

# **St. Mark's Preschool New School Year 2020-2021 Policies during Covid-19 pandemic**

St. Mark's Preschool and School Age Care begins our new 2020-2021 school year on Monday, August 31, 2020. We know it has been unusual and uncertain times with difficulties for many. We want everyone to know we care about every child, every adult and every family at St. Mark's Preschool and in our community!

We begin the new 2020-2021 school year with some new changes. They are;

St. Mark's Preschool has health and safety protocols during Covid-19 to help protect children, families and school staff. By sending your child to St. Mark's you are certifying you agree to follow these protocols. This form is required to be signed and returned to

St. Mark's Preschool before entering on the first day. We are committed to the health and safety of children, families and school staff!

We know this is a new way of being in an early learning center and school age care. We can assure you that children are having a happy day with classroom friends and their teacher! There is lots of laughter, play, learning and social-emotional care! Your child's teacher will share the day on Class Dojo- an app where we share photos, lesson plans, classroom activities and classroom news. You are also able to communicate with your child's teacher on Class Dojo. The office is always available to talk together with you at 941-484-8707. Open and ongoing communications is important to us all!

## **Family Drop Off and Pick-Up:**

- Morning drop off is from 7:15-8:45 a.m. within 15 minutes of your scheduled time- and no later than 8:45 a.m. Pick up is 3:30-5:15p.m. within 15 minutes of your scheduled time and no later than 5:15 p.m. Half day pickup is noon and the 3 day VPK program is 2:15.
- Families will pull into the arrival and departing car lane and remain in your car until you are in front of the entryway. At this point turn off your car, help your child out of the car and gather the lunch and snack zip lock type bag you packed.
- Holding your child's hand walk to the front door where school staff will assist you and welcome your child. Parent and child must wear a mask. Children over the age of 2 years will wear a mask going to the classroom and at the end of the day going home. School-age children will at times be required to wear a mask except when 6 foot distancing. A note from your physician is needed if your child cannot wear a mask due to health conditions. Please make sure your child is wearing a fresh daily child size mask.
- To keep the car line moving families need to arrive at the time signed up for. If you have an emergency or other important situation you may arrive at a different time and we appreciate a call from you. Please be aware having assigned arrival times will help the car line move quicker and be respecting of every families scheduled pick-up and drop off time. To keep the line moving check in staff will have minimal conversation. Parents, caretakers, and family members will not be allowed in the school. Everyone must remain in cars until at the entryway.

- School staff will take your child's temperature and ask the parent/caretaker a few health questions. Children who are ill or been given medicine in prior 24 hours are not allowed in the school.
- Parents, caretakers, and family members will return to their car at once and leave the parking lot. You can send messages to your child's teacher on class dojo or call the office for further communication.
- Children may not bring anything into the school except their packed lunch. All toys are to remain at home or in your car.
- At the end of the day drive into the same car lane. Please put a card with your child's name and teacher's name on window or windshield so we know you have arrived. When you get to the door stay in your car until we bring out your child. You must shut off your car and safely buckle your child in. Please be patient as grandparents and parents with Toddlers and 2 year old children take longer to buckle their child in their car.
- If you arrive late due to an emergency, from an appointment or a traffic jam you will be asked to call the school office ahead of time so someone can assist you. The same procedure as above will be followed. Expect delays may occur outside of the posted arrival and pick up times. School Age Children
  - School Age children will be brought to the overflow parking lot in the morning where St. Mark's bus will be. There will be a short family car line as there is only 10-12 families needing before school care. This will alleviate children from missing the bus. We need to leave between 7:30-7:35 to be on time for Garden Elementary and Venice Elementary School. For the families with a preschool child a teacher at the bus will walk them over to the preschool and sign them in.
- The school is open from 7:15 a.m.-5:15 p.m. Our hours may change back to our usual hours later in the school year. We expect parents to arrive on time.

### **Child Health Check**

- Children with a temperature of 100.4, coughing, shortness of breath, sore throat, muscle aches will not be able to attend and must be out until temperature free and symptom free for 48 hours. If you give your child medicine to reduce a temperature, they are still sick and must remain out from school. Your child may also return to St. Mark's Preschool and School Age Care with a physician's note that they are free of communicable disease and that their return poses no risk to the child or to others.
- We are following St. Mark's Preschool policy, Health Department and CDC guidelines. St. Mark's Preschool retains the right to exclude a child if a physician's note contradicts St. Mark's Preschool policies or is not in the best interest of the child or staff.
- If your child becomes sick while at school, you will be notified, and your child must be picked up immediately (within a half hour). Any child that is not picked up will not be able to return to school. We must be able to reach you by phone or text.
- Families must notify St. Mark's Preschool office immediately if they are aware of any person diagnosed with covid-19 that their child or they themselves have had contact.

