

SAECC Parent Handbook

Please read and sign the last page. Return the signed page only with your enrollment packet. Keep the handbook for your reference.

I. INTRODUCTION

We are delighted to welcome you and your child to St. Alban's Early Childhood Center (SAECC). We are confident that your child will have a nurturing and stimulating child care experience with us.

SAECC is economically and ethnically diverse. Our 55 children come to us from all over the DC Metropolitan area and from a wide range of economic, ethnic and religious backgrounds. We also actively seek a mixed group of teachers and staff. Together, we provide an atmosphere in which all individuals are valued and respected. Nurturing and strengthening a sense of self-respect and respect for others is fundamental to our philosophy of education. To support our policy of economic integration of families, we hold a contract with the D.C. Department of Human Services, which partially funds 15 slots to low income families. Our Board of Executive directors and Parents' Association raise funds to supplement tuition for middle income families through three sliding scale slots.

We have recently received re-accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The SAECC curriculum is based on NAEYC standards – the highest in early childhood education. Our educational program includes creative expression, languages, reading readiness, math, science, music, outdoor play and emotional development. During indoor and outdoor play, with carefully selected materials, children establish important foundations for conceptual learning. Children become increasingly independent as they learn to dress themselves, set tables for lunch, serve their own food and drinks and clean up after themselves. They learn about their environment through neighborhood exploration and about the city by taking field trips (mostly on public transportation.).

Each teaching team designs its own curriculum and schedule, with guidance from the Executive director. When you visit the classroom on your child's first day, you will have the opportunity to observe the program, become acquainted with the teachers and ask any questions you might have.

II. HISTORY & DESCRIPTION

St. Alban's Early Childhood Center, Inc. is a licensed, non-denominational child development program, located in St. Alban's Parish, adjacent to the Washington National Cathedral. The Center is located in the parish administration building and the rooms are provided free of charge as a community service. The playground, owned by the National Cathedral, is maintained by our Center. Children are grouped by age and development level. Founded in 1972 by Margaret Sloan, a former parishioner of St. Alban's Church, the Center is a not-for-profit organization guided by a Board of Directors comprised of parents, staff, two St. Alban's Parish representatives, and interested community members from the metro area. The Center has been accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) since 1997.

Funding for the Center comes from tuition, grants, gifts and contracts with the D.C. Office of the State Superintendent of Education and the federally funded Child and Adult Care Food Program.

III. STAFF

Teachers have degrees in Early Childhood, Child Development, and/or Education. Assistant teachers have a Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) or are in the process of obtaining one. All staff members have CPR and First Aid Training. Five staff have certificates in Safe Food Handling Practices. Staff training is continuous. All staff receive a minimum of 30 hours of training per year. Before being hired, all staff must submit an incident free criminal background clearance, three positive references, a positive health report ensuring they are free from any communicable diseases include TB. Staff submit updated clearances annually.

IV. MISSION STATEMENT

St. Alban's Early Childhood Center's (SAECC) mission is to provide high quality educational services using a developmentally appropriate preschool curriculum for a multi-economic and culturally diverse group of young children.

To achieve our mission, the following objectives provide the foundation for which our goals can be met.

- 1. To maintain a student body and staff that reflects the diversity of the greater Washington Metropolitan area.**
 - To maintain and support cultural and linguistic diversity for the student body and the staff
 - To provide spaces for children from families in need
- 2. To provide a high quality, developmentally appropriate, early childhood program.**
 - To provide a curriculum, which is appropriate for young children and is consistent with the way young children learn
 - To provide a clean, safe, stimulating, and secure environment, that allows and encourages children's individuality and creativity
 - To set up a learning environment that fosters growth and competence in all developmental areas
- 3. To promote cultural awareness and appreciation of diversity**
 - To teach children about different cultures within the different areas of the curriculum
 - To maintain and ethnic and cultural diverse environment at the center
- 4. To establish open and beneficial relationships between parents and staff**
 - To communicate with parents about overall program as well as their child's progress and accomplishments
 - To encourage parents to actively participate in the Parents' Association and activities within the program
 - To provide support and learning opportunities regarding parenting issues

IV. PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy behind our curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. Learning requires observing and experimenting to find out how things work and why they work the way they do. Children expand their imaginations creatively through use of various mediums. Through use of real materials, children begin to take their explorations from a concrete level to an abstract level of thinking. Children explore the world around them by using all their senses: touching, tasting, smelling, looking and listening. Our educational curriculum is based upon child-initiated and teacher-facilitated activities. Teachers plan and supervise activities, which enhances children's self-esteem, encourages problem solving, and facilitates language development. We respect children's developmental stages by tailoring activities and expectations to the age, interests and abilities of the individual child. The activities planned for the children, the way the environment is organized, the selection of toys and materials, their daily schedule and the language staff use with the children are all designed to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and to give each child a successful start in school. Above all else, we want children to enjoy their day, make friends and to benefit developmentally from their child care experience.

VI. CURRICULUM

A. THE GOALS

The most important goal of our early childhood curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic life long learners. This means encouraging children to be active and creative explorers who are not afraid to try out their ideas and to think their own thoughts. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident inquisitive learners. We teach them how to learn, not just in preschool, but also throughout life. We allow

them to learn at their own pace and in ways that are best for them. We try to teach them good habits and encourage positive attitudes - particularly a positive sense of self - which will make a difference throughout their lives.

Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development:

- Social:** to help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends, and feel they are part of a group.
- Emotional:** to help children experience pride and self-confidence, develop independence and self-control, and have a positive attitude toward life.
- Cognitive:** to help children become confident learners by letting them try out their own ideas and experience success, and by helping them acquire learning skills, such as the ability to solve problems, ask questions, and use words to describe their ideas, observations and feelings.
- Physical:** to help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do.

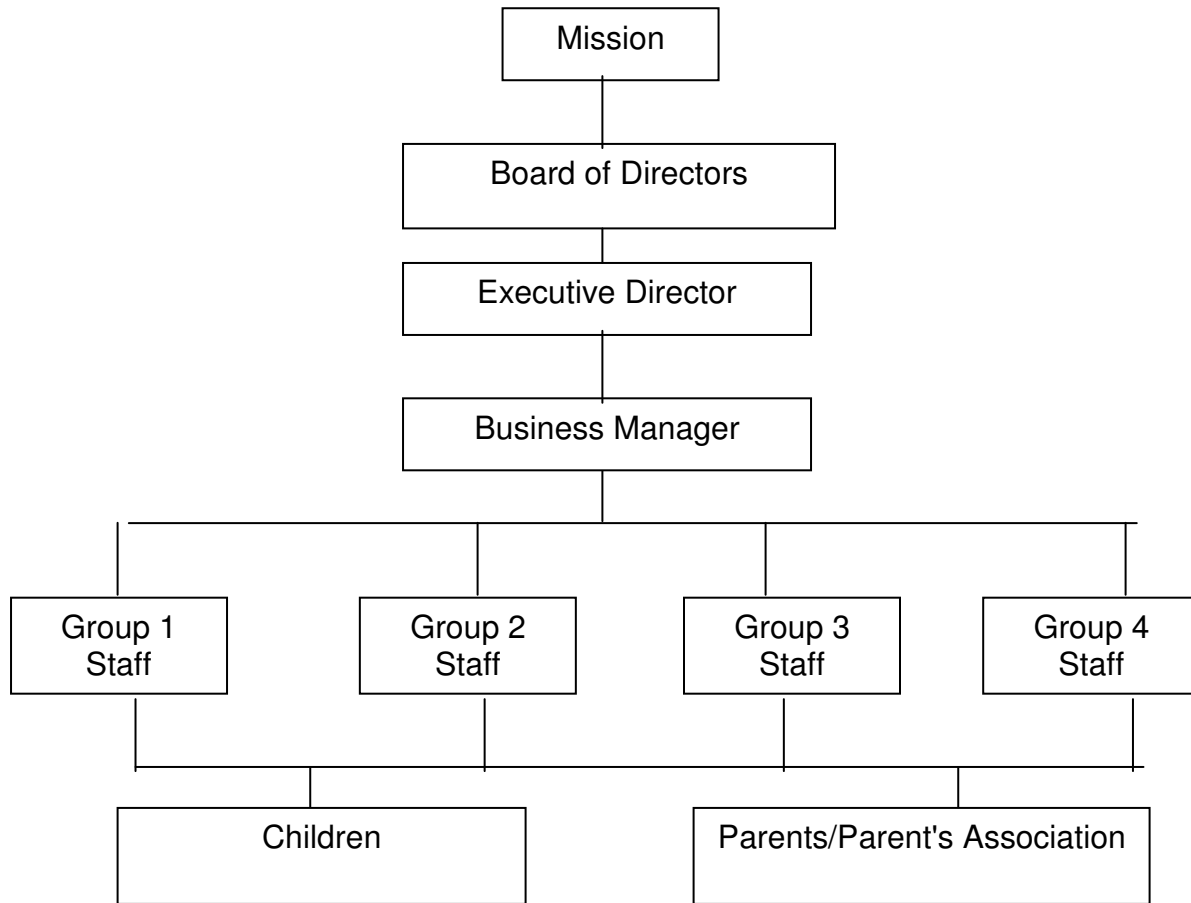
The activities we plan for children, the way we organize their environment, select toys and materials, plan their daily schedules and talk with them are all designed to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and give your child a successful start in school.

B. EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Our educational curriculum, The Creative Curriculum is based upon the understanding that preschoolers learn and develop best through carefully supervised play with age appropriate educational materials. We also want children to enjoy their day, to make friends, and to benefit developmentally from their child care experience. Teachers plan and supervise activities which enhance children's self-esteem and which minimize the experience of failure. We respect developmental stages of early childhood by tailoring activities and expectations to the age, interests, and ability of the individual child. We follow NAEYC standards.

- Daily art activities are open-ended so that children may explore possibilities and experiment with materials without adult determined models.
- Oral expression of thoughts and feelings is encouraged during structured group times and mealtimes, as well as during unstructured playtimes.
- Classroom materials such as unit blocks, puzzles, legos and table games teach math and pre-writing skills, in addition to encouraging small motor dexterity and strength.
- In the "creative play area" children have opportunities for imaginative play.
- In the water and sand tables children have an opportunity to experience sensory motor play while exploring textures and temperature.
- Children play outdoors twice a day on our shaded, mulched and fenced play yard. Outdoor equipment includes climbing structures, bikes, sandboxes, balls, and hoops.

VII. ORGANIZATION OF THE CENTER



A. BOARD OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

The Center is governed by a Board of Executive directors composed of current parents, past parents, two parish representatives, a teacher representative and other interested community members from the D.C. metro area. In January of each year, the Board holds its annual meeting for the purpose of electing new members. The Rector of St. Alban's Parish and the Executive Director are permanent members. The member's terms are staggered to provide continuity.

