**ST. PAUL LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL and**

**CHILD CARE CENTER**

PARENT HANDBOOK

257 E. KING ST, SUITE 2

STRASBURG, VA 22657

Phone (540) 465-2393

Email: splick@shentel.net

www.strasburgchildcare.com

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**FOR**

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 St. Paul Lutheran Preschool and Child Care Center was founded in 1988, opening its doors first in August of that year. It operated out of the church until 2005 when the church opened the new building on King St. The land was donated by Dr. Byron Brill and Ms. Kathy Kanter. The Center moved into the new building in August of 2005.

 We hope your stay at St. Paul Lutheran Preschool and Child Care Center will be fun and educational for your child(ren) and beneficial to your peace of mind while working away from your home. Our priorities are keeping your child safe, and to make SPLPCCC a place “where learning is fun!”

**Revised: August 8, 2023**

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**MISSION STATEMENT**

The philosophy of St. Paul Lutheran Preschool and Child Care Center is based on the Christian tradition of love set forth by Jesus Christ in the Gospels. The Gospels are the true foundation of democratic living because they are based on the principles of equality and mutual respect. Quality means “children are equal to adults in the terms of human worth and dignity.”

Therefore, care shall be given to each and every child with compassion and understanding. Each child shall be recognized for his/her own infinite worth. This acceptance, regardless of develop-mental stage, will allow the child to grow in wholeness. In all areas, the Center shall operate as an extension of Christ’s mercy and offer its service with love. As the Body of Christ, we have the responsibility to extend knowledge of the Gospels.

This is an outreach ministry of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Strasburg, VA.

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool and Child Care Center (SPLPCCC) is a private, non-profit Christian day care for children 6 weeks through five years of age. The Center operates on a non-discriminatory basis, providing equal treatment and access to services without regard to race, creed, nor color.

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool & Child Care Center offers a rich blend of activities that promote spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, and emotional growth of young children. We incorporate the Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood, written by Diane Trister Dodge and Laura J. Colker as our primary learning tool. We also follow the guidelines set forth in the Foundations Blocks for Early Childhood Education.

**ST. PAUL LUTHERAN PRESCHOOL AND CHILD CARE COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMITTEE** (April 15, 2016)

Mary Redmon, (Chairwoman, educational support)), Helen Hall (personnel) Tammy Kibler (educational support) Kim Painter (treasurer, council rep), Katie Harley (Director)

**STAFF**

 Barbara Hamman, Sharon Doman, Katie Harley, Wilhelmina Payne, Donna Tobin, Laura Hunt, Kyra Blankenbaker, Kim Gibson, Sheri High, Krysten Bischoff, Allyson Blankenbaker, Jordan Kline, Kelsey Costello, Sam Gonzalez, Kaitlin Angel, Madelyn Crabill and Adriana Barrera

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**FORMS (DOCUMENTS)**

You will need 5 forms for registration purposes, and an “authorization to give medication” when appropriate.

REGISTRATION FORMS

This is also called an “enrollment form” and will be used for your child’s name, address, and parents’ occupations, phone numbers, etc. This form needs to be completed before your child is admitted.

MEDICAL CONSENT FORMS

This form is an authorization which the parent signs in case a child needs emergency medical attention (i.e. rescue squad, emergency room, etc.) This form is in your child’s file and will be used when needed. This form is your consent for enlisting the services of EMTSs, doctors, and/or transport.

PARENTAL AGREEMENT

A legal contract signed by the parent(s) whereby agreeing to pay the weekly fees, deposit, and registration fee. The registration fee is a one-time, non-refundable payment; The deposit will be returned as long as you give 2 weeks’ notice verbally or by letter to the director. A payment schedule of every week, every two weeks, or once a month is agreed upon at this time.

SCHOOL ENTRANCE PHYSICAL FORM

This form is used by all daycare centers and elementary schools in the state of Virginia for medical information. Your child needs a recent “well child check-up” by his/her pediatrician and needs to have all immunizations up-to-date. This is required by DSS and Licensing for daycare centers. If you chose not to have your child immunizes for religious reasons there will be a separate paper that will need to be filled out and notarized.

\*\*If your child has an upcoming appointment ask your caregiver for their physical form so we can stay up to date on their immunizations.

MAT INFORMATION FORM

This form acknowledges that you are aware of our programs decision to administer medications as long as the appropriate paperwork is filled out and submitted to the center.

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**HOLIDAYS OBSERVED BY SPLPCCC**

The following holidays are observed by our Center:

 New Year’s Day Thanksgiving Day and Friday

Good Friday Christmas (2 days designated by

 the director)

Memorial Day

Independence Day

Labor Day

The two days observed for Christmas may be changed according to when Christmas Eve falls. Two school days will always be used for the observance of Christmas. You will be notified in advance of the dates, so that other childcare arrangements can be made.

**EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

Should inclement weather force the closing, or early/ late opening of SPLPCCC, the announcement will be put on our website, Facebook page and will be heard on our phone if you call in. In the event that SPLPCCC needs to close early we will call the parent of each child in attendance to inform you of the closure and give you at least a 2-hour notice unless it is known before opening the center for the day in which case it will be posted on the doors of the facility.

**FINANCIAL FEES AND CONTRACTS**

Fees are due upon enrollment at SPLPCCC and consist of:

 Registration fee – $50.00 (a one-time fee, non-refundable)

 Deposit: equal to one week’s tuition

 Tuition – amount depends on age of child

The registration fee covers the initial cost of your child’s paper goods at the center, including toiletries, and paper used for curriculum and arts and crafts. Your deposit is held in savings while your child is enrolled, and as long as you give two weeks’ notice of terminating your child’s enrollment, it will be returned. You may pay your tuition weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. It is always paid in advance of service. This means at the beginning of the week, beginning of the bi-weekly period, or the beginning of the month. You may pay with a personal check, money order, or cashier’s check. We do not keep cash in the building, so please DO NOT BRING CASH. All checks or money orders should be placed in the locked box in the lobby beside the director’s door.

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Fees are susceptible to change at the discretion of St. Paul Lutheran Church. Payments are required for all 52 weeks of the year, with only two exceptions. (See one exception under Health and Medicine and the other under Vacation Time.)

**SPLCCC OPERATION POLICY:**

We enroll children on a year-long basis, with parents/guardians paying for 52 weeks. We must have a reliable source of income to plan for budgeting needs.

Late fees are as follows:

Late payment - $1.00 per day that your check is past due

Returned check fee: $30 for any returned check; once you have 2 checks

returned to us, we ask that you pay with cashier’s checks or money orders.

Late daily pick-up: $5.00 for the first fifteen minutes past 6:00; $5.00 for every five minutes thereafter. (Example: if you arrive at 6:20 p.m. your late charge will be $10.00.) You will be charged this fee for each one of your children. Should you have more than 2 late pick-ups, you will be charged double the third time and each time thereafter.

If you are 2 weeks past due on tuition fees your child may not return to daycare until you have paid your balance in full. If you are unable to pay the balance in full, we will need to have a meeting to set up a payment plan. During this repayment period you may not miss any payments. If you miss a payment the balance will need to be paid in full before your child may return.

These fees are adhered to strictly. Some staff members have ten-to-eleven-hour days and I respect their hard work. We appreciate your cooperation in all our policies.

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**ENROLLMENT**

Parents must schedule an interview with the director prior to admittance. As indicated in the statement of purpose, children from 6 weeks through age 5 yrs are enrolled. A tour of the Center, along with introductions to staff, will occur during orientation. The director will also go over policies and procedures with you at this time. All children are accepted on a trial basis. A two-week probationary period is used to determine if a child is capable of adjusting to our program. Notice of dismissal will be given if the Center finds the child is not adapting well. Immediate dismissal may take place should there be severe problems which threaten the safety of other children or staff.

*ENROLLING INFANTS:* Your name is added to our waiting list when you call the first time, and once you have delivered the baby, his/her name and birth date are added to your information. When your name moves to the top of the waiting list, you are given the next available position. If you already have a child enrolled (older sibling), your baby receives the first available slot after birth, unless there is another family already enrolled, whose baby is born before yours.

*OLDER CHILDREN:* When your child reaches one year of age, and for every birthday after one year, he/she will move to the next level provided there is an opening in that age group. Any other child in your child’s age group, who is already waiting to be moved, will have first priority. This decision is made at the discretion of the director. According to the Division of Licensing, children from six weeks of age up to age 2 yrs., may be combined in classrooms. Children over two years of age through age 12 yrs., may be combined as well. Occasionally circumstances arise at which time the director has sole responsibility for making the decision on moving the child.

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**LUNCHES AND SNACKS**

The Center serves two snacks each day – one at 8:30 a.m. and one at 3:30 p.m. Milk is also provided for lunch. Lunches are packed and brought from home and may consist of “heatable” foods and sandwiches, fruits, raw vegetables, etc. All heatable foods should be placed inmicrowave safe containers. Do NOT send foods in cans nor jars. Please make sure your child’s lunchbox has your child’s name on it – preferably below the handle. If your child is allergic to dairy products or will not be using the center supplied 2% milk, you must bring a note from your doctor signifying such. You will receive a monthly snack menu with your monthly newsletter. If you do not like the snack, we are serving you may choose to bring one from home.

