



St. Paul's Christian School

Student/Parent Handbook 2025-2026



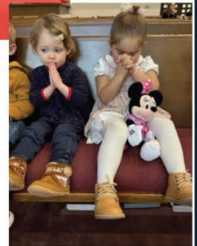
Caring...



Learning...



Growing...





St. Paul's Christian School

Student/Parent Handbook 2025-2026

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St. Paul's Christian School

Rev. 12/22/2024

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OUR VISION

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Our vision is to provide high quality early childhood education in a Christian environment that fosters a lifelong love of learning about God's world through the development of the whole child.

OUR MISSION

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St. Paul's Christian School's mission is to emphasize Christian principles and teachings as children interact and participate in activities centered on living and learning. We facilitate children's spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional, and social growth by providing a creative and nurturing environment led by skilled and creative teachers. Our program incorporates Christian curriculum, along with purposeful play-based curriculum (Beyond Centers & Circle Time), to enhance each lesson. We foster a sense of community through encouraging interaction among parents, students, school staff, church congregation and local organizations.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

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St. Paul's Christian School is committed to the developmental needs of children, and encourages growth in all areas: physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual. We believe play is the work of children and the foundation of a good school and we recognize its value for all children. We strive to provide each child with a foundation which furthers learning and where a maturing faith can grow.

Our school is a happy place where a child will learn to live, work, and play with other children of his or her own age. Our classes stress learning through play and socialization through a wealth of "hands on" activities. Time for art, music, outdoor play, story time and group activities are part of each day's program.

We consider our students to be "gifts from God" that are temporarily in our care. We hope to make a difference in their lives and impress upon them that who they are makes a difference in the world.

OUR GOALS

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- Provide a safe and loving Christian learning environment, along with satisfying experiences and loving relationships that communicate the love of Jesus.
- Accept each child at his developmental stage and facilitate his continuing growth in abstract thinking, problem solving, and emotional development.
- Strongly encourage and facilitate parental involvement by recognizing that parents are the essential partners in children's education.
- Minister to students and their families through communication, availability, encouragement, and community involvement.

OUR BEGINNING

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St. Paul's United Methodist Church (SPUMC) began the ministry of St. Paul's Christian School in 1978 because of its desire to serve the families in the community and surrounding areas. The SPUMC Mission Statement says a lot about who we are and what we do:

As a Christian family of faith, Saint Paul's affirms God's love by transforming lives, connecting generations, impacting our community & world, and making disciples for Jesus Christ.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

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St. Paul's Christian School admits students of any race, color, national, or ethnic origin to the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

St. Paul's Christian School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school administered programs.

KINDERGARTEN ADMISSIONS

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Your child's educational needs represent one of the most important decisions you'll make. We want to take the time to ensure you make the best decision based on your child's particular needs. Thus, student admissions are based on a personal interview, previous VPK test results, admission screening test, and your child being a St. Paul's Christian School "Saint" for the morning to ensure this is the best learning environment for your child.

The admission process begins with the registration application that will be filled out online. After it is received, the director will contact you and set up a time for your child to come in and be a "Saint" for the morning and for the admission screening test. After that step has taken place, we will review the application and required academic requirements and notify you of your acceptance status.

Attendance matters and every minute of learning is important. Please make sure that if your child is healthy and able to come to school each day, that they arrive on time and leave at dismissal. We strive for 100% attendance rate but realize this isn't always the reality. If your child misses more than 20% of the school year, the recommendation may be made that they need to attend Kindergarten again.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY

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Discipline will always be administered to our students with love. In general, corrective discipline is firm, fair, and consistent. It is designed to correct an unacceptable behavior pattern and is administered in such a way as to preserve the child's dignity. Discipline is not associated with food or toileting. Corporal punishment is never used. Procedures such as "time out" or sitting in a "thinking chair" may be used. Time out will never be longer than one minute per year of age of the child.

