

Parent Handbook



2023-2024

12291 River Road
Richmond, Virginia 23238
(804) 784-2049
Email – preschool@stmarysgoochland.org
Website - saintmarysschool.net

Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Mary's Episcopal School! We are beginning our 23rd year of enriching the lives of children. We are glad that you have chosen for your child or children to be a part of our St. Mary's family. We want to provide each child with a hands-on learning environment that will optimize their growth and development and prepare them for success in the future.

We invite you to play an active role in your child's education. Get involved in your child's classroom, communicate with your child's teacher, and encourage your child at home by reinforcing the activities that are introduced at school.

Please share your thoughts and ideas with us so that as a team, we as parents and educators, can see "our" little ones reach their highest potential.

Sincerely,

Susan Rawls

St. Mary's Episcopal School

St. Mary's Episcopal School is an early childhood learning program located at 12291 River Road, Richmond, Virginia, 23238 (804-784-2049). It is a Virginia non-stock Corporation that has applied for tax-exempt status under section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. It operates, according to state law, under the status of religious exemption. The school offers a co-educational experience for children ages 2-years-old to kindergarten. A voluntary Board of Directors operates the school as an independent, non-profit institution. The school functions as a collaborative effort among its students, educators, parents, directors, and the membership of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Dover Parish.

St. Mary's Episcopal School welcomes participants of diverse abilities, and any cultural, racial, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. Students are selected for enrollment on an individual basis and in compliance with non-discrimination laws.

Our Mission:

St. Mary's Episcopal School treasures children and childhood, fosters development through play and exploration, and prepares children for success in all aspects of their education.

We believe in the whole child, learning through:

Play: Children thrive and succeed when education is based on play and exploration. By providing personalized education, we meet each child where they are, helping the whole child develop social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills.

Exploration: We foster curiosity, wonder, independence, and confidence in each of our students. Questioning, investigating, taking risks, and observing builds a child's understanding of the world around them.

Relationship: We are a strong community of students, teachers, parents and families, anchored in our shared faith, mutual respect, and cooperation. We nurture spirituality by sharing the love of God and the lessons of His teachings.

Nature: We spend time in nature to promote wellness, enhance learning, and instill a love for the natural world. Outdoor environments, as the third teacher, encourage children to explore, using all their senses.

Upon graduation, a St. Mary's child will be:

- Caring
- Confident
- Curious
- Creative

St. Mary's Episcopal School

Curriculum

Our emergent curriculum promotes growth in all areas of development (social-emotional, physical, cognitive, literacy and language). It is research-based and is influenced by the works of child development theorists Piaget, Vygotsky and Montessori. The Reggio Emilia philosophy has encouraged us to follow the children's lead, provide experiences and environments that promote play through hands-on exploration, and assist children to find deeper meaning through projects and common interests. Our unique program offers:

I. Daily Components:

- Outdoor nature play experiences
- STEAM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math
- Interdisciplinary center activities (including literacy and math activities)
- Reading of quality children's literature that promotes values and character development
- Music, creative movement, fingerplays
- Time for wonder and curiosity
- Large and small motor skill activities
- Imaginative and dramatic play opportunities
- Guidance that promotes self- management skills

II. Weekly Components:

- Children's Chapel
- Music or Movement enrichment
- Nature-based Learning
- Volunteer opportunities for parents and other members of the community
- After school enrichment program
- Library
- Art - Kindergarten and JK students
- Pop, Hop, and Rock – Kindergarten and JK

III. Monthly Components:

- Holiday celebrations, following the church's calendar
- Field Trips and other special activities
- Community service opportunities (Caritas, Goochland Family Services)

St. Mary's Episcopal School

Board of Directors Membership

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chair Brianna McElhannon
Vice Chair Chris Cotropia
Secretary Pamela Merrick
Treasurer Ken Russell

MEMBERSHIP

Patsy Simril
Adrienne Webb
Chris Kitchen
Liz Marcum
Burch Pope

Susan Rawls – Director of St. Mary's Episcopal School
Wendy Dixon – Assistant Director
David May - Rector

PROGRAM

Classes are provided for toddlers and for children ages 2 to kindergarten. The program is divided as follows:

Programs

Day Schedule

2 Day Twos	Monday / Wednesday or Tuesday / Thursday
3 Day Class (3 year-olds)	Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday
4 Day Class (3-4 year-olds)	Monday through Thursday (4 day)
5 Day Junior Kindergarten (5-6 year olds)	Monday through Friday
Kindergarten(5-7-year olds)	Monday through Friday

PROGRAMS and FEES

Registration Fee (non-refundable): \$35.00 for Preschool, \$50.00 for Kindergarten
Deposit: \$400.00 non-refundable deposit is due with the preschool contracts.
\$800.00 non-refundable deposit is due with the kindergarten contract. The deposits are applied to the total tuition.

Tuition assistance is available. Please call the school office at 784-2049 for an application.

2 Day	\$2284
3 Day (/Tues./Wed./ Thurs.)	\$3340
4 Day (Mon.-Thurs.)	\$3922
5 Day Junior Kindergarten (Mon.-Fri.)	\$5900(9-12, Sept.-Dec.) (9-2, M-TH, 9-12, F)
	\$6300 (9-2, M-TH, 9-12, F)
Kindergarten (Mon.-Fri.)	\$7200

**Early Morning Drop-Off
(Must Sign-Up at least
24 hours in advance)** **\$12.00 per day**

***After School Enrichment Program (12:00 – 12:30)** **Prices and times may vary.
depending on the program**

***After School Lunch/Stay and Play (12:00 - 1:45).** **25.00 per day**

***After Enrichment Lunch/Stay and Play (12:45 – 1:45)** **\$20.00 per day**

No reimbursements for after school programs.

