

St. John's Nursery School Handbook

2026-2027

Children are a Lifetime Adventure



**1811 Lincoln Way East
Chambersburg, PA 17202
(717) 264-8224
www.sjucc1811.org/nursery-school
nsdirector@sjucc.net**

MISSION STATEMENT

WHEREAS, the Reformed Tradition of Protestant Christianity highly values all aspects of education;

WHEREAS, St. John's values the spiritual, social and academic education of all persons;

WHEREAS, St. John's values the family unit as the basis of a strong community;

WHEREAS, St. John's values the involvement of the Church in and with the community;

WHEREAS, St. John's values children as treasured gifts from God;

THEREFORE, St. John's reflects our values by operating a Nursery School in a Christian atmosphere for families who are striving to achieve the highest possible level of social, academic and spiritual development for their children.

**** WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S NURSERY SCHOOL ****

The purpose of St. John's Nursery School is to provide an organized learning environment in which children will grow and learn physically, socially and mentally. We believe it is appropriate to teach young children by example. To this end, we provide a loving atmosphere, which promotes sharing and caring for others. The Nursery School is an educational outreach ministry of St. John's United Church of Christ, and does model Christian values and tolerance. Although simple prayers will be shared, the program is not intended to be a religious educational program. Parents desiring formal religious education for their children are encouraged to explore Sunday church school programs.

St. John's Nursery School is a private nursery school that offers a wide selection of classes to meet the needs of children 2 years through 5 years of age. Two-year-old classes are limited to 9 children. Families of three, four, and five year olds may select from a two-day program (meets Tuesday and Thursday) or a three-day program (meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday). Four and five year olds also may choose a five-day program. Class size is limited to 12-16 children, depending upon the classroom. Each class is staffed by a teacher and an assistant.

ENROLLMENT GUIDELINES

- Registration for the school year is available to current Nursery School families and Church members two weeks prior to opening to the general public.
- Registration forms are available at the Church and online at www.sjucc1811.org/nursery-school/
- A **non-refundable** registration fee must be submitted with each registration form.
- A compatible match between the Nursery School's established programs, including the discipline policy, and the specific needs of each registered child, is an expectation for enrollment.
- The enrollment of a child into and/or dismissal from St. John's Nursery School is on a case-by-case basis and at the sole discretion of the Nursery School Ministry and designated Administrators.
- The staff of St. John's Nursery School is neither trained nor certified to administer/teach children with developmental delays and/or children with disabilities.
- **POTTY-TRAINING**
 - For the All By Myself classes, the child does not need to be bathroom independent. Diapers or pull-ups are permitted.
 - For all 3 and 4/5-year-old classes, the child **must be** bathroom independent. **NO** diapers or pull-ups are permitted.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum at St. John's Nursery School is aligned with the Chambersburg Area School District's Kindergarten program and the Pennsylvania State Standards for Preschool Education. Our teachers support children's learning opportunities by providing meaningful, theme related experiences to engage their interest, abilities, and culture. Key objectives are obtained through stories, music, games, art, play, instruction, and other interactive learning activities. Each classroom has a daily schedule that is included in the orientation packet.

SCHOOL CALENDAR, OPERATIONAL HOURS AND PROCEDURES

- The Nursery School calendar is closely based on the Chambersburg Area School District's yearly calendar. Our calendar accommodates the CASD Friday closings by adding a week to the beginning and end of our school year.
- **Arrival-** The main doors will be unlocked at 9:25 am, 5 minutes before the start of school. **Prompt arrival is greatly appreciated!** After entering the building, please take your child to the bathroom if needed, and line up in the hallway outside of your child's classroom. (Please do not open the classroom door.) Teachers will greet students at 9:30 am.
- **Dismissal-** The main doors will be unlocked 5 minutes before your child's scheduled dismissal time. After entering the building, please line up in the hallway outside of your child's classroom. (Please do not open the classroom door.) Sometimes children may become anxious if the pickup person is not present when class is dismissed. If you know you will be detained, please contact your teacher and the Director through *ClassDojo* or call the Nursery School at 717-264-8224. If you are continually late picking up your child, a late fee will be assessed.
- **Parking-** For the safety and convenience of all Nursery School families, please use *Parking Lot A*. The yellow chained-in area is designated for families to enter and exit the premises safely. Parking is only permitted in designated parking spaces. Parking is NOT permitted near the yellow chains, the handicapped parking entrance, or in the parking lot turn-around areas.
- **Building Etiquette-** Since our Nursery School is held in a church and we share space, we ask that you please keep the noise level to a minimum as well as control your children in the hall at all times. Sometimes there are church meetings or events (including funerals) that are held during the morning hours. There is no running permitted in our hallways.
- **Scheduling Appointments-** We encourage families to schedule appointments for their children at times other than during their registered school hours. (i.e. doctor, dentist)

