.) are available to our children for independent play. Other manipulatives and counting objects provide children the opportunity to sort, sequence, and to use the concepts of quantity, volume and mass to solve problems, compare quantities, and have a variety of experiences in one-to-one correspondence. Interaction with these materials help children discover shape, size, likeness and differences, to compare quantities, and to arrange order. Teachers provide guided mathematical activities using many items and pertaining to subjects of current interest to the children.

Science:

Our discovery area displays an interesting collection of objects to handle and to observe. We encourage children to use their senses to experience their environment as fully as possible. The children often cook their own snacks, gaining experience in combining ingredients and noticing changes. Similarly, we present interesting experiences by providing materials such as magnets, levers and springs, seeds, pods and pine cones, caterpillars and cocoons, water and sand for observation and experimentation. We often measure and record observations. For example, we use basic scientific tools to measure and record the daily temperatures as spring returns, our height and weight, and the length of our shadows.

Social Studies:

The children take field trips, meet special people, and role play (post office, grocery store, doctor's office, etc.) as they develop and understanding of how people in the community work on their behalf. Representatives of various community workers often visit the classroom and share their occupation with the children. Preparing foods such as American Indian fried bread, Swedish Lucia buns, or Chinese Nian Gao (rice cake), in addition to participating in activities including spinning a dreidel or doing the dragon dance to our own music gives our children special insights into many cultures. Participating in a variety of familiar customs develops a deeper understanding of their own culture.

Art:

For preschool children the process is more important than the product. Therefore, we provide access to a wide variety of art experiences such as easel painting, finger painting, collage, crayons, markers, scissors, and using a wide variety of clay and other materials to create. Art materials are available daily and children are encouraged to create freely. Children may paint with Q-tips, toothbrushes, golf balls, weeds, sponges, and paint brushes. We do not engage in Patterned Art, (when a project has a specific outcome and looks like everyone else's) as these types of projects tend to limit a child's creativity. Children learn soon enough that flower stems are green, but why can't they make them blue or purple if they want? At St. Peter's Episcopal School the children's art is an expression of their interests, ideas, and abilities.

Music:

Children enjoy listening and participating in a variety of musical activities. Rhymes, fingerplays, games, and songs are integral parts of our day. The children sing and move creatively to music. Our children also have the opportunities to see, hear, and play a variety of instruments to create music. Children create their own marching and rhythm bands as well as keep time to recorded music.

Physical Development:

The physical development of the child is an important part of our daily program. Through both gross and fine motor play children develop their large and small muscle skills, including eye-hand coordination, balancing, and sensory abilities. At St. Peter's we provide a variety of outdoor and indoor equipment to meet these developmental needs of your child.

Emotional Development:

Positive self-images develop in an accepting and loving classroom atmosphere where the child encounters praise and encouragement and where children and adults respect each other. We encourage children to recognize and verbalize emotions in an honest and constructive manner.

Social Development:

The preschool years are a critical time for social development in children. The school day affords many opportunities for the children to talk, play, and work cooperatively with one another and to develop a sense of trust and security. Our staff observe the children as they initiate and carry through their interaction, stepping in when necessary to encourage a child to become involved or to help negotiate the settlement of a dispute. Children and teachers interact in a friendly manner.

Spiritual Development:

By maintaining a warm and loving classroom environment, we strive to foster the acceptance of oneself and others and to reflect God's love through song, story, and prayer. The seasons of the Church year provide a chance to act out a growing awareness of God as the children participate in traditions such as making advent wreaths, learning about Christmas and Easter, and learning new prayers and songs. Children may also share prayers and traditions familiar to their families.

Curriculum

The Creative Curriculum guides instruction at St. Peter's. This curriculum emphasizes learning through play and a variety of hands-on experiences. Teachers are facilitators who create a classroom environment that fosters children's learning, creativity, self-expression, and security through both child selected and teacher directed activities.

We also utilize the curriculum *Let's Begin With the Letter People* in our 4 year old class. Both curricula are approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Our Enrichment Program will also utilize aspects of *Let's Begin With the Letter People*, as well as use the Core Curriculum used by Pre-K programs in Howard County to help prepare our children for all day Kindergarten. Please inquire if you would like more information about our curriculum

Policies and Procedures

School Contact Information:

The school number (410-461-7283) rings in both the classrooms and in the office, and connects to voicemail. Messages can also be left with the Church Administrator at 410-465-1333. You can also send messages to director@stpeterspreschool.org.