****See “Extended Day” under General Information***

Guidelines for Proper Placement in Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten

To be eligible for St. Mary's Episcopal Junior Kindergarten a child must be 5 by June 1st of the year following acceptance (I.e. a child entering JK at 4 in 2023 should be turning 5 by June, 2024)

To be eligible for our kindergarten program a child must be 5 by September 1 of the school entry year (I.e. to be eligible for kindergarten in 2023, the child must be 5 by September 1, 2023.)

After applying to kindergarten, a child will be scheduled for a visit to the school to receive a short assessment that determines readiness in language and math.

In addition, teachers are asked to complete a recommendation form that asks questions related to all areas of development including social/emotional.

Parents are able to meet with the administration to review assessments and are given an opportunity to respond to the recommendation made by the school for the child's placement.

Tuition Payment Policy

Tuition checks should be made to **St. Mary's Episcopal School**. Tuition payments are due in full on or before **August 1**. If tuition is being paid in two payments, these are due on or before **August 1 and January 15**. Monthly payments should be paid by the 1st of each month. If your payment is not paid by the 15th of the month, you will be assessed a late fee of \$10.00. If payments are more than 2 months behind and you have not made arrangements to pay, your child will not be able to attend school. Also, if your tuition is not paid in full by May 15th, your child, if eligible, may not participate in graduation ceremonies and your child may not attend our summer programs.

Being a tuition driven school makes it imperative that all payments be made in a timely manner.

Returned checks will be assessed a fee of \$40.00.

Tuition Assistance

Tuition assistance is available on a limited basis. An application process is required. The application may be found on the website. The following policy was adopted by the Board of Trustees.

- ❖ The family of any child admitted to St. Mary's Episcopal School will be considered for tuition assistance upon completion of the application.
- ❖ All information provided by applicant families will be kept in strictest confidence.
- ❖ First consideration will be given to current students at the school, followed by the siblings of current and former students, and finally to new students. Parishioners will be given priority consideration.
- ❖ No student shall receive 100% tuition assistance.

St. Mary's Episcopal School expects tuition assistance recipient families to participate fully in the life of the school.

General Information

Accidents

Parents will be notified immediately if a child has been involved in any mishap in the classroom or on the playground, including biting incidents by the classroom teacher or director/assistant director. Any accident requiring treatment will be reported by the classroom teacher on the Incident Form. The Incident Form should be signed by both the teacher and a parent and returned on the next school day, or the day on which the child returns to school after the said accident. This form will be kept in the school's records.

Allergies

Please make sure that we have all necessary information related to any allergies your child or children have developed, including the state required Medication Administration form.

St. Mary's is a **nut free zone**. This means that no nut products of any kind should be brought from home during the regular school day and during lunchtime. There will be no nut products used in our cooking projects at school. It is important to read each label to determine whether nuts or nut oils are used in the ingredients. Anytime there is concern about a particular food, the school will contact the parent to make sure that it is safe for the child.

Assessment

Teachers actively seek information regarding the growth and development of each child at St. Mary's. The following are some of the ways that we collect information which enables us to provide the optimum learning situation for each child in our care: (these are not exclusive)

For Preschool:

- Portfolio for each child which includes work samples, pictures, etc.
- Checklists with developmental milestones
- Anecdotal records and/or narratives
- Parent input in planning for individual children
- For Junior Kindergarten: results of readiness assessments
- Information from specialists such as speech and occupational therapists

For Kindergarten:

- Portfolio for each child which includes work samples, pictures, etc.
 - Kindergarten Readiness Assessment
 - Kindergarten curriculum assessments
 - Report card.
 - Parent input in planning for individual children
 - Information from specialists who work with the children outside of the school setting included in planning (speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and pediatricians)

All student's portfolios will be shared with parents during conferences and parents will receive a written summary. A signed copy of the written summary will be kept in the student records. If teachers have concerns about individual developmental issues, parents will be notified and given additional resources.

Attendance

We look forward to seeing your child each school day. Staggered school start begins at **8:50 a.m. and ends at 12:10 p.m. for preschool, 2:00 for full day Junior Kindergarten and 2:30 p.m. kindergarten.** Each child should arrive on time so that he/she may participate in the opening activities of the day. Regular attendance will encourage developmental growth in all areas. If you know that your child will be out due to an illness or a family trip, please notify the school. Also, please contact us in the case of any communicable illnesses (chicken pox, head lice, Covid-19, Pink eye, etc.) so that other parents can be notified. This information will be shared anonymously with other families.

A daily record of your child's attendance is recorded at school and on the Playground App by your child's teacher.

Birthdays

Please come and share your child's birthday at school with us! A simple birthday treat (**purchased with ingredients listed**) of cookies or cupcakes is appropriate (**no nut products!**). In consideration of others, we request that you **mail** invitations for "at-home" birthday parties.

Bringing Things to School

We are always excited about special discoveries the children make at home or on trips with their families. It is acceptable for the children to bring these things to school to share. The teacher in each class will determine how "show and tell" will be handled. However, if your child has discovered something that he/she wants to share immediately, please do not hesitate to send it on any given day. **Please encourage your child to leave candy, money, and electronics at home unless requested by the teacher.** These items will be placed in the child's bag for safekeeping when brought to school.