TUITION AND PAYMENT INFORMATION

Tuition is calculated according to the total number of days that your child is scheduled to attend nursery school. This total is then divided by 9 months. This means that you will pay the same monthly fee for a month like October, having more school days in it, as you will pay for a month like December, which has fewer school days. Please understand that paid tuition will not be reimbursed.

Tuition Payment:

- Tuition is due on your child's first school day of each month.
- **Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) is highly encouraged and the preferred form of monthly payment.** The form to permit the use of EFT is found in the orientation packet.
- If you do not choose the EFT method, a monthly tuition envelope for check or cash payment is available through the Nursery School Director.
 - Make checks payable to **St. John's Nursery School**.
 - Tuition envelopes will be sent home in your child's bucket a week before tuition is due.
 - Payments not made by the 10th of the month are considered late.
 - Beginning the 11th of the month, late payments will be charged an additional fee of \$5.00 per week until the payment is made.
 - There will be a charge of \$30.00 for a returned check.
- After 4 weeks of nonpayment, your child may be dropped from enrollment.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS & DELAYS

- We follow the Chambersburg School District's calendar for breaks and holidays. For snow days, we are closed if the Chambersburg School District is closed. Snow days will NOT be made up.
- School delay and closing information is broadcast by 95.1 FM. You may also call the Chambersburg Area School District's hotline 717-261-5680 or visit the district website at www.casdonline.org.
- If the district is operating on a 2 hour delay, all classes at the Nursery School will begin at **11:00 am**. Please reference the chart below for your child's dismissal time. You may also reference the Nursery School Calendar for this schedule.

Weather Related Delay Schedule	
<u>Scheduled Time</u>	<u>Adjusted Time</u>
9:30 - 11:30 classes	11:00 - 12:30
9:30 - 12:00 classes	11:00 - 12:30
9:30 - 1:30 classes	11:00 - 1:30

- If you are concerned about road conditions, please know that you are welcome to pick-up your child before his/her scheduled dismissal time. Contact the Nursery School Director if you plan to pick up your child early.
- Parents (and those transporting students) are encouraged to sign up for text/email alerts through the *ClassDojo* app. This app is used by the Nursery School Director and teachers to send important announcements (school closings, weather information, events, etc). An invitation to join *ClassDojo* will be sent via email, or you can scan here to join:



SCHOOL ATTIRE

- Dress your child in play clothes that you will not mind getting a little dirty.
- Dress your child according to the weather. Children go outside on days when the weather permits.
- Please mark your child's coats and jackets with his/her name.
- For three, four and five year olds, your child needs to be able to independently manage the clothing that he/she wears since each child is to be an independent bathroom user.
- In case of "accidents", send in an extra set of clothes (including socks) to be kept in the classroom. Place clothing in a bag labeled with your child's name. Items will be returned at the end of the school year.
- Sturdy, stay-on-your-feet shoes, allowing your child to be ready and easily able to run, jump, crawl, climb, etc. are a must. Flip-flops are a safety concern and are not permitted.
- Keep in mind that although precautions are taken, your child's clothing may be torn or stained. If damage should occur, the Nursery School does not replace or pay for ruined clothing.

TEARS

We are very aware of separation anxiety (sometimes as much for the parent as the child), particularly during the first few weeks of school. The best tactic is to bid your child good-bye with a kiss and hug, reassuring them that you will be back soon, and then promptly leave.

TOTE BUCKET

The Nursery School uses tote buckets instead of backpacks. Tote buckets will be available to purchase at Orientation. Put your child's first name on the outside of the bucket and inside on the bottom.

FUNDRAISERS

Various fundraisers will take place throughout the school year. The purpose of fundraisers is to generate additional funds for special projects to benefit the children and the Nursery School as a whole. Because we are a tax-exempt nursery school, we do not need to collect taxes. Participation in fundraisers is voluntary.