Admissions and Inclusion:

St. Peter's School does not discriminate as to race, color, religion, or national origin or ability regarding the enrollment of children. Children entering our two, three, and four-year-old programs must be the appropriate age by September 1st of the program year. We may occasionally offer mixed age groups based on enrollment during a particular school year.

St. Peter's welcomes all children and is committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences that support the full access and participation of each and every child. We believe that each child is unique and work in partnership with families and other professionals involved with the child to provide the support every child needs to reach their full potential. We welcome children with disabilities, special health care needs, and children who speak languages other than English.

Staff will make every attempt to make any adaptations or modifications necessary to meet the needs of the children. Schedules, materials, routines, and activities are flexible. Many children with disabilities or other special needs are supported by developmental and educational professionals such as therapists. We welcome those professionals and will work with them to assure the child's success. The service provider is encouraged to provide services to the child in the context of the early childhood classroom environment and the child's teacher and the service provider work collaboratively to determine the best strategies to support the child in the group setting. St. Peter's supports the teacher's participation in Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. All staff members receive American's With Disabilities (ACT) training on the inclusion of children with special needs.

When a child with a disability is admitted we require the following:

1. That the child receives the benefit of additional resources for his/her particular disability outside St. Peter's School.
2. That, when deemed necessary, St. Peter's receive a recommendation from a qualified person in the field of the particular disability in question, verifying that this school is an appropriate placement for the child.
3. That the school's director and teacher have access to the most recent diagnostic assessment of the child, and that the child's therapist and teacher confer to assure consistent and appropriate interaction with the child at St. Peter's.
4. That, when appropriate, the child receive services in the classroom setting at St. Peter's.

Enrollment:

Enrollment: After March 1st, we will not enroll a child who would enter our 2's program. If your child will be in the 3's and 4's class, it will be a possibility depending on conversations with parents, a child's familiarity with school settings, adaptation ability, etc. We have found that when a child enters school this late in the year, it can be very difficult to the parent, the teacher, the other students, and the child. Our school year wraps up in May and very often it can take a child several weeks to adjust to new routines, new faces, and new surroundings.

The School Day:

St. Peter's holds classes during the mornings, Monday through Friday. Two-year-old classes are held on Tuesday and Thursday mornings 9:30-12pm; three-year-old classes are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings 9:30-1pm; four year old classes are held five mornings a week 9:30-1pm. We have an optional program that runs October-May for an additional fee: Lunch Bunch for the 2's 12-12:30pm. Please contact the director if you are interested in our optional programs.

Arrival/Dismissal:

When you bring your child to school, please be sure that one of the teaching staff greets your child before you leave. **ALWAYS escort your child to the classroom door and please inform us in writing if someone other than you will be picking up your child. For your child's safety, this person will be required to show identification at the time of pick up, and must be listed on your child's emergency form.** In the random emergency where your child will need to be picked up by someone other than who is on your child's Emergency Card, we will accept emails and texts only by the child's parent/legal guardian. However, we will need a handwritten note and changes made to your child's Emergency Form after this case. We DO NOT allow children to go home with people who are not on their Emergency Form and without a parent's consent. Otherwise, your child will stay here at the school until a parent/legal guardian comes to pick them up. Please communicate with the child's teacher prior to any changes to their Emergency Form or who will be picking them up that day.

Arrival is AT 9:30am. At 9:45 the doors to your child's classroom will be locked. If you will be late (i.e. 9:45). Please proceed to the director's office. It is important that you understand your child's day at St. Peter's is very short. As educators, we are squeezing a lot into this short time and find that it has become very disruptive when parents arrive late; whether this is chit-chat with other parents in the classroom, settling their child in, taking time to sign their child in, etc. This is disruptive to the other students, your child, the teachers and the routine. If you will be late, proceed to the director's office. If tardiness becomes a habitual issue, you may be asked not to bring your child to school after 9:45.

Please be prompt when picking up your child at the end of the class session. Being late causes the child needless concern and distress. The teaching staff needs to be free to clean up and close the school for the day. Dismissal for the regular school day is AT 12pm for the 2's and 1pm for the 3's and 4's. If your child will be in our optional Lunch Bunch program, pick up is AT 12:30.