If a child has a transitional item such as a blanket or a special toy that will help the child to adjust, he/she may bring that item to school. After the adjustment period, we will keep the transitional item in the child's tote bag for safekeeping during the school day.

DROP-OFF/PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Drop-Off

Twos

All two-year-olds must be escorted to the classroom **through the side door each day unless directed otherwise by the teacher.** This door will be opened by a parent volunteer from 8:55 – 9:10 a.m. **Please use the bell to enter after 9:10 a.m.**

Preschool and Kindergarten

Beginning **the first week of school**, all **preschoolers and kindergarteners** may utilize the carpool drop-off through the double doors closest to the school office.

- Carpool will begin at **8:50 - 9:00 a.m. for 4 day, 9:00 - 9:10 a.m. for JK and K, and 9:10 - 9:20 a.m. for 3 day.** Please remain in your car until your child is escorted into the school by a staff member. 9:00 and 9:10 carpool should wait in the designated area until your scheduled time. (A sign will direct you where to wait)
- **If you have more than one child, we ask that you either return to the carpool line at the scheduled arrival time or park and walk your child to the door at his or her scheduled time.**
- **For the safety of all children, please do not pass others in the carpool line.**
- Carpool ends at **9:20 a.m.**, which will be indicated by the closing/ of the double doors. **Late arrivals must be escorted to their classrooms by a parent or care provider.**
- Children arriving for **early morning drop-off must be escorted to the early morning drop-off room (Block room) and signed in each day.** The sign-in book is located on the front counter of the office. **Early morning begins at 8:00 a.m.**
- **All children must be escorted into the building by an adult.**

Pick-Up

Safety for your children is our primary concern. Please use the following procedure for pick-up:

- **Two-year old's must be picked up in the classroom. Please enter through the side door by the parking lot for pick up. If picking up an older child, please wait by the double doors next to the two year old classroom for a teacher to bring the older child to you and do not go to your child's classroom.**
- **Preschoolers and Kindergarteners may be picked up in afternoon carpool (by the double doors next to the school office) unless preschoolers are staying for after school activities.**
- **Always display your child's carpool number in the front of your car. If someone else picks up your child, they should also display the carpool number. They should also be prepared to show an ID.**
- Please line cars up facing **east** at the double doors near the school office. Carpool pickup will begin at **11:50, 4 Day, 12:00 for Anders JK, 12:10, 3 Day 2 p.m. for Daly JK and 2:30 for Kindergarten** and will end when the double doors are shut (at 12:20 p.m. and 2:40 p.m.).

- You may walk up to pick up your child (Preschool-Kindergarten). Please wait on the grassy area by the double doors by the carpool and your child will be brought to you.
- If you need to pick up your child early for any reason, please let us know on the Playground App. You will need to use the double doors to come in and get your child if it is before dismissal.
- If your child will be going home with someone else, we must have a written note, message or a phone call for verification. If it is someone we do not know, please let them know that we will ask for an ID. If your child is going home with another student in our school, we need **a note from both families** stating that the children will be going home together. If the person picking up your child needs a car seat, please label the car seat and leave it by the double doors. Have the person come early to install the car seat before dismissal.
- Carpool conversations should be kept to a minimum to continuously move the carpool line. Please call or email your child's teacher to converse about lengthy topics or to share changes in schedule, etc.
- Please **no cell phones** when dropping off/ picking up your child. Especially at pick-up, your child needs your **undivided** attention.
- Accommodations will be made for children with wheelchairs or crutches.

Late Pick-Up

If you are more than 10 minutes past your pick up time, this will be considered a late pick up and you will need to park and come in to get your child unless the carpool line is still in motion. He/she will either be with the classroom teacher or in the school office.

Please notify us immediately if you will be unable to pick up your child at dismissal time so that we may reassure your child of your impending arrival. **After 3 late pick-ups you will be charged a late fee of \$5.00 for the first 5 minutes and \$1.00 per minute thereafter.**

Calendar

Each family will receive a printed copy of the school calendar at the beginning of the school year. The calendar is also available on the school website. Some of the dates may change during the year. You will receive a "Playground" notification of any changes.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Our staff is legally responsible to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to the appropriate local agency.

Class Assignment and Enrollment

Children between the ages of 2 (by December 31st) to kindergarten are accepted in order of application. Priority is given as follows:

- to siblings of currently enrolled children
- to children of St. Mary's Episcopal Church members
- to children of the community

If the teacher or director feels that a child is inappropriately placed, the school reserves the right to reassign the child to the class that is most appropriate for him/her.

We have space for 80 children in our preschool (per day) and 14 children in our kindergarten.

Clothes

Children are encouraged to wear clothes that are comfortable and appropriate for the season and weather, preferably **play clothes (appropriate for messy play) and tennis shoes**. We discourage the wearing of *sandals, Crocs and flip-flops* as they make it difficult for a child to move about safely on the playground. On rainy days, please send your child in a raincoat with a hood. For safety reasons, please do not send an umbrella to school. **Also, please help us and label all personal belongings with your child's FIRST and LAST NAMES.**

Twos/Preschoolers/Kindergartners:

Please send a change of clothing in a gallon-sized Zip-lock bag.

As the season changes, you will need to add warmer clothing to these bags.

Remember to include socks and a change of underwear. Also, remember to restock your bags if a child should have an accident and has to wear that clothing home.

Twos:

In your child's tote bag, please have at least 2 diapers (labeled with your child's last name) and 2 large zip-lock bags to send home soiled clothing each day.