VIII. STARTING SCHOOL

A. THE FIRST DAY

The first day is essentially a visit for you and your child. We require at least one of the child's parents or a guardian to stay in the classroom with the child through lunch time. At that time, the child will go home with the parent/guardian. On the second day, the child may stay for the duration of the school day. We recommend an early pick up. If your child is having a particularly difficult time adjusting, then we will ask you to "visit" more than once. We require you to visit the first day in order to familiarize yourself with our program and your child's teachers. This process gives your child a chance to get to know us while feeling "protected" by the one he/she trusts the most - you!

B. SEPARATION ANXIETY

Your little one may be quite an angel at home, but once you are ready to drop him/her off at the Center, the hysterics begin. What is a parent to do? Young children often experience separation anxiety when their parents leave them. Your child needs to learn that he/she can manage without you and that he/she can rely on other caretakers until you return.

Here are some things you can do to minimize the apprehension your child feels when you leave him/her each day:

- 1) Reassure him/her that the separation is only temporary and that you will return. Always tell him/her when you are going to leave and when you will return.
- 2) Don't leave without saying good-bye. Knowing that you could leave at any time could cause him/her to feel uneasy.
- 3) Don't linger. If he/she starts to cry when you say good-bye, you need to leave anyway. Otherwise, he/she will soon learn to use his/her tears as a way to keep you around.
- 4) Return when you promise and remind him/her that you did.
- 5) Discuss the day with your child. Talk about what he/she did, as well as what you did while you were away.
- 6) Talk about all the good things you do at work. Arrange to have him/her meet your co-workers, and see where you go and what you do when you are gone all day.

C. DEVELOPING A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH US

As a parent, you know that you can't just give up responsibility for your child when you take him/her to a caretaker. On the contrary, for the childcare situation to be a positive one, you must be an active participant.

It is important to monitor your child's progress in the childcare environment. Try to take a few minutes at the end of each day to pick up notices from your child's mailbox and discuss your child's day with the center staff. While this is not always feasible, make sure you at least get weekly updates on your child's progress. Ask your child how things are going. If he/she can't yet speak make a mental note of his overall disposition and behavior when you drop off and pick up each day. Teachers will be sending home a daily report to the parents. This report provides a recap of the day's activities as well as particulars about your child and their day. If you have questions, compliments or concerns, feel free to set up a conference with your child's teacher either in person or by phone. The best times to reach your child's teachers are during the class's nap time, 1:00pm-3:00pm. There are also three regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences a year.

Please understand that we value a positive working relationship with our families. To this end we will do whatever is possible to facilitate and ensure that the relationship is both cooperative and healthy. Under no circumstances will we permit parents to exhibit disrespectful, divisive, abusive, or aggressive behavior towards staff, a child, or another parent. If it is determined a parent's behavior is inappropriate their enrollment status will be terminated.

X. TERMS OF PAYMENT

A. Tuition Deposits

When your child is accepted into the program, a deposit equivalent to one month's tuition is required to hold the spot. The deposit is applied as tuition to your child's last month in attendance. The deposit is non-refundable. We require you to inform us **two months in advance, in WRITING, if you are planning to withdraw your child from the Center.** Parents are liable for payment of the entire month's tuition following

notice of termination, regardless of child's attendance. We do not prorate tuition for your child's last month in attendance. Failure to inform the Center in advance of leaving will result in forfeiture of the deposit.

B. Tuition Payments

Tuition is payable on the day the child is scheduled for his/her half day visit and on the first day of each month, thereafter.

C. Partial Month Enrollment

Tuition for partial month enrollment is pro-rated as follows: one month's tuition is divided by 20 (days) and is multiplied by the number of days enrolled. Pro-rated tuition is applied to the initial month of enrollment ONLY.

D. Late Payment Fees:

Tuition payment is due on the first day of the month. If not received by the 5th of the month, a \$25.00 late fee will be assessed to your account.

E. Returned Check Fees

If your check payment is returned by the bank for non-sufficient funds, your account will be assessed a \$25.00 returned check fee. You will be allowed only two (2) returned checks. Payments thereafter must be made in cash, money order or cashier's check.

F. Tuition Payment of Non-Attended Days

Parents are responsible for payment of full tuition if the Center is closed for holidays, emergency situations, snow days, if the child is absent due to illness and if the child goes away on vacation.

G. Late Pick-up Charges

The Center closes at 6:00 p.m. Late pick up is detrimental to both the child, who sees all of the other children leave, and to the teacher, who must stay with the child until the parent arrives. A late charge of \$10 for the first 10 minutes or portion thereof and a \$1.00 per minute thereafter will be imposed - payable at that time to the teacher. We recommend that you set up an alternate pick up plan for extenuating circumstances. **After the third late pick-up all fines are doubled.** Recurrent late pick-ups may prompt dismissal from the program.

After 7:00pm center staff will contact the DC Metropolitan Police Department and Child Protective Services.

XI. CLASSROOM PROCEDURES

A. What to Wear to School

The children play a lot at school! They play with sand and water, they paint, they cook, they run and climb-- and they get dirty! Please dress your child in clothing that is sturdy and washable. Long dresses and sandals are not appropriate clothing for preschool. They are dangerous on the climbers and they restrict other types of play.

Please dress your child accordingly for the weather. The children play outside even in the cold weather, so please dress them warmly in winter. We recommend dressing them in layers as the temperature changes drastically from indoors to outdoors. If the ground is wet, snowy or icy, they will need boots. As the whole group goes outside every day (unless



it is raining) your child will suffer unless he/she is warmly dressed. Hint: Mittens are warmer than gloves... and much easier to put on! It helps immensely if mittens, hats, boots, coats and sweaters are labeled. Young children are often not able to keep up with all their belongings. If they are labeled, we will know who owns what and your child's things will usually find their way back to you!