If habitual tardiness becomes an issue, you will be required to pay \$1 per minute, per child, after the first 5 minutes. You may pay in cash at the time of pick up, or we will attach this fee to your next month's tuition. This will be at the discretion of the Director. Habitual tardiness may result in termination of services. Please understand that as teachers, we also are wives and mothers, and have many things to take care of, including staff meetings and curriculum planning, when our day ends at St. Peter's.

Starting School/Potential Crying:

We know that settling into school and separation from parents can often be difficult. This is not unusual and most children from time to time find it difficult to say good bye to parents and caregivers at the start of the day.

If children are crying, usually they will settle quickly and stop crying 5 minutes or so after parents have left. If you are very worried, you can wait in your car and we can call to let you know they are okay.

If your child is extremely upset and has not settled for an hour after trying to console them, we will call you to come get your child. This may need to happen several times (coming for an hour a day) until they get used to school. Once they stop crying, we will lengthen the amount of time they are in school. Together, we will monitor your child's adjustment.

Starting school can mean many things to children. It may be the first time your child has been left with people he or she does not know. Adapting to different teachers, languages, classroom, school, friends and challenges can be exciting for some children. However, it can also be overwhelming for them; they have less experience in dealing with the unknown. Here are some tips on what you can do to make starting school a more pleasurable experience:

- You can help your child settle in to preschool by being positive about it and talking about what they might do at school.
- Help your child to be as independent as possible. Particularly with the children from 3+, they will feel more comfortable if they can do things such feed themselves, unzip their coats, and identify his/her bag and other belongings when you are not there.
- Plan with your child how you will say goodbye. Make a routine for leaving your child each morning, for example you will come in, sign in and hang their bag, give a kiss, and then say good bye and go.
- Do not stay long or prolong the goodbye process, this only makes the child feel insecure.

- Do not leave quietly without saying goodbye just because your child seems busy or okay without saying goodbye.
- Be punctual when collecting your child. They can become very distressed if you are late and he/she is the last one left at school.

Toys from home:

Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home. This can cause unneeded headaches for teachers/staff and possible sadness from a broken toy and other children vying for the toy. Should your child have a toy in his or her bag, the toy will stay in his or her bag during the duration of the school day. There may be times when your child's teacher will have show and tell or other special occasions to bring in special items from home, but during a regular school day, toys from home are not allowed.

School Closings/Weather:

Please consult your copy of the school calendar for vacation dates, staff development days, and all other scheduled closings. Please be informed that for consistency, and to help parents with school aged children in Howard County Public Schools, we, for the most part, follow the HCPS calendar. Given that there may be times HCPS may make changes to their calendar, we may need to make changes ours as well.

During inclement weather, St. Peter's School will follow the HCPS closing and delay policy. When Howard County Schools are closed, St. Peter's will be closed. When HCPS schools have a one hour we will open at 10:30. If HCPS has a two-hour delay, we will not open.

If worsening weather causes HCPS closings during the school day, St. Peter's will also close. We will notify parents of any other unscheduled closings. This keeps St. Peter's consistent with HCPS systems plans and policy for closings and delays.

St. Peter's does not refund missed days due to inclement weather or any other unavoidable closings. The knowledge that we will most likely miss several days due to inclement weather is considered when our calendar is planned, and when you register your with St. Peter's. However, we will remain flexible and dependent upon how many school days are missed. We may tack on a few days at the end of our regular school year which will be determined by the school board once winter has passed, and you will be notified. Therefore, we are following and dependent on HCPS systems plan for closings and delays. Please check the television and radio stations, and phone weather apps for closing information.

Dress:

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes and in accordance with the weather. We engage in many activities and we do occasionally get messy despite our best efforts to cover up, so please save fancy clothing for special occasions. A pair of sneakers or rubber-soled shoes help to maintain your child's safety and protect toes when playing outdoors. **Please, NO CROCS or FLIPFLOPS. These do not allow children stability when running and climbing.** We always go outside, unless it is raining or extremely cold, so please be sure to send appropriate clothing including boots, mittens, and hats when warranted. Please bring a complete, labeled change of clothing, including underwear and socks, in a labeled Ziplock bag. These bags stay in your child's cubby for use in case of a spill or a bathroom accident. Please update clothing as sizes and seasons change. Please label as many of your child's outer garments as possible. This is especially important in the winter when many identical pairs of little gloves are apt to appear.

Class Sizes:

Each class has 2 teaching staff. Enrollment for our classes averages:

Two-year classes:	12 children
Three-year classes:	12 children
Four-year classes:	14 children
Lunch Bunch:	8 children

In the event we have additional children, additional staff will be added to maintain ratios.