Parents will be asked to send in wipes for use in the classroom.

Twos and Threes:

As much as possible, please dress your son or daughter in elastic waist pants. This allows children to be independent in toileting skills. It is challenging for young children to manipulate belts and buckles.

Chapel

The children ages 3 to junior kindergarten will attend chapel every other week. The kindergarten will attend chapel each week. During this 15 to 20-minute session, there will be a very simple service in the Sanctuary led by a member of the church staff. The service usually consists of simple rituals – lighting candles, liturgical responses, the Lord's Prayer, an age-appropriate Bible story, songs and prayers for the people. The two-year olds will be invited to attend the Christmas Chapel and one chapel time in the spring.

Communication

An essential part of an optimal learning environment for children is parent-teacher communication. It is important for parents to contact the school with any concerns or issues pertaining to their child. It is equally important that the teacher or school keeps the parents informed of any school concerns or issues related to their child. Please notify the school and/or the teacher if you do not feel you are receiving adequate communication from the school.

We use the following sources for communication between school and home:

- Phone calls – This will be our most immediate means of contact. Your cell phone numbers must be kept current.
- E-mail and texts– You will receive communications from the school office as well as individual teachers through e-mail and texts on the Playground app. Please keep your e-mail address current so that you will not miss any important information. Let us know if you are not receiving regular updates from the Playground App.
- Newsletter – There is a whole school e-newsletter that is sent at the beginning of each month. Each teacher will also send a newsletter that is class specific. Teachers will send this through the Playground app.
- Class Schedule – Teachers’ class schedules will be posted outside of each classroom. Other class specific information may be posted, as well.
- *Website – Our web address is www.saintmarysschool.net, for updates, schedule changes, class directories, and photos of the children throughout the school year. If you think we are missing information, please notify us.

Your child’s teachers will (through written or verbal communication):

- Make you aware of any changes in your child’s physical or emotional state.
- Inform you of any behavioral or developmental issues that they have encountered.
- Ask for your advice when assessing and making plans for your individual child.
- Inform you of any school-related changes involving your child such as changing teachers or rooms.

We ask that you contact us:

- In the event of any changes at home such as a death in the family, divorce, a new baby, a hospitalized or injured relative, business trips or vacations when a babysitter is left in charge, and if new nannies are hired who will be transporting the child to and from school.
- If you observe any behavior changes in your child (frequent potty accidents, sleeplessness, etc. – anything that may affect your child’s behavior at school)
- In cases of changes in addresses, work phone numbers, or emergency numbers. This is important information for our records.
- With program or policy concerns, **after your contact with the school administration**, you may address the Board of St. Mary’s School through Brianna McElhannon, 12291 River Rd., Richmond, VA 23229.

***Please refer any questions related to communications to the director/assistant director.**

Classroom/School Visitation

We welcome your participation in our school day and grant permission to you to access our program during our operating hours. We ask that you check in with the office when you arrive to visit in the classroom and sign our visitation log. We will also ask that you wear a name tag throughout your visit. The teachers will have opportunities for you throughout the year to participate as a classroom volunteer. Please keep in mind that the first few weeks of school may not be the optimum time to visit the classrooms as the

children are all adjusting to their new situations. Your child may not have an issue with you “dropping by” the classroom but your visit could trigger another child’s stress during this very important transition time. Please help us to minimize any stress for our little ones during this adjustment period.

Conferences

During the fall, classroom teachers (Preschool, including 2 Day, 3 Day, 4 Day) will contact you by phone and the 5 day teachers (JK and Kindergarten) will invite you to school to share a brief update of how your child is doing in the classroom. In February, there will be an in-person conference for parents of 2,3, and 4 day students,, and in March, there will be an in-person conference for JK and Kindergarten parents. During your conferences, you will have the opportunity to review your child’s development and make plans that promote further progress. If you have any concern before these meetings, please do not hesitate to ask for an earlier conference. It is very important for us to have a continuous dialogue about your child’s progress throughout the school year, not just on conference day. All conferences must be documented by both a parent’s and a teacher’s signature. This information and a summative report of your child’s development will be kept on file in the school office. The school director/assistant director is always available to conference with you and/or to participate in your classroom conference, if necessary.

Confidentiality

Our teachers and staff maintain confidentiality regarding any student records including health, medical plans, referrals to other educational specialists. These records are kept in a file in the office. Parents may access these records through the office. Any other individuals needing access to these documents must have a form signed by the child’s parent in order to gain access to these documents.

In addition, parents with outside childcare providers such as Nannies must complete a form stating whether the childcare provider may receive information from the school about the child.

Diapers and Toilet Training

If your child is not fully potty trained and wears diapers, please make sure they are easy to change! Potty training will be reinforced at school, but teachers cannot be responsible for the training process. Especially in our two-year-old class, the teachers will be very busy dealing with daily issues and will not have time to toilet train. Each day, all children who are using the toilet will have scheduled bathroom breaks and/or reminders about the bathroom. If your child can verbalize his or her bathroom needs and has infrequent accidents (1 or 2 times a week max), then he or she is probably ready to wear underwear to school. Please make sure this is the case. Children who participate in the 4 or 5-day classes must be fully potty-trained. To participate in Lunch Bunch (until 1:45 p.m.) children need to be fully potty- trained, as well.

Any child requiring diaper ointment must have a medication form on file at the school before ointment can be administered. Only teachers who have MAT training may administer ointment.

