2024 - 2025
Policies & Procedures

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AN OUTREACH PROGRAM

St. Stephen's Day School is an outreach program of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. The program began in 1985 as a non-profit service for toddlers through four years of age. The Day School is licensed and regulated by Bright from the Start: GA Department of Early Care and Learning. The Day School was one of the first schools in Georgia to be awarded the certificate of Center of Distinction. The school is a 2 star Georgia Quality Rated program. Our four year old children participate in the Georgia Pre-Kindergarten program. More information about Georgia's early education programs and child care licensing may be found at the BFTS website: www.decal.ga.gov.

Administrative policies of the Day School are guided by the Vestry of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. The day to day operations of the Day School are guided by an experienced director and highly qualified staff. Parents are included on an Advisory Board and in a Parent Association. Other than the state funding provided by Georgia's Lottery for the Pre-Kindergarten program, income is derived entirely from tuition fees of children attending. The program is non-profit and self-supporting, and operates on a budget separate from that of the church.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY, VALUES & GOALS

The Day School's goal is to provide a healthy, safe, nurturing environment in which the child feels emotionally secure. This environment encourages physical, emotional and mental growth. Our belief is that children "learn through play," and we therefore provide a variety of experiences and exposures to create a developmentally appropriate atmosphere of learning. We use the Frog Street curriculum, the Georgia Early Learning & Development Standards (GELDS) and the Georgia Pre-K Content Standards to guide our activities. We strive for each and every child to gain respect for self, for others, and for property in a meaningful way in a warm, relaxed atmosphere and to learn limits of behavior reinforced by praise, as well as to gain skills to prepare for school.

St. Stephen's Day School believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in child care. We will make every reasonable accommodation to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs. Equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students. Inclusion means that ALL children are included! We believe ALL children are special and that individual needs of each child must be met. We make necessary classroom arrangements to make sure all students are engaged and involved and that activities lend themselves to support learning. The Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) provides resources, training, and support through their Inclusion Services Program. We also encourage the involvement of parents through volunteer time, assessment, parent/teacher conferences and conversation, because we want to establish and maintain strong relationships with our families. We respect cultural differences and want our families to feel supported and nurtured in their child rearing, because we realize they are the child's first teacher.

FACILITIES

Programs for children age three through age four are housed downstairs in the Parish Hall of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. The classrooms are well lighted and centrally heated and air-conditioned. Restrooms are either in or adjacent to the classrooms. The classrooms are furnished with appropriate child size furnishings conducive to free choice of activities that encourage exploration, dramatic play and creative use of materials. Space is also

provided for group activity as well as individual work. The shaded playgrounds adjacent to the classrooms promote active play and support large muscle development. During inclemet weather, we schedule gross motor activities in the Parish Hall.

Children in the two year old program are housed in Warden's Hall. They have a separate shaded playground so that they are not intimidated by the active play of the older children.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Both professional competence and special personal characteristics are basic qualifications for our staff. Staff members are sought who are warm, friendly, sensitive, thoughtful, understanding, creative, resourceful and responsible. Lead teachers in the four year old program are required to have early childhood teacher certification. All other lead techers also have education credentials approved by Bright from the Start. All staff are required to maintain yearly training requirements monitored by Bright from the Start. Initial training includes safety and disease control, child abuse recognition, nutrition, as well as appropriate activities for young children. First aid, fire safety, and CPR training are also required of all staff.

CHRISTIAN BUT NON-DENOMINATIONAL

The Day School welcomes children of all races, colors and creeds. The program strives for the development of character and attitudes that will enable children to adopt a Christian approach to values and relationships. Our instructional focus is on the Golden Rule, helping children learn to treat others as they want to be treated. Children in our three year old class attend chapel weekly and participate in daily devotions with their classmates. Chapel is led by Father David Probst of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. Children enjoy learning lessons from the Bible, singing songs, reciting scripture and praying together.

ENROLLMENT

Children are enrolled on a first come, first serve basis and is limited for each age group. No drop-in care is available. Siblings of children already in the program and children of active members of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church are given preference in the two and three year olds classes. Once enrolled in the Day School program, your child is eligible to continue in our program for the subsequent remaining years (3K/4K).

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

The Day School is open from 7:30 AM until 5:30 PM Monday through Friday. The half day preschool program hours are until 11:30 AM (no lunch) or 12:00 PM (with lunch). The 4 year old pre-k program hours are from 8:00 AM until 2:30 PM, with an after-school program available until 5:30 PM. Pre-k children who are not enrolled in the afterschool program should be picked up promptly when the pre-k program ends at 2:30 PM.