Shoes. The preferred shoe throughout the entire year is a sneaker type. They provide the most protection for your child's feet as well as support for climbing, running and bike riding. Please make sure all shoes fit properly and either tie or Velcro securely to their feet. If your child wears sandals, please make sure that they are close-toed. Flip-flops, jellies, clogs or non-secured are not permitted. For the child's safety, we do not permit children to wear open toed shoes or unsecured shoes to ride bikes or play on the big climber. If these shoes are worn, play will be limited to sandbox and drawing with chalk.

Water Play shoes: Closed-in rubber bottom shoes are the best and our first and choice for water play.

B. Nap Time/Bedding

Each group has an appropriate rest-time. Each child is provided a cot and a nap bag. Nap bags are blue and are labeled with your child's name and class symbol. The bags are used to transport and store your child's linens (small blanket, large crib sheet) each day. Please take your child's bedding home at the end of each week to wash and return on the following Monday. Parents will be fined for lost or misplaced nap bags. Cost is \$10.00 per bag. If your child wets their linen, please make sure a clean set is provided for the following day. Parents will be expected to launder and return the replacement linen.

C. Toilet Training

Children enrolled in the two youngest groups need not be toilet-trained in order to attend SAECC. However, children moving to or enrolling in the two oldest groups **must** be toilet trained. Regardless of which stage of training your child is in, each class makes frequent stops to the bathroom and children are always invited to use the facilities. Children who are not yet trained sometimes start using the toilet because they have watched their friends take a turn. Please provide an ample supply of underpants, pants/shorts, socks and shirts. During training and beyond, it is quite common for children to have accidents or to become so involved in play they forget to use the facilities. Children are never disciplined when this occurs. Toilet training must be a positive experience for all involved. If your child does need pull-ups, please bring in an ample supply of both pull-ups and wipes at the beginning of each week.

When your child is transitioning from pull-ups to cloth underpants, please keep in mind that we prefer you to use the thick training underpants, not thin underpants.

In the event of a potty accident, parents are required to pick up their child's soiled clothes the same day. Due to stringent licensing guidelines, all soiled clothes left in cubbies after 24-hours will be discarded.

D. Toys From Home

We discourage toys from home in the classroom except for naptime companions. Sometimes, however, a child may need a favorite toy initially to help adjust to school. **GUNS, WAR TOYS, LIGHT SABERS, WEAPONS AND ACTION FIGURES ARE PROHIBITED FROM SCHOOL AT ALL TIMES!!** These toys promote aggressive play and are discouraged. If a child needs to express feelings of aggression, we suggest pounding clay or play-dough or a punching a bag; or active movements such as dance or running.

E. Snacks and Lunch

The Center provides a morning and afternoon snack and a hot lunch daily. An outside catering company provides our hot lunches. The center prepares the snacks. The foods served do not have artificial color,

artificial flavoring or preservatives. To encourage healthy eating habits, and to help your child function best throughout the day, we include foods from at least two of the four major food groups when serving snacks and all four major food groups when serving lunch. We serve milk daily and with all meals. Please do not send in any food items for snack or lunch for your child. (Please see Special Dietary Requirements below.) Lunch and snack menus are distributed at the beginning of each month.

Many children eat breakfast very early or due to some reason do not eat breakfast at home. If your child eats a snack on route, we ask that all food items and drinks be left in the car. We do not want food on the playground, as crumbs and leftover food invite unwanted rodents.

****Special Dietary Requirements: Food Allergies & Vegetarians**

It is our policy to provide an alternative snack for those children who have food allergies. In addition, we will provide alternative meals for vegetarians. A written note must be provided from a licensed physician if your child has any food allergies or dietary requirements with specific substitutions. If your child has a specific dietary requirement for religious or spiritual reasons, you are required to give us a written statement for your child's file. The center will provide a vegetarian substitution for all beef and chicken meals. Please let us know as a vegetarian if you eat fish or eggs. Chips, cookies, candy or other similar foods are not part of our lunch or snack menus nor are they allowed as a food alternate.

F. Parties

- We celebrate birthdays during the p.m. snack time (3:30-4:00). Please make arrangements with your child's teachers a week or two in advance. Please keep the celebration low-key and simple. Please let the teacher know if you will try to join the class. If you are running late, snack will not be held later than 4:00 pm.
- The center snack prepared for the children will be served prior to any special treat brought in.
- We do not allow party favors, goody bags, or piñatas. Instead, please feel free to make a donation to your child's class in the form of a book or toy in honor of your child's birthday.
- We have a no candy & balloon policy. Any candy or balloons sent in will be sent home with a reminder note.
- When planning a party at home, please only distribute invitations at school if every child in their class receives one.

Please note that candy, gum and soda are not allowed at school at any time, including birthday parties or special school events and programs at which food is served.

PEANUT POLICY—Due to an increasing number of life-threatening allergies to peanuts, SAECC is a peanut-free school. This means that peanuts, peanut butter, foods cooked in peanut oil, or any processed foods that contain even a trace amount of peanut product must not be brought into the school. Peanuts do not have to be ingested to cause a reaction. Swift and severe anaphylactic shock can occur if a child with a peanut allergy touches another child's fingers or a table with traces of peanut oil.

G. Field Trips

Various age-appropriate field trips are scheduled throughout the year to enrich and augment the program. Examples from recent years include: Cox Farm, The Capital Children's Museum, National Gallery of Art, Duke Ellington School of Dance Spring Recital, Air and Space Museum, National Zoo, Museum of African Art, Museum of Natural History, and Glen Echo Park.