We recognize that each child is different and needs to be disciplined according to his/her personality and character.

We will strive to cooperate with parents concerning problems that are chronic. If all efforts fail, and a child still requires a disproportionate amount of the teacher's attention and/or is a disruption to the class, the parent may be asked to withdraw the child.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The policies and rules of the school are established by the Board of Directors (BOD). The BOD meets monthly during the school year. BOD meetings are open to all parents of the school and members of St. Paul's United Methodist Church. BOD meetings are normally held on the 2nd Thursday of the month in the church narthex.

REGISTRATION FEE

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A **NON-REFUNDABLE** registration fee for each class will be set by the School Board of Directors each year. This fee will accompany each application and will be payable to St. Paul's Christian School. Class assignments will be made by random selection.

TUITION

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Tuition for each class will be set by the School Board of Directors each year. The first tuition payment is due August 1st and is non-refundable after the first day of school. The last tuition payment will be due May 1st.

Tuition is due on the first (1st) of each month. At St Paul's, we utilize an automated withdrawal system to deduct your monthly tuition obligation directly from your banking institution. You are required to provide your banking institutions routing number and your personal account number along with your authorization to deduct from your account. The deductions will take place on the first (1st) of every month. If the 1st lands on a weekend day or holiday, the deduction will take place the following business day. If your payment is declined by your banking institution for any reason, you are responsible for all fees incurred by St Paul's Christian School.

TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS

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Partial tuition scholarships may be available. Application information may be obtained from the school director. The Tuition Scholarship Committee makes all decisions regarding scholarship applications. Applications are strictly confidential. The committee may adjust the amount of the scholarship if circumstances warrant.

CLASS AGE REQUIREMENTS

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- **Kindergarten:** Your child must be five (5) by September 1st of the year in which he/she is to attend. In special circumstances, the Director may use his/her discretion.
- **Advanced K-4:** Your child must be five (5) by December 31st of the year in which he/she is to attend.
- **All Four-Year Old Classes:** Your child must be four (4) on or before September 1st of the year in which he/she is to attend.
- **All Three-Year Old Classes:** Your child must be three (3) on or before September 1st of the year in which he/she is to attend.
- **All Young Three-Year Old Classes:** Your child must be three (3) after September 1st and before March 31st of the year in which he/she is to attend.
- **All Two-Year Old Classes:** Your child must be two (2) before December 31st of the year in which he/she is to attend.

FUNDRAISERS

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Several fundraisers are conducted each year. Each family is asked to participate in at least one of these major events as it is the fund-raisers that help us to keep tuition costs down. Also, we believe it is important for families to be involved in their child's educational experience here at St. Paul's.

CURRICULUM & CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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The school philosophy and curriculum, *Beyond Centers and Circle Time* will be maintained and enriched using **age-appropriate** centers. In addition, the Christian Curriculum will be included in the regular classroom program and Christian education themes will be interwoven into the curriculum in all classes. This curriculum will be enhanced through the music curriculum, the teacher's use of white boards, crafts, story activities, and a weekly chapel experience.

All classrooms will include centers. These centers include dramatic play, blocks, puzzles, manipulatives, books, art and sand/water play.

HEALTH

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We pray that your sweet preschoolers will all be well during the school year, but as you know sickness does occur. If your preschooler is experiencing any of the following things listed below, we ask that you keep him/her home for at least 24 hours. For example: If your child vomits at 9:00 am and again at 11:00 am- the 24 hours would begin from 11:00 am. Green nasal discharge (not allergy related) and/or widespread rash

- Toothache, nausea/vomiting, fever over 100°
F diarrhea
- Severe or uncontrollable coughing
- Head lice, earache, headache, impetigo,
- Sore throat
- Pink eye or conjunctivitis ringworm
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth (Please keep your child home until their sores are scabbed over and not weeping).