The Day School accepts children ages two years through five years old. Children are assigned to classes by their age, using a September 1st cut off date. Your child will remain in the same class for the entire year.

All enrollment forms must be completed prior to the child's first day in school. Immunization records are required, must be kept current and are required within the first 30 days of school. The Ear, Eye, Dental, & Nutrition Screening (Form 3300) is required for children ages three and older within the first 60 days of enrollment or within 60 days of the child's third birthday.

Your child's class schedule will be given to you at the beginning of the year and is posted in the classroom.

Newsletters will be sent home weekly to keep you informed of our activities and upcoming events.

Parents of two year old or non-verbal children are asked to let the staff know of any special instructions for the day or any disruptions in schedule at home that might affect the child's day.

Children are accepted into the Day School who will profit from group experiences in this setting. At the end of two (2) weeks it may be determined that the child will not profit from this service and other arrangements must be made.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CHILD RECORDS

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released, with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential. All records and information related to your child or family are considered confidential and kept in a locked file cabinet or stored on a password protected computer. Only those employed by the programs who have a "need to know" will be able to access this information.

SCHOOL FEES

The tuition and routine fees for the Day School are as follow:

$100.00 per week - half day preschool (pick up time 11:30 a.m.)
$105.00 per week - half day preschool & lunch (pick up time 12:00 p.m.)
$160.00 per week - full day program
$60.00 per semester supply fee due August & January (this does not apply to pre-k)

Pre-k only :
$20.00 per week – breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack / **$70.00 per week** – Pre-k after school care (any portion of time from 3:00 - 5:30 PM)

If there is more than one child in a family enrolled in the Day School, a 10% discount will be applied to the older child's tuition. This discount does not apply to the pre-k program. Tuition is due weekly and may be paid by the month in advance. We utilize Procare, online payment system, for your convenience. Invoices will posted to your account on Mondays and tuition is due no later than Thursday each week. For families preferring another form of payment, please contact Mrs. Valerie for arrangments. A late payment fee of $15 will be added weekly on Thursdays for any outstanding balance. The full weekly fee will be charged for any child enrolled in the Day School even if absent due to illness or vacation. The full weekly fee will be charged for all weeks unless the Day School is closed for the ENTIRE WEEK (Fall Break, Thanksgiving Break, Christmas Break, Spring Break).
Unless previous arrangements have been made, a charge of $15.00 will be made for the first 15 minutes that a child is in the center past agreed program time, and for any portion of every fifteen minute segment thereafter. This late charge also applies to Pre-K children who are not enrolled in the afternoon program.
A child or children whose account is in arrears **two weeks** will not be allowed to return to school. Their position will be filled by a child on the waiting list.

CALENDAR

The Day School follows a school calendar with holidays similar to the Baldwin County School System and GMC Prep School. The first day of school is August 1, 2024 and the last day of school is May 22, 2025. The following holidays and breaks will be observed:

Sept. 2 (Labor Day), Oct. 7-11 (Fall Break), Nov. 25-29 (Thanksgiving Break), Dec. 20-Jan. 5 (Christmas Break), Jan. 20 (MLK Day), Feb. 14-17 (Winter Break), Apr. 7-11 (Spring Break), Apr. 18 (Good Friday)

HEALTH & SAFETY

A copy of the state rules and regulations that apply to the operation of a childcare center is available for your viewing. A copy of our most recent licensing review is available upon request. A communicable disease chart and emergency plans for severe weather and fire are posted for your information.

Transportation is not provided by the Day School. Children should be brought to the classroom when they arrive. Morning drop-offs will take place outside the door of our classrooms for children in our 3 and 4 year old classes and under the portico outside of Warden's Hall for children in our 2 year old classes. Classroom and building entrances will remained locked throughout the day. Please help us promote safety by closing playground gates behind you upon entering and exiting our grounds. Parents are permitted to walk children inside to their classrooms on the first day of school.

**** CHILDREN WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO ENTER OR EXIT WITHOUT AN ADULT ESCORT!**

Children will not be allowed to leave with anyone except the custodial parent(s) or persons designated by the parents to pick them up.