At the beginning of the year a general permission slip is signed which includes all walking field trips around the community. Such as Giant, Guy Mason Park, Fresh Fields, pet store, or the library. Trips in which children will ride on a school bus, metro bus or driven by another parent, a separate permission slip will be distributed to be signed. SAECC gives each child a school t-shirt, which the children are required

to wear on field trips. Children without a signed permission slip may not participate in the class trip. Due to staff/child ratios, parents will need to find alternative care for their child during field trips if their child will not be participating.

We required low adult child ratios during field trips. As such, we encourage parent participation.

H. Enrichment Programs

Throughout the year, the center includes various enrichment programs to supplement the program. These programs usually include music, creative movement, Spanish lessons, yoga, and soccer.

I. Discipline

Discipline is the art and science of teaching and guiding children to learn to control their own behaviors. It is never punitive. The structure we use on a daily basis such as; the daily classroom schedule, setting age and development appropriate limits and being consistent, helps to minimize inappropriate behaviors. When inappropriate behavior presents itself the guidance techniques are handled on a case-by-case basis utilizing a variety of methods, including: redirection, loss of privileges and behavior modification. In cases of more severe disciplinary problems, parents will be notified and solutions will include the teachers, parents, children and recommendations may be made to involve outside resources (counseling or specialists). We believe that physical punishment, sarcasm or belittling is not apart of good discipline and therefore is never used at SAECC. Tattle-telling and using other children against a difficult child is destructive and is not permitted at our Center.

J. Aggressive Behavior Policy

Although age-appropriate and often hard to avoid; hitting, pushing, teasing, biting, rough-and-tumble play and other aggressive behaviors are not acceptable at school. Whenever these behaviors are exhibited, the aggressive child as well as the other child (ren) involved is spoken to by a teacher. It is explained that these behaviors are not okay and children are told to use their words. When children are having difficulty playing appropriately together, they are given a variety of choices for acceptable play or words. If a child becomes excessively aggressive, the teachers and the executive director will work closely with the child's parents to try to modify the child's unacceptable behaviors. In instances where a child is bitten, the parents of both the biter and the biter are contacted by the teacher that day. Biting is treated very seriously and the children are taught that biting is never acceptable. They are told, instead, to use their words, walk away or get a teacher to help them use their words.

Consequences for aggressive behavior vary with each situation and are to be handled at the discretion of the classroom teachers and the executive director. When children are unable to alter their unsafe behavior through methods devised by the staff in conjunction with the parents, the executive director will seek assistance of a specialist affiliated with CORE (Community Outreach Education Specialists) through Ivy Mount School. In extreme circumstances, it may be appropriate for the child to be suspended or expelled from the program.

XI. Health and Safety of Your Child

A. Illness Policy

Your child's health is a matter of utmost importance to us. By the first day of school, we MUST have in our files a standard immunization, oral examination (3 years and older) and health inventory form signed by your child's physician. This form is renewed annually. An informal health inspection is given of each child every day.

To have your child and classmates stay healthy, children displaying any of the following symptoms are required to stay home. Furthermore, if a child develops any of the following symptoms during Center hours, a parent is



contacted and will need to arrange for the pick-up of your child within a reasonable amount of time.

- ****Fever** (MUST be fever free for a full 24 hours - without the aid of medication before returning to school.)**
- **Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Stomach Cramps** (MUST be symptom free for a full 24 hours - without the aid of medication before returning to school)
- **Heavy, thick yellow/green nasal drainage or discharge** (indicates an infection)
- **Crust on the eyes, pink eyes or mucus discharge from the eyes**
- **An undiagnosed rash**

If your child displays any of the following symptoms, we suggest you keep him/her home. They will not be themselves, possibly requiring one-on-one attention, which unfortunately we are unable to provide.

- fussiness, crankiness or is just not acting himself/herself
- excessive fatigue - rest at this time may prevent illness
- excessive sniffles, reddened eyes, sore throat, headaches, or earache

YOUR CHILD MUST BE SYMPTOM AND FEVER FREE FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO THE CENTER. IT IS THE SAME IF YOUR CHILD IS ON MEDICATION FOR A CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES

Please notify us immediately if you discover that your child has contracted a contagious disease so that we can inform other parents to watch for similar symptoms.

Sample list of communicable diseases:

Strep Throat	Pink Eye/Conjunctivitis
Scarlet Fever	Chicken Pox
Fifth Disease	Impetigo
Ring Worm	Lice
Coxsackie virus (Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease)	

All children attending SAECC are expected to participate in all daily activities, which include outdoor play. We ask that you bring your child only if s/he is well enough to participate fully. If you do not want your child to play outside, then s/he must stay home. We are not staffed with enough people to supervise a sick child inside, while the others go outside.

B. Medication

If your child needs medication, we can ONLY give it under these conditions:

- Over-the-counter (OTC) ointments (i.e., sunscreen, Vaseline, diaper rash cream, etc) - a parental note of authorization.
- Prescription medications or OTC's (i. e., Benedryl, Tylenol, etc) - we can **only** give these with a doctor's note on a medical order form (we can provide these if necessary).
- **EPI-PENS & ASTHMA INHALERS...**: A doctor's note MUST be kept on file at all times. Doctor's notes must be renewed annually.
- **All medicines must be in the original container.** The bottle must be labeled with the child's name, date, amount of dosage, and frequency of dose(s). If prescribed they bottle must have the name, address and number of the pharmacy and physician. All medicine must be place in a zip lock bag and given to a teacher. Please do not leave medicine in your child's back pack or tote.