Insurance:

Accident insurance is provided for the children enrolled in the school. It covers any accident that may occur at school, **during any school day** related activities.

Transportation:

The school does not provide transportation. Please inform us, in writing, of any carpool arrangements. For the safety of your child **the school requires written notification if someone other than the individuals identified on the emergency cards will be picking up the child. The person picking up your child will be required to show identification, for safety reasons.**

Field Trips:

Field trips are an integral part of the program at St. Peter's. The classes may take several trips a year, such as visits to the farm, a nature center, or a children's theatre. We depend upon parents to drive and require that each child be seated and belted while in the vehicle. There should be a minimum of one adult for every two children. Costs for field trips are kept to a minimum. Permission slips are sent home before each trip. Please return them with any required fee in an envelope marked with your child's name.

Parent Participation:

Parents are welcome to observe their enrolled child's classroom at any time. Parents may also volunteer in the classroom, spend the day with their child, or share culture, occupations, and special skills and activities with the class. Parents are also utilized as substitutes when one of the teachers needs to be out. If you are interested in becoming a substitute, please contact the Director.

Parent /Teacher Conferences:

In addition to the initial meeting in September, one informal conference time will occur each year, in February. You will also receive a written evaluation of your child's accomplishments one week prior to the conference. It is optional for parents to attend these conferences. There is no planned child care for conference times, however, parents often take turns watching each other's children. Prior to the February conference, your child's teacher will contact you via email. This email may provide you the opportunity to sign up for a 15-minute increment of time to conference with your child's teacher. The teacher may decide to have parents sign up via email or on a sign-up sheet in your child's classroom. The teacher will inform you of the method she will choose.

Please feel free to schedule additional conferences with the teacher whenever necessary. If you do not have a scheduled conference, talking with teachers immediately before or after class is discouraged, as they need to attend to all the children in the group. One exception to this is if any unusual events have occurred which might influence your child (the loss of a pet, death in the family, parent out of town, or a marital separation). Please alert the teacher of this immediately. We suggest that you write this information in a brief note or ask to speak to the teacher privately. Teachers may not talk about children or their families where the child or others may overhear. All conversations and information about children and their families will be kept confidential.

Newsletters:

Parents receive a monthly newsletter from the Director which provides relevant information to the school. Important notices appear in this newsletter, so please read and refer to it often.

A weekly newsletter is sent out from your child's teacher via email. Its intent is to give you a general awareness of what your child will be doing in the classroom. Information specific to your child's can also be obtained from the classroom teachers, or postings in the classroom. We distribute the newsletter and other information typically via email.

Access to Records:

St. Peter's Episcopal School teaching staff, Director, parents and guardians have access to their children's records. No records will be shared with anyone else without written consent.

Emergency Cards:

This information is for your child's benefit. Please inform us of any changes in address or phone numbers – home, business, or of the emergency contact person(s). **Emergency cards must be on file when a child starts school.**

Health Regulations:

Prior to entering school, each child must have a physical examination and a completed immunization record. The school provides these forms. Failure to return required forms may jeopardize your child's attendance. **State regulations require us to suspend any child without proper medical documentation within 20 days of the beginning of the school year. The child can be readmitted when all immunization requirements have been met.**

If your child does not seem to be feeling well, or has not completely recovered from an illness, please do not send him/her to school. When children come to school, they are expected to participate fully in the program that usually includes some outside activity. **If your child will be out of school longer than three days,** please provide us with a written statement by you or the physician that your child may return to a regular schedule.

Regulations require that there must be an absence of fever, vomiting or diarrhea without the use of medications for 24 hours before a child can return to school. If your child should contract a communicable disease (conjunctivitis, strep throat, hand-foot-mouth, chicken pox, etc.) please alert us as soon as you know so that other families can be notified and, if the illness is serious, contact the Howard County Health Department. Notification also allows us the opportunity to fully disinfect the classroom and materials, be more alert to symptoms in another child, and inform staff members who may have been exposed.

Discipline Policy

In the context of the early childhood setting, discipline or guidance techniques take the form of providing an environment which is secure, predictable, and meets the needs of the young child. This environment is designed to allow freedom of movement, the opportunity to explore materials, and participation in activities and interactions which are developmentally appropriate to each individual child. The young child will be encouraged to freely choose his/her level of participation within the limits of safety for the child and for other children.