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

- **Room Parents-** A room parent/representative will be designated for each classroom. This person will help organize classroom parties and special events under the supervision of the classroom teacher. This person will also be the contact person for when volunteers are needed for other school functions.
 - **Parties-** There are several classroom parties throughout the year. Each party will provide the opportunity for up to 4 parents/guardians to volunteer within the classroom. Volunteers work together to plan and implement parties with approval of the classroom teacher. Room parents will communicate the need for planning meetings and supplies for these parties. Please know that the Nursery School does recognize the Christian based celebrations of Christmas and Easter.
 - **Parent as a classroom guest-** We appreciate having parents come in to read a story or to share a hobby or vocation. Please contact your child's teacher if you are interested.
 - **Siblings-** Are NOT permitted during volunteer hours.
 - **Volunteer forms-** For those who wish to volunteer in the classroom, the forms listed below must be submitted and approved. These forms can be obtained from the Nursery School Director or online at www.sjucc1811.org/forms. All clearances must be dated within the last 5 years.
 - Volunteer Information Form
 - PA Criminal Record Check
 - PA Child Abuse History Clearance
 - Mandated Reporter Training Certification
 - Attestation of Residency Form (if you have lived in PA for the last 10 consecutive years)
- OR-**
- Federal Criminal Record Check (if you have not lived in PA for the last 10 consecutive years)

HEALTH AND ILLNESS POLICY

To protect the health of the Nursery School children and staff, children who are ill **MUST NOT** come to school. **Children must be symptom-free: no fever, vomiting, diarrhea, etc., and without symptom reducing medication for at least 24 hours** before they return to the classroom. Teachers have permission to refuse admittance to a child who appears to be ill. If your child becomes ill while at school, you will be contacted to come pick up your child as soon as possible.

- **Contagious Conditions-** If your child becomes infected with COVID-19, chickenpox, pink eye, hand foot and mouth, ringworm, strep throat, or other contagious conditions, you must seek medical attention, follow the advice of your doctor, and contact the Nursery School Director. Children with contagious conditions **MUST** remain home until they are feeling better and haven't had a fever for a **full 24 hours** (and they haven't taken medicine for fever during that time).
- **Coughs and Colds-** Colds are very common, but there are some symptoms that warrant keeping a child home. These include a bad cold with persistent cough, green or yellow nasal drainage, green or yellow discharge from eyes. If your child cannot participate in daily routine, he/she is too sick to be at school.
- **Fever-** Your child must remain fever free for 24 hours before returning to Nursery School. This means that if your child had a fever at 6:00 pm they may not return to Nursery School that next day. The **24 hours** begin when your child's fever has broken, he/she is not on fever reducing medication, and temperature remains in a normal range.
- **Diarrhea and Vomiting-** Diarrhea and vomiting due to illness is highly contagious. Child must be symptom free for at least **24 hours** before returning to Nursery School. If your child has diarrhea or vomits at school you will be called immediately to pick them up.
- **Head Lice-** Any child with indications of head lice will be sent home immediately. Parents should consult their child's doctor for appropriate treatment measures. The child needs to be "nit-free" to return to Nursery School. If a lice outbreak should occur, the Nursery School may solicit appropriate and confidential outside assistance. This may include checking your child's head. Parents will be notified if lice have been detected within your child's classroom. All specific information will be kept confidential.
- **Open Wounds-** If your child has a cut or an abrasion, please keep it covered with a bandage until the wound has healed.

TOILET TRAINING POLICY

Children in the 3 and 4/5-year-old classrooms are expected to be toilet-trained prior to the first day of school.

This means children must be able to:

- Recognize the need to use the toilet and communicate that need.
- Use the toilet independently with minimal adult assistance.
- Pull clothing up and down independently.
- Climb onto an adult-sized potty.
- Wipe themselves as needed.
- Flush the toilet.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water.

Pull-ups and diapers are NOT permitted in the 3 and 4/5-year-old classrooms.

We understand that occasional accidents are a normal part of childhood and will always be handled calmly, respectfully, and without punishment or embarrassment.

- One accident in a week is not uncommon in the first couple weeks of school.
- Two accidents in a week indicate the child may not be fully toilet trained.
- Three or more accidents across two weeks indicates the child is not yet ready for the classroom.