When changing diapers, all personnel are required to use gloves as per standard precaution requirements.

Discipline/ Guidance Policy

Discipline/guidance at St. Mary's School is an important part of the learning experience. Children are guided to understand and use constructive behaviors to learn self-regulation, self-control, and respect for others. Our primary goal is for children to learn to take responsibility for their actions and in doing so, learn to accept the consequences.

When inappropriate behavior occurs, the teachers will use:

Redirection: substituting a positive action for a negative activity.

Distraction: a change in the focus of the activity.

Active

Listening: a question and answer listening time between the teacher and the child or children to determine the underlying cause of the behavior and help each child to refocus his or her behavior.

Under no circumstances will your child be subject to corporal or shaming methods of punishment.

Teachers will personally contact parents of children who are having trouble with guidance and will work with them to meet the needs of the child. A conference with the Director/Assistant Director may be held to develop an appropriate plan of action. When necessary, professionals from the community or home school (in which county the family resides) may be asked to help develop a student education plan.

The school reserves the right to withdraw a contract if the teacher and director feel that the needs of the child may be better met in another setting. We practice non-discrimination in considering the termination of a child's enrollment.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Please make sure that the following information is on file at the school and is kept current:

1. Home/cell telephone numbers
2. Work telephone numbers
3. TWO emergency names and telephone numbers, if a parent cannot be reached
4. An emergency information form signed by both parents.
5. Name and phone number of primary physician.
6. Name and phone number of nanny or primary caregiver

***When any of this information changes, please let us know immediately!**

Fire Procedures

Children will have a practice fire drill once a month.

In the event of a fire:

- The children will be evacuated from the building as they have practiced.

- A roll call will be taken to assure that all children are present.
- The classroom teachers will always be with the children.
- Children will be relocated to Second Baptist Church via church bus provided by Second Baptist (corner of Gaskins Rd and River Rd), if necessary.
- Parents will be notified to pick up their children when police and fire officials give school personnel permission to call.
- Please **do not** call teachers or the school directly. You will be notified as quickly as possible.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a medical emergency:

- Teachers/directors will administer first aid/CPR and 911 will be called.
- The school will immediately advise you about the emergency. If you cannot be reached by phone, the school personnel will have your child transported by ambulance to the hospital that you have requested on your emergency information form.
- School personnel will remain with your child until a parent or another individual designated as an emergency contact has arrived.

Weather Emergencies

Snow Policy

When the school is closed due to ice and/or snow (or any other weather condition), the closing information will be reported on WTVR, Channel 6 and by the Playground App (by 7:00 a.m.). Our delayed opening will always run from 10:00 to 12:00. If **excessive amounts of snow days are used, the Director (in consultation with the Board) will determine the need for makeup days.**

For weather emergencies that occur during school hours, the school will activate a text message through the Playground app to notify parents if early pick up is necessary.

Other Weather Procedures (Hurricane/Tornadoes)

Children will have a bad weather drill 1 time a year.

In the event of a hurricane or tornado:

- The children will be divided into areas where there are no windows or doors: the teacher resource room, the bathrooms, and/ or the hallway between the sanctuary and the large hall.
- Your child's teachers will always be with your child.
- Staff members will use cell phones to contact parents with pick up information. Please **do not call** the school; you will be notified as soon as possible.

Crisis Policy (Lock-down)

Children will have a lock-down drill 4 times a year.

If a state of emergency is declared that directly affects St. Mary's, the following plan would be put into effect:

- Our buildings would be locked down immediately.
- If necessary, the children would be moved to a safe place within the building.

- One of your child's teachers would always be with your child. At no time would your child be unsupervised.
- Staff members would use cell phones to begin calling parents so you would know when and where to pick up your child. If you are unable to pick up your child, you should have alternate plans.
- We have an action plan with Second Baptist Church if we need to relocate. They have agreed to use their buses for relocation purposes only.

In the event of any emergency at school, the Director or the Rector of the church will be responsible for any media contact. Should the Director or Rector be unavailable, the Church Office Administrator will be designated as the spokesperson for the school. We will aim to keep you updated throughout any emergency event through text messaging on the Playground app.

Prolonged Closure Due to Emergency or by Government Officials:

A. If flood, fire, wind, hail, hurricane, tornado, or similar severe weather event prevents St. Mary's Episcopal School from conducting normal activities, or if, in the judgment of the Director, or pursuant to order from an insurance official, building inspector or fire official, that a similar event caused sufficient damage to the facilities to result in the staff and students being unable to safely remain in, at, or have access to the facilities, the St. Mary's Episcopal School Director, in consultation with the rector of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, shall close St. Mary's Episcopal School until such time as the facilities can be safely re-opened.

B. If St. Mary's Episcopal School or St. Mary's Episcopal Church must close due to a health emergency, including, but not limited to, the outbreak of any contagious illness, sickness, bacteria, virus, or disease, or any epidemic/pandemic, as declared by government officials, then St. Mary's Episcopal School shall remain closed until the appropriate officials decide St. Mary's Episcopal School can resume normal activities.

C. If St. Mary's Episcopal School is closed under paragraph A or B for 30 consecutive school days or less, then tuition and related fees shall not be subject to refund or adjustment and shall remain fully due and payable. If St. Mary's Episcopal School is closed under paragraph A or B for more than 30 consecutive school days, but less than 60 consecutive school days, then tuition shall be prorated and a partial cash adjustment (or a credit applied, if requested) as the Director of the school in consultation with the school Board of Trustees, may decide. If St. Mary's School is closed under paragraph A or B for 60 consecutive school days or more, then tuition and fees shall be refunded for the portion of tuition and fees allocated to the remaining part of the session occurring after the 60th school day.