** A fever is defined as an oral temperature of 100 degrees or higher or an auxiliary (under arm) temperature of 99 degrees.

Food Allergies & Dietary Requirements: See Snacks & Lunch

*In case of serious accidental injury, we will immediately contact 911. An immediate attempt will be made to contact a parent. If a minor injury occurs, a note will be sent home explaining the injury and the steps the staff took with your child.

*If any staff member suspects a child is being abused or neglected, Child Protective Services will be notified immediately, as directed by law.

PEANUT POLICY—Due to an increasing number of life-threatening allergies to peanuts, SAECC is a peanut-free school. This means that peanuts, peanut butter, foods cooked in peanut oil, or any processed foods that contain even a trace amount of peanut product must not be brought into the school. Peanuts do not have to be ingested to cause a reaction. Swift and severe anaphylactic shock can occur if a child with a peanut allergy touches another child's fingers or a table with traces of peanut oil.

C. Emergencies

Children engaging in active play will sometimes hurt themselves or others. Most accidents are minor and can be treated at school. All head injuries, even minor ones, are reported immediately to the parents.

If a child is injured or becomes seriously ill while at the Center:

- 911 will be called to have your child transported to a hospital emergency room to be treated
- The parent will be contacted and asked to meet the child and center's staff person at the designated hospital emergency room

It is critical for each parent to complete the **AUTHORIZATION FOR CHILD'S EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT** and the **EMERGENCY CARD** so that the Center can contact the parent or authorized person in an emergency. The parent must notify the Center if there is any change in the information on the form (such as telephone number, employer, etc.).

D. Information Updates

There is an information card file in the office which we use when we need to contact you during the day. Parents fill out two (2) of these blue cards when they receive their enrollment package. The card lists parents' home, work, pager and cell phone numbers, home addresses and the names and phone numbers of two other people whom we can call in case of an emergency. **It is absolutely imperative that this information be kept up to date.** Please let us know if there are any changes! We call your emergency contacts only if we are unable to reach either parent. Please be sure that the names we have on file are people who are willing and able to come to the Center, should the need arise.

XII. SCHOOL POLICIES

A. Back to School



The school year begins with a Back-to-School orientation meeting for the parents within the first few weeks of school. At that time, parents have the opportunity to meet with the teachers and receive information concerning the early days of school as well as the rest of the year. This is a mandatory

meeting for all parents and attendance counts as one of the two (2) workshop meeting requirements set forth by the Center.

B. School Closings, Delays and Holidays

For school closings due to inclement weather, we follow the Federal Government schedule. If the Federal Government is closed so are we. However, in some cases, when safety is an issue, we may choose to close. In these instances, please call the school at 202-363-7380 after 6:00 am and listen to the recorded message or listen to WTOP 103.1 FM to see if the school is closed or if we will have a delayed opening. The executive director will exercise her best judgment during inclement weather to safeguard the children and staff.

Should we need to close the school early for any reason, we will notify each parent and wait until the last child is picked up. If you have a problem with immediate pick-up, we will help you make alternate arrangements for care by another parent.

For scheduled closings for holidays and other events, please consult the school annual calendar. The Center is open weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. year-round, except for Federal Holidays and three staff training days per year (usually in August) as follows:

<u>Closing</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Month</u>
Labor Day	1st Monday	September
Columbus Day	2nd Monday	October
Thanksgiving Day	4th Thursday	November
Day after Thanksgiving	4th Friday	November
Week between Christmas Day and New Year's Day	25th*	December
Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday	1st*	January
Presidents' Day	3rd Monday	January
Memorial Day	3rd Monday	February
Independence Day	4th Monday	May
Staff Training Days	4th*	July
2 additional Staff Training Days	Wednesday, Thursday, & Friday prior to Labor Day Weekend	TBA

*If this day falls on a Saturday, the Center will close on the Friday before; if this day falls on a Sunday, the Center will close on the Monday after. For the winter recess, the center will be closed on January 2nd if the day falls on a Friday.

C. Authorization for Pick-Up

For obvious reasons of safety and security, a child will not be released to anyone unless authorized by the child's parent. You must let us know by written note if your child is to be picked up by someone other than the individuals listed on the Release Authorization form. Release Authorization forms are located by the phone in the hallway. Alternate pick-up arrangements must be clearly given to the staff. **We will not release your child to an unauthorized person.** When someone different is coming, please inform your child so that he/she will know whom to expect. The person will need to present photo identification before the child is released.

D. Arrival & Departure

ARRIVAL: The Center opens its doors at 7:00 am. All children are expected to be at the Center no later than 9:00 am unless the teachers are advised otherwise (doctor's appointment, excess fatigue, scheduling conflict). It is very important that parents adhere to this time in order to ensure the safety of the child and the efficiency of the Center's operation. The program is affected and altered when children stagger in late. If

your child arrives after 10:00 am on a regular basis, the executive director reserves the right to send your child home for the rest of the day. If this is not possible, your child may need a different program.

DEPARTURE: When you come to pick up your child, please come into the classroom (or playground) to get your child and make sure you and your child say goodbye to the afternoon teacher. The goodbye is essential because it lets us know that your child is leaving our care and because it gives the child a sense of closure to the school day. Sometimes, at pick-up time, your child may want to show you a special achievement or a picture he/she has made. Don't miss the opportunity to build your child's self-esteem! These demonstrations also strengthen the connection between school and home, which in turn contributes to a general sense of well-being.