If your child exhibits any of the above symptoms at any point throughout the school day, we will call you and you can pick your child up in the school office. Your child is not allowed to return to school the following day. They can return when they are symptom free for 24 hours without the use of medication.

If your physician diagnoses your child with a communicable disease, please let the office know and we will handle it in a confidential manner with the teacher and classroom. Our classrooms and toys are disinfected each day. We love partnering with you to keep our school healthy! Thank you for all you do.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

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Conferences will be held at the request of the teacher or parents, and/or on the two scheduled conference days during the year.

The first six weeks is an adjustment period. During this time the teacher may recommend to the Board withdrawal of a child if the child is not adjusting to school, or if the child is not fully potty trained. Potty training issue refers only to children in the older 3-year-old classes and up.

The first six weeks is an adjustment period. During this time the teacher may recommend to the Board withdrawal of a child if the child is not adjusting to school, or if the child is not fully potty trained. Potty training issue refers only to children in the older 3-year-old classes and up.

DAILY SCHEDULE

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Preschool classes are scheduled from 8:30 am to 11:45 am. Advanced K-4 class is scheduled from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Kindergarten is scheduled from 8:15-1:30 pm.

Please walk your child to their classroom and wait for the school bell. Parents should not bring their children into the classroom earlier as this is the teacher's planning and preparation time. **Dismissal is at 11:45/1:00/1:30. PLEASE BE PROMPT.** All children will be picked up at their classrooms. Please wait until you hear the dismissal bell.

Children who are not picked up by 11:45 am will join "Lunch Buddies" and a fee of \$12 will be charged.

Children will NOT be allowed to leave school with anyone except their parent, carpool drivers, or persons designated by a signed, written note to the teacher. A verbal message from your child *will NOT be accepted*. Teachers will check identification of persons picking up children.

LUNCH BUDDIES operates from 11:45 am until 1:30 pm daily

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- Children are welcome to join Lunch Buddies after school until 1:30 pm daily.
- Children will need to bring a lunch and something to drink.
- Parents must sign the child up in advance online via the link found on the Parent Info section of the website. All students signed up for the day will be charged for the day unless their name is removed online before 9:30 am.
- The fee for Lunch Buddies is \$12/day, payable via Automatic Draft monthly or paid in the school office in advance.
- Parents are expected to pick up their child promptly at 1:30 pm as all our staff will be leaving campus at that time to pick up their own children at school.
- Starting at 1:35 pm, parents will be charged \$1 per minute until arrival. The late fee must be paid before the child may return to Lunch Buddies.
- If any family has been late 3 times, the child will no longer be permitted to stay for Lunch Buddies. Be sure to impress this policy on family, friends, etc. who may be responsible for picking up children as we will strictly enforce the Lunch Buddy policy.
- There will be no Lunch Buddies on early release days as specified in the calendar.
- The above stated policy for late Lunch Buddy pick-up will also apply to children not picked up on time on early-release days.

PARKING/SECURITY

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Parents should park on the North side of the building when dropping off or picking up children. Please do not drive any closer to the buildings as it endangers students and younger siblings. Please only park in the handicap spot if you have a handicap decal. When pulling into the parking lot please be mindful of all children, as some run and play at pick-up time.

The security fence surrounding the school property is there to protect all children.

The gates will be open between 8:00-8:45 am for drop-off purposes. In the afternoon, the gates will be open from 11:30-12:00, and then again at 12:50-1:30 pm. If you need to pick your child up at a time that the gates are closed, you will need to call the front office at 352-694-4219. Please be sure not to disrupt the classrooms by knocking on a window or a back door to be let in. The administration and staff will be happy to let you in at the gates.