The parent must take the lunchbox to the Center kitchen each day. We must refrigerate it regard-less of what you pack. Children under four years of age are asked not to bring peanuts (nor any nut) popcorn, nor raisins due to choking hazards. Hot dogs should be cut lengthwise and then crosswise into small pieces. Fresh grapes should also be cut into halves.

**PERSONAL ITEMS**

The Center provides toys, games, and books for the children. Therefore, you are asked not to bring any items from home other than a packed lunch, a blanket for naptime, and a stuffed toy (if needed) for naptime. Please label all personal articles clearly with your child’s name. Please keep a complete set of clothing, including socks, on hand at the Center for your child. We will place them in a clear plastic shoebox for safekeeping in your child’s cubby.

SPLPCCC provides cots for naptime, high chairs where needed, bibs, washcloths. We will send your child’s blanket home every two weeks for laundering. It is your responsibility to return it to the Center on the following Monday.

DO NOT permit your child to bring personal toys or games to the Center. We cannot be responsible for the loss or damage to personal items. They also cause problems in the classroom since your child may not want to share.

TENNIS SHOES: for safety concerns we require that all children wear shoes that have “closed toes” and a “closed heel”. Sandals flip flops, crocs etc. make it hard for the children to run on the playground and they pose a safety issue in the classroom. Please do not let your children wear these to daycare.

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**HEALTH AND MEDICINE**

Should your child become ill while at the Center, we must call you for immediate pick-up. Illness may consist of fevers of 101+, vomiting, diarrhea, and or diseases such as pink-eye. Once your child has been symptom-free of the illness for 24 hrs, he/she may return to daycare. Should you take your child to a pediatrician, he/she may return to daycare immediately if the doctor signs a note designating such freedom from contagion. An infant may be in childcare if he is running a low-grade fever due to immunizations. However, you must have proof of the immunization shot upon returning to the Center.

Should your child become ill enough to be admitted to a hospital, once admission reaches 3 days, you may be excused from paying that week’s tuition at SPLPCCC, or a length of time not longer than 10 days.

It is the responsibility of SPLPCCC to deny admittance to any child who exhibits symptoms of any contagious illness. These policies are for the benefit of all children enrolled in our care and are in accordance with the policies of state agencies with regard to child care.

Should your child need any medication while attending daycare, you must fill out an “Authorization to give Medication” form which your staff will have. It must be filled out accurately and completely in order for us to administer medication. Our staff has training to

administer meds, and one of the trained members should review your medical form BEFORE you leave the Center. Make sure this has been done or we won’t be able to give the medication.

**DISCIPLINE:** SPLPCCC emphasizes INDEPENDENCE, COOPERATION, AND SELF-DISCIPLINE. We will foster independence by re-directing a child should his behavior be inappropriate, explaining what he/she should do instead. We will intervene, giving the child options for discontinuing the inappropriate behavior, instead moving on to another activity, or giving them “words” to help alleviate the problem. Should redirection and intervention fail, your child will be asked to sit in timeout for one minute per year of his age (i.e. a three yr old will be in timeout for 3 minutes.)

Discipline will be handled in a way so as not to embarrass the child but to reflect on what he did that was inappropriate and to emphasize the acceptable behavior. Staff members are instructed to enforce our rules even in the parent’s presence. We need and appreciate your support and co-operation. By working together, we can create an environment of stability and unity for all the children.

Should your child not follow disciplinary procedures set forth by the Center, he/she may be suspended for 3 days or longer. If problems continue, an evaluation by professionals in the school system where you live may be recommended. These pre-school screenings are free of cost to you, and if we are having on-going disciplinary or developmental problems, the services

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are an invaluable resource. If behavioral problems become too severe and endanger other children or staff, we may find it necessary to dismiss your child from our program immediately.

**BITING POLICY:** We realize that toddlers and preschoolers sometimes bite others. We will treat each incident on an individual basis and work together with parents and staff to resolve the problem. If the problem continues, parents will be called to pick up the child.

**ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE:** Upon arriving at SPLPCCC each morning, you should sign your child in on the “sign-in/out” sheet in the lobby. Children’s names are alphabetized by surnames, and you can initial your child in and out daily. Your child may not leave the building with anyone you have not listed on the enrollment form. Anyone whom we have not met before must bring a

picture identification for this purpose, or the child will not be allowed to leave. It is best if the parent tells the staff in advance if someone new is coming to pick up a child.

Should you have a family member under the age of 18 years picking up your child, you need to give the Director a letter of permission in writing (i.e. a teenage sibling who drives but is not 18 years old.)

Do NOT Park under the carport when arriving at the Center. Please Park in designated spaces on the lot, do not park parallel to the building. DO NOT leave your engine running while you pick up children. This is a safety precaution.

**DAILY SCHEDULE**

You will be given a daily schedule depending on which class your child will be enrolled in. Please call to let us know if your child will not be attending daycare for any reason.