Transitions are often hard for young children and your child may cry at the sight of you and refuse to leave. If you can accept this as normal behavior and spend a few extra minutes with your child, letting your child get used to the idea of leaving, you may prevent tears or a tantrum. More commonly, however, your child will be thrilled to see you! To help you and your child depart in the evenings we have a motto/policy. It is "When mommy/daddy says it is time to leave then it is time to leave." This is meant to assist you so that negotiations and bargaining do not continue for more time to stay. If you are having difficulty getting your child to leave, please do not hesitate to ask a teacher for assistance.

Schedule and routine is your child's friend. **THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ON TIME FOR ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP CANNOT BE OVER-EMPHASIZED.**

Signing Out: Parents are required to sign their child out at time of departure. Sheets are colored coded and kept outside classrooms & they are brought to the playground in the afternoons.

E. Late Pick-up Policy & Charges

The Center closes at 6:00 p.m. Late pick up is detrimental to both the child, who sees all of the other children leave, and to the teacher, who must stay with the child until the parent arrives. A late charge of \$10 for the first 10 minutes or portion thereof and a \$1.00 per minute thereafter will be imposed - payable at that time to the teacher. We recommend that you set up an alternate pick up plan for extenuating circumstances. **After the third late pick-up all fines are doubled.** Recurrent late pick-ups may prompt dismissal from the program.

F. Kiss & Drop

Between 7:00 am and 9:00 am all children are to be dropped off at either Nourse Hall (inclement weather) or on the playground (nice weather). We have found that this "Kiss and Drop" program creates a relaxed transition from home, car to school. The children enjoy coming in the mornings and being able to ride bikes or play with the train set. They are able to run around and visit with friends from different rooms. Please refer to Addendum Section in the back for a detailed description of the procedure.

G. Termination of Enrollment

When a child is voluntarily withdrawn from the program mid-year, TWO MONTH'S WRITTEN NOTICE is required. Parents are liable for payment of the entire month following notice of termination, regardless of child's attendance. The deposit will then be applied to this final month. The center does not pro-rated tuition for your child's last month in attendance.

There may be times when our school may not meet the needs of a particular child. When this occurs, the parents will be notified and given a full month's notice to find other arrangements for their child. However, if the child is posing a danger to his/herself or others, immediate dismissal may be necessary. If the executive director determines that we are not meeting a child's needs, the parents will not be responsible for any tuition after the child has left the program.

H. Notice of Tuition Increase

The monthly tuition rate is subject to change. Parents will be given written notice of such change at least one (1) month in advance.

XIII. Communication

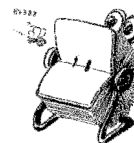
A. Contact Information



- Main number 202-363-7380
- Fax number 202-537-9380
- Donna's cellular phone number 703-869-0750 (used in emergency situation only)
- Email - Executive Director, Donna Mason, dmason@saecc.org
- Business Manager, afettene@saecc.org
- Assistant Director, asandford@saecc.org
- Teachers, first initial of first name along with last name @ saecc.org (for Audrey Wiggins, awiggins@saecc.org)

Between the hours of 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm or when the office is closed, please call the Center cell phone. Numbers will be listed on the center's directory. Please do not use e-mails for urgent or timely messages, as they may not be retrieved in time. E-mail communication is valuable for questions, reminders, and articles and for passing along other information.

If you need to speak with your child's teacher, the best times to call Butterflies, Bunnies or Elephants are between 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm; for Eagles, it is between 1:30 pm -3:30 pm. During field trips please call the classrooms' cellular phone.



B. Messages from the Center

Each classroom has mailboxes centrally located and labeled with each child's name. All non-emergency information such as reminders, field trips news, newsletters, tuition invoices, or parent memos will be placed your child's mailbox as well as through E-News. SAECC E-News is the center's blast e-mail link to the parents. General reminders may also be written on the board at the top of the stairs or clipped to the classrooms sign-in/out sheets.

In the event that the school needs to contact a parent by phone, we will look to the emergency cards for numbers. If these numbers change for any reason, even for just one day, let the teacher know as soon as possible and supply a back-up number, just in case. Please advise us of all changes to the emergency card information.

C. Classroom News and Center Newsletters

Each group will send home a monthly calendar of planned activities. These activities are subject to change due to weather, materials, or the children's desire to do something else. Therefore, each day the teacher's will post a "Today We" type message outside their door. This will let you know what the children actually did that day. This will help you form a communication bridge, thus enabling you to ask your child more direct questions about their day rather than just asking "What did you do today?", only to get a reply of "played" or "nothing". Each group will send home a daily report and a weekly newsletter highlighting activities that week plus some specific information about your child and their development.

Center newsletters are distributed monthly (September –June). Up coming events, articles for parents, parenting tips and overview of the classroom events are usually included.

D. Conferences

Three formal parent-teacher conferences will be held each school year at the parent and teacher's mutual convenience to evaluate and assess your child's development and experiences. They are held usually in November and May. Additional conferences may be arranged to address specific concerns.

E. Assessments

Assessments for speech, hearing, vision and development may be done by outside professionals. Notice will always be given before a screening is done. You will be notified and referred for special needs services if a professional believes that your child requires further evaluation. The executive director has the obligation to inform you, as the parents, if outside testing seems appropriate for your child.

XIV. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

A. Parents' Association Committee

One of the growing components of the St. Alban's Early Childhood Center community is the Parents' Association. As a parent of an attending child, you automatically become a member.

The Association engages in a number of activities, such as fundraising, hosting informational programs and workshops. In past years, the money raised by Parents Association events has helped to provide new playground equipment for the Center and to purchase books and materials. Fundraising ideas are welcome.