The purpose of this approach is prevention of problems. When difficulties do occur, every effort should be made to divert negative behavior, to remove the child from the situation, and to apply reasonable and understandable limits in a firm but fair manner. The purpose of discipline is always to assist the child through a difficult period and to move toward the goal of self-control through the use of redirection.

Serious behavior problems should be discussed with the director. The staff will be given assistance in planning solutions to behavior problems and the director and/or teacher will meet with parents as needed. It is our policy to work with children who have challenging behaviors unless their behavior poses threat to the safety of other children, themselves, the staff, or to the stability of the entire group.

In the event of a child being bitten, parents of both children will be notified immediately by phone, unless it is within 20 minutes of pick-up time. In that case, parents will be notified by teachers as soon as they arrive.

Injurious Treatment:

Behavior modification techniques appropriate to the age of the child must be used at all times. A child may not be subjected to treatment injurious to him/her physical or emotional health by a staff member, or any other adult in the school. There shall be no shaming, ridicule, belittlement, threats, shouting, neglect of basic needs, nor any physical punishment such as pinching, spanking, hitting, slapping, or any other intentional infliction of pain, or isolation out of sight or hearing of staff. Injurious treatment of a child by staff is cause for immediate dismissal. Injurious treatment of a child by any adult must be reported immediately to the Director.

Child Abuse and Neglect Policy:

Maryland law requires that every educator, employee, and volunteer working in a school report suspected abuse of children attending that school. It is also our strong desire that everything possible be done to provide a safe, healthful environment for children enrolled in our school. Staff have the right to report any suspected abuse to Child Protective Services.

Anti-Bullying:

St. Peter's is committed to providing a safe and nurturing school environment that values diversity and commonality. We are also committed to fostering a climate where individuals are valued and their safety and rights are protected. To that end, we prohibit acts of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, or intimidation because they compromise the learning environment and well-being of students, staff, and community.

Suspension and Expulsion:

At St. Peter's our goal is to promote children's social-emotional and behavioral health and to appropriately address and bring resources to challenging behavior. However, as young children learn to develop social emotional skills, they may respond to situations with externalized behaviors (e.g., defiance, noncompliance and aggression). We attempt to create a developmentally appropriate program that meets the needs of each child and precludes the need for children to respond with externalized behaviors that are disruptive to the learning environment. Some of the methods that we use in our program are:

- Consideration of the individual needs of each child. This approach helps us to adapt and respond to individual variation.
- Utilization of Positive Guidance Techniques: Children's desired behavior will be reinforced, and consequences for challenging behavior will be developmentally appropriate and consistent.
- Use of Formal and Informal Screenings and Observations: Early identification through formal and informal screenings and observations helps programs match children with the services that benefit children and their families.
- Maintaining appropriate group sizes: Compliance with recommended and required teacher/child ratios and group sizes improves child outcomes, helps to reduce behavior problems and improves the early childhood experience.
- Using constructive approaches to redirection: Strategies such as class meetings and conflict mediation help to restore balance to the learning environment when young children struggle in large group settings.
- Engaging families: Children benefit when families and early childhood programs work together in partnership. Early childhood educators should engage families to better understand the origin of the behaviors and how parents have addressed the behaviors in the home setting. This information is used as part of the decision-making process to support the child.
- Demonstrating Cultural Responsiveness: Intentionally teaching social skills, raising expectations of all children, and recognizing children's positive behaviors in the context of their own culture.
- Accessing Developmental, Mental Health, and other supports for children and families: There are a wealth of resources in the state of Maryland that can provide supports to the child, family, and program. We work with families to suggest and facilitate the use of a variety of options.
- Balanced Scheduling: Because children benefit from play, our classroom schedules allow children to spend a substantial portion of the day in play (both indoor and outdoor).

Because of the long-term benefits of participation in high-quality early childhood programs, our goal is not to suspend or expel a child from care. Instead, we attempt to collaborate with parents to bring the needed resources and strategies to a situation. Our hope is that these efforts will result in suspensions and expulsions only being used where there are extraordinary circumstances or a determination of a serious safety threat. While we will make efforts to reduce or eliminate such circumstances and/or threats with the provision of reasonable modifications, we reserve the right to suspend or expel in any situation we deem necessary. Our goal is to ensure that all of our youngest learners have the tools and experiences they need to thrive.