Parents will be notified in case of violent storms, fire, or physical plant problems causing the school to close. The school will close if weather causes hazardous travel conditions or effects the school's water and/or power. If Baldwin County Schools close in the case of snow or ice, the school will likely close as well. All decisions to close or remain open in exceptional conditions will be communicated via the Remind text service and the St. Stephen's Day School Parent Association Facebook Page. You may join the Remind text service by texting 81010 for the phone number and @dckk for the message. Please search St. Stephen's Day School Parent Association on Facebook and request membership to join our group.

Each child MUST have a complete change of clothing that is left in his/her cubby to be used for emergencies. All clothing must be marked with the child's name. A small blanket will be needed for nap time. Blankets must be taken home on Fridays to be washed and returned on Monday. All children will be provided with a St. Stephen's Day School tote bag to store their nap items in. All nap items must fit in the bag, so please keep size in mind when selecting a blanket. No additional back pack or book bag is needed as we do not have storage space for these. Each child is provided a cot and sheet that is only used by the individual and are washed and sanitized weekly.

Children should wear clothing in which they will be comfortable. The clothing should be appropriate to the season of the year. Tennis shoes with socks are preferred. Sandals, flip-flops and crocs are uncomfortable when they fill with sand and cause children to fall when they run.

Children who are ill may NOT remain in the Day School. Parents will be expected to pick up children immediately in cases of fever (100.4 or higher), vomiting, or diarrhea. In the event a child is sent home from school for one of the previously listed reasons, the child may not return to school before 24 hours have passed since the fever and/or symptom subsides without the use of medication. Parents will be notified in writing when a communicable disease listed on DHR's Communicable Disease Chart is introduced into the school.

Medications will be administered only with written permission from parents(s) and child's physican. Only staff who have been trained in administration of medication may give medication. Medication forms are provided by the school and must be fully completed by a parent, before any medication is administered. Parents will be notified of any adverse reactions.

Children and staff will wash their hands when they enter the school. Children in diapers will be changed as soon as they enter the school. Proper handwashing is practiced throughout the day. We ask that parents continue this teaching and practice at home.

Our school is a smoke free environment.

Routine visits to a doctor, clinic or dentist are the responsibility of parents. Immunization records should be kept current. In case of emergency medical needs, 911 will be called followed by contacting parent(s). If they are not available, we will consult the physican on duty at Navivcent Health Baldwin. Transportation will be by ambulance. The parent(s) will be notified of any injury requiring medical attention. The staff of the Day School is required to report any suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation or deprivation to the Department of Family and Children Services.

The children in the Day School will have the opportunity to take various walking field trips throughout the year. Permission slips must be signed if your child participates in these activites. Children in the three year old and pre-k classes walk to the library once a month for story time, and all classes occasionally go for walks on the sidewalks around our campus. A field trip form is used for each trip and documents children present, departure from school time, arrival at destination time, departure from destination time and return to school time. Children are accounted for on the form upon each deparure and arrival.

Following national guidelines, we provide all children with numerous opportunities for over 60 minutes of physical activitiy (structured and unstructured) throughout the day. Sedentary activities are less than 30 minutes a day, except for naptime. The children play outside daily, except in inclement weather. Make sure your child wears suitable clothing each day. Heavy jackets, hats and gloves are necessary in the winter and a light jacket is needed in the spring and fall as some of our classes go outside early before it warms up. Names must be on all clothing.

Parents will be asked permission for the use of insect repellent, sunscreen, and first aid ointments. Parents of toddlers requiring diapers are required to provide the appropriate size disposable diapers for their child on a daily basis. We have very limited storage space and cannot store large boxes of diapers. If your child is in pull-ups, we ask that you supply the type that open on the sides.

Children are provided with toys at the Day School; they should be discouraged from bringing toys except when requested by teachers (i.e., show & tell). We cannot be responsible for toys brought to school.

FOOD & ALLERGIES

Children should NOT bring food to school. Please make sure your child finishes his/her breakfast before entering the classroom. We do not use bottles or sippy cups. Children may bring a thermos type water bottle (no larger than 12 oz.) to school each day filled with water only. A light breakfast snack and an afternoon snack are served daily in addition to a meal at lunch time. We enjoy celebrating birthdays and holidays at school and parents usually enjoy providing snacks for these events. Please contact your child's teacher to arrange a birthday snack. Our teachers will arrange holiday party snacks and supplies individually with their classes. Weekly lunch and snack menus will be sent home in advance. We plan to give your child fresh fruits and vegetables weekly, avoiding fried, fatty foods. We encourage children to try a variety of foods and encourage parents to do the same at home.