Early Morning Drop-off - 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM

St. Mary's will offer an early morning drop-off for children in the three, four, and JK and kindergarten classes the second week of school. All children must be **escorted into the building, helped to hang up their belongings, and then signed in** by the office. A teacher will be on duty to care for the students who are dropped off early. **All children who arrive before their designated carpool time must be taken to early morning drop off. Reservations should be made at least 24 hours in advance through the school office. In an emergency, you may bring your child the morning of, and**

childcare will be available. There is a \$12 per day fee. You will receive a bill at the end of each month.

Evaluation

At the end of the school year, parents will be invited and encouraged to evaluate St. Mary's and its effectiveness in meeting the children's and family needs. You will be sent a survey in early May (this may be in the form of an online survey) that should be returned before the final day of school. A summary of the gathered information will be compiled and provided for parents. This information will be used to further improve the quality of the St. Mary's School experience. Parent input about the school is also welcome throughout the year. Please email the Director/Assistant Director with any suggestions on ways that we can improve. Your suggestions may be submitted in writing as anonymous, however, if it is one that we use, we would love to give you credit!

Please let the Director/Assistant Director know immediately whenever there are concerns about the school's operation.

Extended Day

(Please use the Playground App. to sign up for Extended Day activities)

- **After School Enrichment (3 day, 4 day, and Anders JK – potty-trained only!)**
Beginning **September**, we will offer after school enrichment from 12:00 to 12:30 p.m. (this end time will vary). The After-School Enrichment program will run for 8 to 10 weeks at a time throughout the school year and will include activities such as ballet, soccer, tennis, golf, music, art, cooking, puppetry and music/movement. Online sign-up is required for outside vendors.
- **Lunch/ Stay and Play**
After School Enrichment children, may bring a healthy lunch (we are a nut-free environment) and eat once the class has ended and will participate in Stay and Play until 1:45 p.m. There is a separate fee for this. Late pick-up policy will apply. **In the fall, 3-day children may stay with the approval of the Director.**

Family Participation

St. Mary's is a community that actively encourages parental participation. In addition to allowing parents to regularly participate in classroom/school activities, we encourage families to participate in the following:

- Grand friend's Day - during the week of Thanksgiving, we invite our grand friends (grandparents or a special adult friend other than our parents) to visit us. On this day, the children will share some songs and display their artwork for all to see. Parents are welcome, too.
- JK/K Nativity - On December 20th, we invite our JK/K families and our preschool children to attend a special nativity program performed by our JK/K students.
- Donuts with Dads – This is a special time for each child and their dad (a male substitute is appropriate). The classrooms are open, and each teacher plans a special time of fun for the children and dads (a grandfather or uncle is welcome as a substitute!). This activity is provided in the morning before school so that you may choose whether to come.

- Moms and Muffins – Each spring, mothers (or a female substitute) are invited to join their child’s class for a special tea of honor. Special treats are provided, and the children usually sing a song or two to welcome their guests.
- Spring Carnival – This is our major fundraiser for the year. We encourage all to participate. The event includes a Silent Auction, games, food and family fun. This is a great time to introduce your friends and extended family to our school community.

“Being Green”

We would like to encourage our children, teachers, and our families to be resourceful in the use of limited resources. Some of the practices we continue include:

- Using recyclable materials when we can (our labels for children’s personal things will be made from recyclable materials)
- Bringing water bottles from home for snack time
- Electronic billing
- Online newsletters and communication

If you have other ideas to encourage this practice, please let us know.

Facility

Our school is situated in the newest part of St. Mary’s Episcopal Church. The children have weekly use of our Block Room (a multi-purpose room that is also used for rainy day play and special events) and attend chapel in the church sanctuary. Outdoor play takes place on our courtyard play area, our two playgrounds in the school/church yard, and our nature trail. Teachers also have access to the state-of-the-art-kitchen on our premises.

Field Trips

There are field trips planned for our JK/K students. We encourage parents to attend these trips and require at least one adult per 2 children. Siblings may also attend. Other classes may schedule an off-campus trip. For the younger children, each child must be accompanied by an adult.

Health Policies

- **All students and staff members will have a Medical Form on file based on a current physical exam; the children’s form will include an up-to-date list of immunizations.**
All students attending St. Mary’s School must present documentary proof of immunizations. As a private institution we do not accept religious or medical exemptions from immunizations.
Virginia State Law requires that the form be on file at the school prior to the student’s first day.

- The health and well being of your child are of primary importance at St. Mary's Episcopal School. Therefore, it is critical that parents and teachers work together to prevent the spread of communicable diseases and illnesses.