### **Lunch, snacks, and other items**

- Children's lunches need to be packed following [MyPlate.gov](https://www.myplate.gov) guidelines. In addition to your child's lunch 2 healthy snacks must be included, one for morning and one for afternoon. Please pack more rather than less in case your child is extra hungry. Please place in zip lock type bag then this bag with bottled water unless your child's teacher specifies otherwise. Toddlers may

bring in Sippy cups.. Your child's lunch must be labeled so as not to confuse with another child's lunch. Do not pack an ice pack as lunches will be refrigerated. We will also supply water throughout the day.

- In a large labeled zip lock type bag your child may bring a small blanket. At this time we are laundering once a week. Absolutely no stuffed animals or any other toy or item may be brought into the school.
- Every child needs a complete set of extra clothes in a labeled zip lock type bag. Younger children need multiple clothes. Toddlers need wipes, diapers put in a labeled grocery bag.
- Sunscreen needs to be applied to all children before coming into the school every day. Older children can reapply in the afternoons.

### **Communicating with Director, Administrators and Teachers**

- All families will be signed up on Class Dojo for communications between teachers and families. Your child's teacher can respond at naptime/rest time and at the end of the day. Families are required to log into Class Dojo and respond to teacher's communications.
- If you need to speak with anyone in the office or have an emergency call the school at [941-484-8707](tel:941-484-8707). We are always happy to talk with you! We rather have you share anything that you are concerned about and find solutions or even just to chat about how things are going.

### **Cleaning, Disinfecting and Safety Protocols**

- All children's and staff hands will be washed at once upon arrival to the school. In addition, we will be washing hands multiple times a day including after being outdoors, using the rest room, before eating and other times. This has been our hand washing policy for years and follows Health Department policy.
- School staff will be cleaning the school throughout the day. Tables, doorknobs, toys, and classroom supplies will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day and at the end of the day.
- School staff wear face masks all day long except when outside and during naptime.

### **Tuition**

- Tuition is due on the first of each month. A late fee of \$25. is applied on the 5th of the month and your child may not return until tuition is paid in full.
- Tuition Scholarship is limited. If you are having financial difficulties please contact the school director at 484-8707. We know these are difficult times and we are always looking for resources to help for families.
- Call School Readiness (941) 556-1600 to see if your family qualifies for tuition aid.

### **Social-Emotional Well Being**

- All the teachers and staff of St. Mark's Preschool and School Age Care are aware of and sensitive to children's social-emotional well-being, especially after being homebound for several months. Some children may have transition difficulties while other children will be excited to be with their friends again and return as if they were at school all along.
- We will be providing lots of social-emotional support to children, individualizing for each child's needs. We will be communicating regularly with families including posting photos and class activities on Class Dojo. It is a free app.

- The teachers have planned lots of fun and learning activities including many social-emotional activities for throughout the school year. If you have activities your family enjoy at home, please share with us!
- Thank you for your patience as we begin new policies and procedures in place for the safety, health, and well-being of your child. Any suggestions from families are welcomed- please share with the school office!

We are striving to keep children, families and staff healthy, safe and happy. We expect that families do the same to keep everyone healthy and safe. It certainly is a mutual responsibility that we all keep out of respect for one and all! We recognize everyone has differing views while needing to follow our stated protocols.

We are grateful to be open and to have your child be with us. Providing a safe, caring early childhood center where you child can learn, grow and play is our focus. If at any times you would like to chat with Barbara Levesque, Director, St. Mark's Preschool, please call 941-484-8707

A few thoughtful quotes -

“A child must know that he is a miracle, that since the beginning of the world there hasn't been, and until the end of the world there will not be, another child like him.” ~ Pablo Casals

“I really love being human. But some days I really wish I could be fairy.” ~ Greta, age 4

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” ~ William Butler Yeats

“It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.”

~ Albert Einstein

“Children have real understanding only of that which they invent themselves.” ~ Jean Piaget

Lastly, we are happy to have your child and family at St. Mark's Preschool and School-age Care! May we all know God's presence and support in our lives!