Food exceptions are not made for individual children except in case of allergies or special diet prescribed by a physician. Should your child require special foods because of allergies, you will be required to provide this daily as well - clearly marked with the child's first and last name.

DISCIPLINE

Your child will be treated respectfully by all staff members. Discipline is handled by explaining to the child what action is improper and how the situation should be handled. Positive redirection of activity is encouraged and monitored. If a child's behavior is dangerous to himself or others, a warning of "time out" is given, and if needed, removal from the activities for a time out period of one to five minutes. Humiliation, corporal punishment, unsupervised isolation, withholding or increasing physical activity, food or drink will not be used. Parents will be notified of numerous unsuccessful attempts to correct negative behavior.

CURRICULUM

We use the *Frog Street Curriculum,* the *Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards and* the *Georgia Pre-K Content Standards* to guide our activities. Physical Development, Emotional and Social Development, Approaches to Learning, Language and Literacy Development, and Cognitive Development are planned for and addressed daily. Physical Development includes fine and gross motor activities. Emotional and Social Development includes sense of self, responsibility for self and others, and prosocial behavior. Approaches to Learning includes how children learn and what they need to learn. Language and Literacy includes listening, speaking, reading and writing. Cognitive Development includes problem solving, logical thinking and creative, symbolic thinking.

ASSESSMENT

Teachers and parents work together to assess children using observations, checklists, photos, and work sampling. Our teachers have been trained to use these strategies of assessment throughout the daily routine while children are engaged in play. Within the first month of school, parents will be asked to fill out the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)* and the "All About Me" questionnaire. Through these surveys and conversation with you, we learn of your child's particular interests and needs. We also use this information to plan meaningful educational experiences for your child. Your involvement throughout the school year and participation in parent/teacher conferences in December and May are strongly encouraged.

Your child's portfolio will be shared with you at conference time. The portfoilo and all files and information regarding your child, will remain confidential and will be accessed only by our Director and your child's teachers. Permission will be obtained from you before any information is shared with anyone else for referral reasons, etc.

Please feel free to ask for a conference at any time if you have concerns. We would like to have an ongoing dialogue with you about your child. If we have concerns with challenging or delayed behavior, we will ask for a conference to work together on a plan best suited for your child.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Each family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth and development of children in our program. We encourage parents and other family members to be involved in the program, visit children's classrooms, participate in events, and provide feedback on the program. We

offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our program goals. The Day School operates with an open door policy. Parents/guardians of enrolled children are welcome into any area of the center at any time during operating hours. Parents are also encouraged to participate in program/classroom activities and special events. We will occasionally distribute surveys to all parents. These surveys are just one way you can tell us how we are doing. We invite your candid feedback and we will use it to help us get better at what we do. We do want you to feel free, however, to share your feedback with us at any time. Research has shown that the success of a child is directly tied to the interest and involvement of the family in the child's education and learning. It is for this reason that we host events such as our Grandparents Day, Downtown Trick or Treat, Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas Program, Easter Egg Hunt, Art Show, Family Picnic and more. We also welcome family members to share their talents and interests with the children as a classroom activity.

TRANSITIONS

Your child's transition into preschool should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced. Prior to your child's first day, you will have an opportunity to tour the school, meet with your child's peers and teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns. At this time please share the best communication methods that the teacher may use to reach you. New classroom visits are done in the late spring to provide your child the chance to get to know his/her teachers for the upcoming year and to become familiar with the new classroom environment to make the transition a smooth one.
Towards the end of your child's pre-k year, we will spend time preparing them to transition to kindergarden. We will provide you with information on local schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to your child about going to elementary school.

NOTIFICATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents are expected to notify the DIRECTOR in writing immediately of changes in name, address, phone number, or place of employment so they can be notified immediately in case of emergency. Parents need to provide IN WRITING any updates or changes to emergency contacts and/or others approved to pick up your child. In the event you remove your child from the program, TWO WEEKS NOTICE TO THE DIRECTOR IS REQUIRED. IF PROPER NOTICE IS NOT RECEIVED, YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO PAY THE TWO WEEKS TUITION.

We are glad you have chosen St. Stephen's Day School for your child's early learning education. We strongly believe that early learning begins at home and we are excited to partner with you on this journey!