Children should be kept at home when they experience the following symptoms:

1. **Temperature at or above 100 degrees within 24 hours of the school day. Please do not administer Tylenol for a fever and send your child to school.**
2. **Vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours of the school day**
3. **Thick nasal discharge, yellow or green in color**
4. **Mouth sores with drooling**
5. **Rash with fever**
6. **Heavy bronchial cough**
7. **Strep throat**
8. **Chickenpox**
9. **Impetigo**
10. **Any eye inflammation or discharge/conjunctivitis**
11. **Sore throat or enlarged glands**
12. **Earache or discharge from ear**
13. **Head lice**
14. **Scabies**
15. **Covid-19**

***Children who have been ill with fevers, strep, etc. usually need a day or two of rest before returning to the activity level of preschool**

- Please notify the school of any contagious diseases your child may contract. We particularly need to know about **Covid-19, head lice, chicken pox, and measles**. In these cases, it will be important to let other families know of these illnesses (through printed materials) so that they may be alert to symptoms in their children. At the discretion of the director, some contagious diseases will require a doctor's note to return to the school setting. **Any child diagnosed with Covid-19 will be required to have a doctor's note to return to school.**
- **Each day as the children arrive at school, there will be a health inspection completed by the classroom teacher or director.** If the adult observes any symptoms related to illness, you will be asked to come get your child and take him or her home.
- **Should your child become ill at school, he or she will be separated from his classmates and kept in the school office until a parent can return to school to pick him or her up.** An illness report must be completed and signed by the teacher and parent.

The health of our children and teachers are very important. Please make every effort to adhere to these important policies.

Helmets

The children ride trikes and scooter boards on a regular basis. If you desire for your child to wear a helmet when riding, please make sure there is one in his or her bag each day or it can be left on the child's hook in the hallway. Like all items from home, please label the helmet with the child's first and last name.

Holiday Celebrations

We will celebrate traditional holidays throughout the school year. Although we do not completely exclude Santa and the Easter Bunny, we do approach holidays from a Christian perspective, particularly at Christmas and Easter. If your family has any unique ways to celebrate the holidays (traditions, etc.) that you would like to share with the children, please let us know in advance so that we can plan a time for you to visit.

Hours of Operation

The school is open five days a week, Monday through Friday within the designated school year. School hours are 8:45 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. We offer extended day hours throughout the year on certain days of the week. These days will be listed periodically throughout the school year.

Insurance

St. Mary's Episcopal School has public liability insurance through The Church Insurance Company.

Lost and Found

A basket for lost and found items is in the school office. Please check with the classroom teacher and the office if you are missing any clothing items. To avoid losing items, **please make sure your child's things are labeled properly, with first and last name.**

Medication

For any medication to be administered at school, there must be a completed medication consent on file in the school office. This form must be signed by the child's pediatrician to be valid.

Epi - Pens

A form must be completed **and renewed every 6 months (as per state law)** if your child has a prescription for an epi-pen. Teachers are trained to administer epi-pens. The epi-pen will always remain with your child's teacher. Any use of the epi-pen will be recorded in the school office. The school will remind you when your child's epi-pen is close to expiration. We expect parents to provide a current epi-pen and form for use at school. **The school cannot provide an epi-pen for your child. It must come from a prescription from a certified medical doctor.**

Diaper Ointment/Lotion

To apply diaper ointment and lotion, prescription and non-prescription, (per State requirement) on your child, we must have a medication form completed and kept on file. A written log must be kept in the classroom.

Other Medication

Other medication, prescription and over the counter, will be administered at the director's discretion. The director will not administer the initial dosage of medication. The parent must provide written instructions that are consistent with labeling on medication or doctor's note and include medication name, dosage, time and date medicine is to be given. A written log will be kept showing amount and time the medicine was given. Medicine will be stored in the director's office in a locked cabinet and will only be administered by the director. Medicine must not be expired.

Nannies/Sitters

If you have a regular sitter or a nanny, you must fill out a Caregiver Authorization form. It is important to have updated and accurate information on file related to who will be bringing your child to and from school. We will check the identification of unfamiliar persons who come to pick up your child. The child will not be put in the car with anyone unless the name is on file at the school, and the parents have given permission for the person to pick the child up from school. We ask that any regular care providers for your child display the carpool number in the front window of the car.

Nature Trail

Our beautiful nature trail/outdoor classroom is available to your child's class every day. This space is also available for you and your family to enjoy during off hours. Be mindful that creatures live in the woods, and you must be cautious when supervising your own children in this area or in any other play area of the church. We have had fox, deer, snake and bee sightings.

Office Hours

The school office will be open daily from 8:00 to 2:45 p.m. If you need to report a change in your schedule, a family emergency, or anything else related to your child, please leave word on our voice mail @ 784-2049 or contact us on the Playground App. We will be checking the voicemail several times daily. Mrs. Rawls may be reached by cell, (804)833-9422 during other times if you need assistance.

Outdoor Play

Weather permitting, we will go outside every day. We have a variety of outdoor spaces that allow for extending classroom activities into the natural environment. In addition to our two playgrounds, the children will also have an opportunity to garden and to explore our nature trail. We often use an open space near our building to play soccer, t-ball, or parachute games. We value opportunities for children to embrace the joys of nature and their surroundings.

Payments

Payments may be made through the website as a Paypal payment with a fee of 3.5% being assessed. Payments may also be sent in the form of a check through the child's folder system or mailed to the school at 12291 River Road, Richmond, Virginia 23238. If you pay by cash, please bring the payment directly to the school office. If you are unable to make payments, please contact the director to make additional arrangements. If payments are not made for 2 consecutive months, you will be asked to withdraw your child from school. **It is preferred that payments are not presented in the carpool line.**

Returned checks will be assessed a fee of \$40.00.

Parent Resources

In addition to the memos that you will receive from the school, there is an updated list in the office and on the website of resources for parents. This includes speech and language specialists, behavioral specialists, public school resources, health resources, etc. Please check with the director should you need any assistance in finding help for your child or your family. A small lending library with parent resources is also available.

Playground Safety

Please help us to keep your children (including siblings) safe by observing our playground rules **after hours** as well as during the school program.