Responding to Concerns:

We hope our program meets the needs of your child and you. In the unlikely event that you are dissatisfied, we ask that you take the following steps:

- Try to identify what is causing concern. Visit the class while it is in session to see if the situation that causes concern is as frequent or as severe as you suspect. Identify the steps, if any, which you would like to see taken to improve the situation.
- Arrange for a time to talk with your child's teacher. If the problem is consistent with our school's philosophy, the teacher will be able to explain the educational value of it. If it is not consistent, we can begin to work together to improve the situation.

We ask that you are direct in addressing your concerns with the parties involved. We cannot respond to third party issues. If a staff member cannot alleviate your concern, talk with the director. If you feel you need additional clarification, please contact the Church Rector.

Snack and Lunch Program

2's Snack Program

To provide more nutritious and varied snacks, we ask parents to provide 2-3 weeks' worth of snacks from for their child's class on a rotating basis. The school will provide part of the snack from the grain food group (ex. Crackers, Goldfish, graham crackers, cereal, etc.). There will be a snack sign-up calendar provided in the classrooms at the beginning of the school year. The preschool will provide filtered water to drink. **Please let us know if your child has a food sensitivity or allergy so that we can plan snack accordingly.** If you would prefer to bring in your own snack for your child, please let us know. Nut allergies should not be an issue, given the listing of fresh food snack suggestions you may choose from below.

Approved Snack Suggestions Include: Fresh Fruit or Vegetables (*pre-washed and cut*, canned fruit, applesauce, raisins or dried fruit, yogurt (please freeze Go-gurts before sending to school), pudding lean lunch meats, cheese (cubes, slices, sticks or string cheese) **PLEASE DO NOT PROVIDE SNACKS THAT COULD BE A CHOKING HAZARD**

3's and 4's Lunch Programs

Lunch will be served during the regular school day around 11:30am; however, **parents will provide** a nut free, healthy lunch from home in a labeled gallon-size plastic bag. Per the Office of Child Care, parents are not to provide milk, juice, or water from home. St. Peter's is required to provide milk. If your child does not prefer milk or is allergic, please inform the staff. All lunches are required to be refrigerated at our school.

2's Lunch Bunch (Optional program) 12-12:30 Tues/Thursday

Parents will provide a nut free, healthy lunch from home. Per the Office of Child Care, parents are not to provide milk, juice, or water from home. St. Peter's is required to provide milk. If your child does not prefer milk or is allergic, please inform the staff.

A note about food served at school:

We prefer to stay away from foods that are high in processed sugars, colorings, and additives. Parents are welcome to bring in "special" snacks to celebrate special occasions. **Due to the increasing amount of food allergies, we cannot serve anything containing peanuts, tree nuts, or peanuts products or in a facility that processes these items. On some occasions, (i.e. dependent on the school year, and the children with certain allergies (milk, egg, etc.) present) store-bought baked goods may not be brought to the school.** Teachers will update you on any additional class allergies.

Please check package labels for allergy warnings. They are listed with the nutrition and ingredient information. Sometimes allergens are in products you wouldn't suspect, so check labels carefully. All baked goods must be nut-free and store bought, when permissible, dependent on the school year and children with certain allergies (milk, eggs, etc) present. NO HOMEMADE BAKED GOODS PLEASE...these will be sent back home.

Tuition and Fees

Registration:

A registration fee of \$150.00 is due for each family when they register their child(ren). Payment of the registration fee completes the registration and reserves a space for your child and is non-refundable.

Tuition fees:

2-day classes:	\$2385.00/year	\$265.00/month
3-day classes:	\$3330.00/year	\$370.00/month
5-day classes:	\$4410.00/year	\$490.00/month

Optional programs (October-May):

Lunch Bunch: \$20/month (Tu OR Thurs) OR \$40/month (Tu AND Thurs)

Prepayments:

We require 2 tuition prepayments one in May and one in September. These prepayments represent the tuition for the months of the following September and May. Tuition payments are then required monthly from October through March. Prepayments help with purchasing materials, supplies, and equipment.

Parents who register children from January through May are required to make the 2 tuition prepayments prior to the first day of school. If the first 2 payments are not received, your child will be unable to start school until payment has been received. If payment is not received by the end of the first week of school, your child's spot will be given to the next name on the waiting list.