PARENT-TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

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- To facilitate a smooth transition for your child, please bring your child to the classroom door and leave PROMPTLY.
- Each child will bring his/her own snack and drink each day in a lunch box. **No carbonated drinks.**
- Teachers may from time to time ask for a specific snack or food item to coordinate with class activities. Snack time at school is a time for social interaction while providing the child a new source of energy. We encourage healthy snacks.
- Please dress your children in clothing that will allow them to participate in all types of activities comfortably. We recommend shorts/pants, shirts, and sneakers.
- Parents are responsible for making sure that all the child's belongings are labeled with his/her name. Students should not bring toys from home unless the teacher has specified that certain items may be brought for special events.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Withdrawal from St. Paul's Christian School requires a minimum one-month notice. Failure to provide this notice will result in a responsibility of the whole month's tuition. Families wishing to withdraw must complete a written Withdrawal Form indicating the last date of attendance, the reason for withdrawal, and whether they are interested in returning in the future. Withdrawing families give up all rights to their child's spot and the spot will become available to waitlist families and/or the community.

PARENT COMPLAINT PROCEDURE**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Issues involving a class or teacher should be discussed with the teacher first. Make an appointment with or call the teacher after hours. Do not try to discuss the issue when picking up or dropping off your child. If the issue is not resolved, contact the Director. If still not resolved, contact the Personnel Committee Chairperson.

Issues involving the Director should be discussed with the Director first. If the issue is not resolved, contact the Personnel Committee Chairperson.

ANIMALS ON CAMPUS**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Animals at school can provide a valuable learning experience for children, but they cannot be allowed to endanger other students' safety or disrupt their learning. Therefore, prior permission must be obtained from the classroom teacher and director before any animal is brought to school and they must be caged or leashed.

During the year, sometimes animals are brought to help extend the learning, ie, a horse or cow for the farm unit. St. Paul's Christian School will follow DCF Child Care Facility Handbook guidelines which states:

Animals must be properly vaccinated (if a vaccination is available for the specific animal), free from disease, and clean. Animals that are poisonous, venomous, aggressive, or pose a potential threat of harm to children in care are prohibited.

Parents/guardians must be informed in writing of all animals on the premises. Notice may be provided by a conspicuously posted notice or bulletin, policy handbook, parent flier, or a statement included on the enrollment form. Current vaccinations records must be available for review by the licensing authority. No animal may freely roam the indoor/outdoor premises. Animals are prohibited in areas where food is prepared, stored, or served. If animals or birds are kept in classrooms, they shall be caged, and cages must be kept clean.

PARTIES**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Each child's birthday is recognized. You will have the opportunity to provide refreshments on your child's birthday. Because individual party gift bags are discouraged, a parent may present a gift to the classroom. Your child's teacher will have a wish list.

Parents will be given the opportunity to sign-up to coordinate class parties at the beginning of the school year. Each parent will be asked to help (provide refreshments) with one party. The parties are Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and the End of the Year Party (this party will include summer birthdays). Pool parties shall NOT be held during regular school hours or as a school function except for the last day of school.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

In the event of any national or local emergency (such as hurricanes) our school will follow the lead of the Marion County School System. If they dismiss early, we will do the same. If they cancel school, we will do the same. This will make it easy for parents to watch their media sources as needed to make determinations about school schedules. If we are on a Code Red, and our school is ever on lock down, you will be notified immediately by the front office or your child's teacher.

CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Child abuse and /or neglect will not be tolerated by St. Paul's UMC or School. Child abuse is defined as any non-accidental injury, sexual battery, financial or sexual exploitation, or injury to the intellectual or psychological capacity of a person by the parents or other persons responsible for the child's welfare.

Suspected child abuse and/or neglect must be reported to:

Florida Protective Services Systems toll free, 24-hour abuse registry line at 1-800-962-2873.

If the abuse is believed to be from anyone on the school staff, it must be reported immediately to the school director.

The director will follow guidelines set forth by the Florida Department of Children and Families.

If it is believed to be from the school director, it must be reported immediately to the minister of St. Paul's United Methodist Church (352-694-2161).