The Parent Association will also organize the Fix Up Days (see below). All parents are encouraged to participate in these weekend events.

We believe that St. Alban's offers one of the finest child development programs in the metropolitan area. In order to continue to provide this excellent level of care for your child in such a diverse setting, we need **your involvement**.

B. Parents' Meetings and Workshops

All meetings and workshops are open to all families. Suggestions for topics are gathered at the first Association meeting in October. The meetings/workshops are generally held from 6:00-7:30 at the parish. Childcare and a light meal are provided for the children. Light fare is provided for parents. Your participation and ideas are needed!

Each family is required to attend two (2) Parent Training Workshops per school year. Topics by and large are geared to help parents better understand the needs of their preschool children. Presenters are your child's teachers, the center executive director and other education specialists. There will be approximately five (5) workshops offered throughout the school year so that all parents receive an ample opportunity to satisfy the mandatory requirement.

C. Room Parents

From time to time teachers require the assistance of parents to help with library books, special items for the classroom or drivers for field trips. Room parents also may be called upon by the Parents' Association to make phone calls for special events or programs.

D. Chaperones

While these trips provide special adventures for the children, safety and proper supervision are of paramount importance. We ask that parents take turns chaperoning the children. We realize that we all have busy schedules and that in order for you to chaperone, appropriate notice would be appreciated.

Therefore, four (4) weeks notice will be given for trips so that parents can arrange their schedules. Unfortunately, we will have to cancel trips at the last minute if we do not have enough chaperones. We ask that all parents take turns accompanying their children on class trips. When there are a limited number of spaces for parent chaperones, we will post a sign-up sheet. From this list we will ask parents who have not had a chance to chaperone a trip first. When you chaperone field trips, you will be required to assist the teachers by being responsible for other children beside your own. We rely on your additional eyes and ears during these times. Only parents (not babysitters or care givers) are allowed to chaperone or drive the children for field trips.

E. School Fix Up Days

Twice a year, parents will be invited to help fix up the classrooms at SAECC. These Fix Up Days, organized by the Parents Association, will take place on Saturdays and will involve painting, floor cleaning, repairs and other light handy-work. While we do not require parent participation in these events (as other preschools do), we strongly encourage it. We hope parents will help us take care of the environment in which your children are learning and playing.

F. Visitors

Visitors are always welcome! In fact, we encourage parents to visit as often as they can and share the day with us. We ask, however, that guests who wish to observe classroom activities check in with the staff upon arrival. Parents of young or new children are asked to wait at least two months or until your child is adjusted before visiting or having lunch with them.

G. Parent Grievance Procedures

Should you have any questions or complaints about the care your child is receiving, please follow the procedures below:

1. Speak directly to the supervising teacher.
2. If there is still a misunderstanding or complaint, speak to the Assistant Director or Executive Director.
3. If necessary, the case may be taken by the Executive Director to the Board of Executive Directors to obtain their advice.

XV. Release of Child to Intoxicated or Drugged Individual

In order to protect the children from any potential danger that could arise because of a parent's or other authorized individual's condition, and to protect the Center against potential claims, it is the policy of the Center to take all reasonable steps to avoid releasing a child to a person in a drugged or intoxicated state. Accordingly, if, in the opinion of the senior staff member present at the center, a parent or authorized person arrives in an intoxicated or drugged condition, the staff member will:

- a) Notify any other parent or guardian of the situation;
- b) Ask the person to leave his/her car at the Center and take the child home using another means of transportation home; and,
- c) Offer to call another relative, friend or taxi (at the parent's expense) to drive the person and child home.

If the parent or guardian insists on driving the child home, the Center's staff member will notify the local police department. If police officers agree that the parent or authorized person is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, the parent or authorized person may be charged with public drunkenness and/or driving while under the influence of alcohol.

If a particular parent or guardian frequently arrives in an intoxicated or drugged state, the Center will not only notify the police department, but also will alert other appropriate governmental authorities involved with the care and treatment of children.

XVI. Procedures for Suspected Child Abuse Cases

The Center is required by law to report evidence or suspicion of child abuse or neglect. Persons found guilty of failure to report abuse are subject to a fine.

XVII. Individuals Authorized to Pick Up Child; Changes in Custody

The Center can release a child only to the parents or legal guardian(s) of the child, or to individuals authorized to pick up the child whom the parent/guardian has listed on the Center's Release Authorization and Custody Information form. Staff members of the Center may require any person who arrives to pick up a child to show identification.

All persons authorized to pick up a child must be at least sixteen (16) years old.

If only one parent has custody of the child and the other is not authorized to pick up the child, the parent must instruct the Center of this fact, and must provide the center's Executive Director with a certified copy of the Court Order confirming the change in custody.

Although we at the Center recognize that this may be inconvenient for the parent, this policy is essential in order to protect the Center against potential claims for releasing a child to an unauthorized person or for refusing to release a child to an authorized one.

If an unauthorized person arrives at the Center to pick up a child, the Center staff will notify the parent immediately.

Agreement Contract

Please sign this form and return to the office.

I have received and read the SAECC Parents' Handbook and agree to the policies and procedures stated within it.

1. _____
PLEASE PRINT PARENT/GUARDIAN

2. _____
PLEASE PRINT PARENT/GUARDIAN

PLEASE PROVIDE PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

PLEASE PROVIDE PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE

DATE

FOR OFFICE USE:	
Received by:	
_____ Name of Office Personnel	_____ Signature
_____ Date	