Important Tuition information:

- The school's tuition is an **annual financial commitment** broken down into nine monthly payments for your convenience. **We do not pro-rate for illness, vacation, snow days, non-attendance, or any other emergency closures.** Tuition is required if your child is enrolled in our program, not whether they attend or not. We still must pay our staff, buy materials, and pay rent and utilities whether or not your child is present. Our school is a non-profit organization and our fees are intentionally kept as reasonable as possible. Should you decide not to pay for times your child is not in attendance (ex: longer vacations, visits with family, sickness) your child will not be able to return to school, until all payments have been made.
- There is an option to pay tuition in full at any time. However, a 5% discount will be given if paid in full before the start of the school year.
- Monthly tuition payments are due Friday of the first full week of each month. If payments are not received by this time, a \$20 late fee will be charged to you/your account and you will be informed to pay. If payment is 30 days delinquent, the child will not be able to attend class and will forfeit his/her spot in their class.

Forms of Payment Accepted:

- Checks-Please include your child's name and the tuition month in the memo of the check. (\$35 fee for a returned check plus applicable late payment fee of \$20 applies)
- Pay Pal - payments via our school website (processing fees apply should you choose this option)
- Cash-We prefer one of the other methods. We seldom have change on site. If you choose to pay in cash, you may have to accept any overage as a credit to your account.

Payment by check may be mailed to the school or given to your child's classroom teachers or the director.

Sibling Discount:

A tuition fee discount will be offered to full time families with more than one child enrolled. For families with two children enrolled, the discount will be 10% off the tuition cost for the oldest child enrolled. For families with three or more children enrolled, the discount will be 15% off the tuition cost for the oldest child enrolled.

Referral Policy:

The highest compliment our parents can pay us is the referral of family or friends for child care. The trust and confidence that you place in us each and every day means a great deal. In appreciation of that trust and confidence, you will receive a **15% tuition credit** for every new enrollment as a result of your referral!

Debt Policy:

Parents who register children from January through May are required to make the 2 tuition prepayments prior to the first day of school. If the first 2 payments are not received, your child will be unable to start school until payment has been received. If payment is not received by the end of the first week of school, your child's spot will be given to the next name on the waiting list.

Monthly tuition payments are due Friday of the first full week of each month. If payments are not received by this time, a \$20 late fee will be charged to you/your account and you will be informed to pay. If payment is 30 days delinquent, the child will not be able to attend class and will forfeit his/her spot in their class.

Returned Checks:

Any check returned for insufficient funds will be subject to a returned check fee of \$35.00 to cover our bank costs. Payment of this fee will be required with the next month's tuition. Returned checks will be re-deposited into St. Peter's account in 3 days.

Withdrawal:

Should there be an instance when you will need to withdraw your child from attending St. Peter's for the remainder of the school year (such as a family move or relocation), please notify the director one month in advance so that we may be able to fill your child's spot once he/she is no longer in the school and payments have ceased.

Vacations and long absences are not a withdraw. If your child is **enrolled** in our program for the remainder of the year, monthly tuition payments are required.

Registration

Advanced Registration:

It is our goal at St. Peter's to make the registration process for a new school year as simple and stress-free as possible. Over the years we have listened to parent comments, observed the registration process, surveyed those involved, and reviewed procedures from other schools to try and create a process that is clear, safe, and reduces anxiety for all parties involved. Please refer to our current preschool enrollment form for more detailed information.

- **First full week in January: Parishioner Registration for members of St. Peter's Episcopal Church.** This registration is open to children and grandchildren of parishioners. To register, turn in a completed registration form with the registration fee.
- **Second Full week in January: Registration for returning families.** Registration for returning children and current families.
- **Third full week in January: Open registration for new families.** New families wishing to enroll will be able to drop off or mail registration forms during this time frame. Spots are filled on a 'first come first serve' basis. We will notify families to let them know of their position, and place any children who did not get a space on a waiting list. Once you are notified that your child's position is held, the registration fee is due to secure his/her spot in the program.

Waiting List Policy:

If any class exceeds the maximum number allowed, a waiting list will be developed. Families put on the waiting list do not pay a registration fee until they are notified of an opening. Upon notification of an opening, the registration fee and prepayments are required for enrollment.

The Registration and Wait List hierarchy is as follows:

1. Members of St. Peter's Episcopal Church
2. Current St. Peter's Episcopal School students
3. Siblings of current St. Peter's Students
4. Past families of St. Peter's Episcopal School
5. All other prospective families

***We welcome you to the St. Peter's Episcopal School
family
and trust that your association with the school
will be a positive experience for
both you and your child.***