If it is believed to be by the minister or other member of St. Paul's United Methodist Church Staff, it should also be reported to the North-Central District Superintendent (352-376-6353) and to the chairperson on St. Paul's Staff-Parish committee. (See the church office for the current chairperson).

PRIVACY POLICY**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

If you do not wish to have your child's personal information (address, phone number, birthdate, photo, etc.) shared with other parents or if you do not wish to have photos of your child published on bulletin boards, website, or our Facebook page etc., please notify the office in writing.



2025-2026 TUITION and FEE SCHEDULE

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REGISTRATION FEE \$295 per child. Due with enrollment application.
(applies to Non-VPK students only)

Registration fees are NON-REFUNDABLE.

*Active St. Paul's United Methodist Church Members discounted registration fee is \$195 per child.

TUITION

	<u>Class</u>	<u>Monthly</u>	<u>Yearly</u>
2's, Y3's, 3's	Swing	\$300.00	\$3000.00
2's, Y'3, 3's	Full Week	\$425.00	\$4250.00
VPK*	Full Week	FREE	FREE
Non- VPK 4's	Full Week	\$400.00	\$4000.00
VPK Adv K-4	Full Week	\$175.50	\$1755.00
Non VPK Adv K4	Full Week	\$600.00	\$6000.00
Kindergarten	Full Week	\$675.00	\$6750.00

*Certificate of Eligibility is required for VPK enrollment.

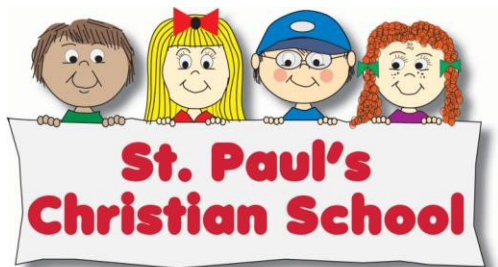
Tuition Payment Options/Schedule

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One yearly payment • 10 monthly payments | <p>DUE 08/01/2025</p> <p>Schedule as follows:</p> |
| <p>Payment #1 – 08/01/2025</p> <p>Payment #2 – 09/01/2025</p> <p>Payment #3 – 10/01/2025</p> <p>Payment #4 – 11/01/2025</p> <p>Payment #5 – 12/01/2025</p> | <p>Payment #6 – 01/01/2026</p> <p>Payment #7 – 02/01/2026</p> <p>Payment #8 – 03/01/2026</p> <p>Payment #9 – 04/01/2026</p> <p>Payment #10 – 05/01/2026</p> |

The tuition fees are NON-REFUNDABLE after the first day of school.

EXTENDED DAY

Early Care	8:00 am - 8:30 am \$4.00
Lunch Buddies	11:45 am - 1:30 pm \$12.00
Adv VPK Lunch Buddies	1:00 pm – 1:30 pm \$4.00



FOOD RELATED ACTIVITIES AND LUNCH POLICIES

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Snacks & Food Related Activities Policy

I understand that on occasion teachers may incorporate food related activities that correspond with curriculum and individual class lesson plans.

I understand that parents are asked to contribute to morning snacks for the entire class. Due to Department of Children and Families (DCF) regulations, these snacks must be store bought and/or made in an approved cooking facility.

Reusable Water Bottle Policy

I understand that my child must bring a reusable water bottle to school each day.

I understand that per DCF regulations my child's water bottle must be clearly labeled with their first and last name.

Lunch Policy

I understand that St. Paul's Christian School does not prepare food and that I must provide a nutritious lunch for my child.

I understand that there is not adequate refrigeration space and per DCF regulations, I must pack my child's lunch in an insulated lunch box with an ice pack to keep the food safe.

I understand that per DCF regulations my child's lunch box must be clearly labeled with their first and last name.

I understand that my child's lunch must meet nutritional guidelines set by the USDA. (We recommend that you use the "My Plate" as a guide to ensure that your child is eating a healthy and nutritious meal. Families not abiding by these guidelines will be notified.)