- Children should always be accompanied by an adult when on the playground
- Children should not be allowed to climb on the roofs of the houses, stand on top of the play equipment, or stand on the fence
- The sandbox must be covered upon leaving the playground
- During our school day, our **playgrounds** are used only by our preschoolers and kindergarteners, unless special permission has been granted from the Director/Assistant Director.

Room Parent Committee

Each classroom will have 1 or 2 room parents. Throughout the year they will be responsible for helping to plan and implement some of our schoolwide activities. Room parents will also be responsible for planning class parties and encouraging participation in school events.

School Directory

On our website, we provide a school directory of our students' names, addresses and phone numbers. If you do not wish to be included in the directory, please make sure that is noted on your agreement form.

School Pictures

In the fall a photographer will take individual school pictures. In the spring, we will take a group photograph of each class. **Each photographer has their own billing process. Please read your payment information carefully.**

Snacks

We are a nut-free school. Please make sure that you read all labels for nuts and nut oils. **DO NOT** send peanut butter or items that contain any type of nut for a snack or for lunch. We will send home the unopened snack/lunch with nuts and provide your child with an alternative snack, if you mistakenly send one. There are some highly allergic children who cannot risk even sitting next to nut products.

Each day the children will have a mid-morning snack. Parents of the 2-day twos classes will be assigned a week to provide a group snack for the children in the class. All other children will bring their own snack each day. **Please label your child's snack with his or her name. We are promoting independence at snack time so please do not send containers that your child has difficulty opening (each teacher may have age related suggestions.)**

All children will be given water to drink during snack time. Each child should bring a cup or water bottle from home (**labeled with his or her name**) to be used for water. These will be sent home for washing. **Please do not send additional drinks for your child unless requested by the teacher.**

Sometimes preschoolers and kindergarteners will be making/cooking a snack at school. Parents will be asked to help with the ingredients for preparing these snacks. Every effort will be made to include ingredients that all children can eat (even those with allergies). For those who have allergies, parents may send an alternative snack for cooking day or the school will have crackers available for the child. We plan for our cooking times to allow us to incorporate foods from other cultures represented in our student population.

Please send healthy snacks to school.

Healthy snack suggestions:

Apples

Bananas

Raisins

Yogurt

Cheese

Muffins

Pretzels

Graham crackers

Fresh vegetables

Hummus

Crackers (including Goldfish)

****Please try to avoid cookies and candy for snacks.**

Social Media Policy

The use of social media has become a very important and necessary tool for communication. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn are a few of the many ways to communicate over the internet. As a precaution, St. Mary's has developed the following guidelines.

- Please do not distribute any information that might be deemed personal about any students, including pictures of children (other than your own) where they can be identified and/or use their names without written permission granted by the parent.
- Please do not share personal information of other teachers, parents, or students such as full names, addresses or phone numbers without written permission from said individuals.
- Please do not post any negative information about the school on any form of social media. Instead, bring your concerns to the St. Mary's office.
- Above all, use good judgment when posting anything related to the school, respect the privacy of our St. Mary's families and staff, and make sure you understand copyright and fair use laws.

Special Event Days

During the year, there are several special events planned (i.e. pictures, parties, puppet shows). **If these events do not fall on your child's school day, your child is invited to attend the event.** The Two's classes will be informed of any special events throughout the year. If you bring your child to a special event on a day that he or she does not attend school, we ask that you stay with your child during the activity and take him or her home afterwards.

Student File

Each child should have the following information on file with St. Mary's Episcopal:

- Application/re-registration
- Contract
- Student Health form (required by state)
- Agreement
- Copy of birth certificate (required by state)
- Information sheet
- Grandparent form
- Emergency contact card

Staff Qualifications

Your child's teachers and assistant teachers are well qualified for providing your children with a developmentally appropriate preschool education. Our lead teachers have college degrees in education or a related field and/or have many years of experience working with children. Our assistant teachers have college degrees and/or 2 or more years' experience with working with young children. The director, at her discretion, may hire a

teacher or assistant teacher who has not met the stated qualifications. In addition to training in CPR and First Aid, standard precautions, child abuse, and use of the fire extinguisher, our teaching staff receives training (20 hours) throughout the school year in topics that relate to working with young children. All hiring and termination of employees follow non-discrimination laws.

Tote Bags

It is much easier for the children to carry a tote bag instead of a backpack. We have tote bags with the St. Mary's Episcopal School logo for sale. The cost of each bag is \$12.00.

Volunteers Other than Parents

We welcome volunteers other than our St. Mary's parents to participate in our program under the following conditions:

- Must always be under the direct supervision of an employee of the school
- Must participate in a volunteer orientation program that includes health and safety, child abuse, emergency procedures and child guidance
- Must have a criminal background check at a cost of \$10.00 per person (if volunteering on a regular basis throughout the year.)

Please make sure that you sign-in at the office when entering the school so that we may keep track of who is in our building.

Withdrawal/Refunds

When enrolling a child at St. Mary's Episcopal School, according to the **Student Contract**, it is understood that each child is enrolled for the entire school year and therefore responsible for the year's tuition. The tuition has been determined based on the cost of providing quality services including materials, supplies, equipment and a well-qualified staff. If for any reason, the child is withdrawn from the school by the parents, the school in its sole discretion may decide to refund tuition payments or waive future payments. This action will not be considered unless the family has given **30 days written notice**. No refunds or tuition waivers will be granted after **March 31** of any given school year.