**OUTDOOR PLAY**

All ages are required by the Dept. of Licensing to have outdoor time each day, as long as the weather is fitting. State guidelines say, “Children must play outside for at least 30 minutes as long as the temperature is over 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Children in large centers (more than 10 children) must have two recess periods outdoors if weather is appropriate.” If you think your child should not go outdoors for play, he/she is not well enough to attend childcare that day. Pediatricians will tell you that the fresh air is much better for your child than “recycled” indoor air. Be sure and send appropriate clothing for your child (i.e. gloves, hats or hooded jackets, sunglasses, etc.) so that he or she can be comfortable outside.

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**VACATION TIME**

If your child is a full-time enrollee of SPLPCCC and has been enrolled with us for at least three months you are entitled to a one-week vacation at which time you do not have to pay the weekly tuition. There is a form that must be filled out at least one month prior to the requested vacation date. This form can be obtained by your request from your child caregiver.

**MULTIPLE CHILD DISCOUNT**

St. Paul Lutheran Preschool and Child Care Center is pleased to offer a multiple child tuition rate for families that have more than one child enrolled at our Center. We will be offering a 10% tuition discount for each additional enrollee.

We look forward to working with you and your family!

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

St. Paul Lutheran Child Care Center is in compliance with the religious exemption code for daycare centers in the state of Virginia. St. Paul Lutheran Preschool and Child Care Center (SPLPCCC) was founded in 1988. In August of 2005, we moved from the church building to our current location. SPLCCC follows the standards listed below, according to the Division of Licensing.

The facility serves children from 6 weeks of age through 5 yrs., or when the child enters kindergarten. We have two infant rooms with 8 children each, 2 toddler rooms with 8 children each, and separate classrooms for the two-, three-, and four-year-old classes. The staff/child ratio for infants and toddlers is 1 caregiver per 4 children. For children, two years old 1 caregiver per 8 children, and for the 3- & 4-year-olds the ratio is one caregiver per 10 children. Our center has a restroom for boys (3 commodes or urinals) and a restroom for girls with 3 commodes. We have three hand sinks in each restroom also. There is a separate restroom for staff members. We have a sink beside our diaper changing stations in the infant and toddler classrooms. The infant rooms have their own microwaves and refrigerators. Our kitchen has a fully equipped 3 compartment sink, commercial refrigerator, kitchen range, 2 microwaves, and a hand sink. Our storage/ utility room has a mop sink. Our facility has fire stations with pull alarms and we practice fire drills once a month. We use evacuation cribs for the infants and toddlers.

Katie Harley is the director/ administrator of SPLPCCC under the auspices of St. Paul Lutheran Church. She has been the director since January 2, 2018. Katie was the assistant administrator for 5 years before obtaining the director position. Ms. Katie has approximately 16 years of experience in childcare. She works in our office 5 hours per week, and works in the classrooms 35 hours each week. We employ 18 other staff, including our kitchen helper.

The current staff of SPLPCCC is required to attend at least two training sessions per year totaling at least 4 hours. We are certified in first aid/ CPR, fire safety, and MAT training- medication administration. We continually train in safe food handling, child neglect/ abuse recognition, and daily screening of children for illness upon entering daycare each morning. We use gloves for changing diapers, sanitizing equipment, wiping noses, toileting, and cleaning wounds or bloody accidents.

SPLPCCC has liability insurance for its employees and children. All children must have a well-child check-up and immunization records available before enrollment. Parents and guardians must present birth certificates or a hospital birth records, and/or social security cards before enrollment. All caregivers are given criminal history checks by the State Police and DSS Child Protective Services before employment. Caregivers receive annual medical check-ups per state guidelines.

Children attending SPLPCCC bring packed lunches from home. These lunch boxes are refrigerated immediately upon their arrival at the center. A cook warms them at lunchtime and the lunches are transported by servers to the classrooms. Milk is served with all lunches unless other directions are given by the child’s pediatrician. All children receive a morning snack at 8:30 a.m. and an afternoon snack at 3:30 p.m. Pre-packaged foods are used for snacks. Children rest from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. on cots. Infants are permitted to sleep as needed in their cribs. Sheets are provided for these cots and are laundered and sanitized by the Center. Prepackaged foods are used for snacks. Each child is nurtured on an individual basis and preschool lessons which are developmentally appropriate are provided.

SPLPCCC has a playground enclosed by a four-foot-high chain link fence. Toys are inspected daily for safety and endurance, and replaced as necessary. We have a “6 inch” layer of hardwood chips for the safety of the children. We have no climbing toys higher than 6 feet.

THIS NOTICE IS PROVIDED ANNUALLY TO PARENTS AND POSTED YEAR-LONG AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHILD CARE CENTER.

Katie Harley, Director

August 8, 2023