WEAPONS

A gun, knife or other object that can be construed as a weapon or is designed to look like a weapon is **NOT** permitted on church property. Even on your child's 'Show and Tell' day, **NO toy guns or toy weapons are permitted on the school grounds.**

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

- If it becomes necessary for your child to be treated for a medical emergency, the *Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form* will be used by the staff to have your child treated. This form is provided in the orientation packet. The parents will be notified immediately.
- If there is a change in your child's health/medical status during the school year, please immediately inform the staff so that the *Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form* can be updated.
- If your child must receive emergency medication during the school day, parents **must fill out the Medication Administration Form** available from the teacher (examples: seizures, asthma, extreme allergies, etc.) The need for emergency medications to be administered during school hours must be prearranged by the parent/guardian with the classroom teacher and the Nursery School Director.
- **Classroom teachers are NOT permitted to administer medications** (i.e. Tylenol, antibiotics, cough medication and over the counter medications.)

MEDICAL INSURANCE and LIABILITY

St. John's Nursery School has accidental medical insurance and liability for registered students who are injured during the student's attendance within the regular school hours.

REPORTING ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

All employees of the Nursery School are required to immediately report and document all accidents and incidents (including discipline) involving a child at the Nursery School. A staff member will complete the appropriate form for the parent/guardian to sign and return as soon as possible. After making a copy of the form, the original form will be returned to the parent/guardian.

- **Medical Report:** reports to parents any incident in which first aid was administered.
- **Incident Report:** informs parents of child's involvement in a behavioral incident and the action taken by staff.



SNACK

Children will be asked to provide a healthy snack for their class on a rotating basis. A snack calendar will be given out each month to inform you of the days for which you are responsible and the number of children in the classroom. As part of the snack calendar, your child will be assigned to bring a snack on the day closest to his/her birthday.

NOTE: We are a NUT FREE SCHOOL. Do NOT send any items to school that contain nuts. To insure safety, review the ingredient label to verify that the snack is nut free.

You may only send prepackaged goods to school with your student for snack. Snacks do not need to be the individual serving size packages. All items must be unopened and contain an ingredient label to insure the safety of all our students.

Items NOT permitted:

- No homemade items, including cupcakes and birthday cakes
- No grapes
- No nuts of any kind
- No peanut butter

The following are snack suggestions that are generally enjoyed by preschool children:

Applesauce	Baby Carrots	Baked potato chips
Apple wedges	Bananas	Jello
Goldfish crackers	Fruit Cups	Pudding
Graham crackers	String Cheese	Popcorn
Raisins	Yogurt/Go-Gurt	Pretzels

*Unpackaged fruit must not be cut. Staff will cut the fruit.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

If desired, you may provide special plates, cups, and napkins for your child's birthday snack. Birthday cakes are not permitted.

The following are suggestions for birthday snacks:

Brownies	Mini cupcakes	Pizza
Rice Krispie treats	Popsicles	Doughnut Holes

LUNCH

There is no refrigeration available for packed lunches and lunch items will not be heated at school. Our school is Nut Free and we follow our Nut Free Policy for packed lunches.

WATER

Water fountains will not be in use within the building. Each child must bring a container filled with water to school each day. Label the container with your child's name. For your child's safety, it is important that containers are cleaned daily with soap and water.

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments are completed in January and May and are sent home to the family for review and signature. Families may request a conference with the teacher to discuss the assessment. Families may also request a conference anytime throughout the school year. Should the teacher have a concern about a child's progress, the teacher will initiate contact with the parent, and notify the Nursery School Director.

An additional resource to all preschool children in Pennsylvania is the Lincoln Intermediate Unit (LIU). This agency provides many services to preschoolers including speech and developmental evaluations. These services, designed to clarify developmental concerns, are provided at no additional cost to parents. Speak with your child's teacher or the Nursery School Director for information on how to acquire these services.

CONFIDENTIALITY

St. John's Nursery School protects the confidentiality of the children in our program. Employees are to respect the individual dignity of the children, families and co-workers at all times. Daily incident reports and/or general information concerning your child's progress will be shared only in a private conversation between the teacher and the parent.

Staff members do not post a child's address, telephone number, or other information that would make it possible to identify the child. The staff may choose to generate a list of names, addresses, and phone numbers for the purpose of birthdays, Valentine's Day, and other special occasions. Parental permission is required for your child's name to be included on such a list.

Candid photos of the students are taken periodically throughout the school year. Parents must give written permission to have their child included in any candid classroom photos that may be posted in classrooms, hallways, presentations, newspapers, and websites. Photo release forms are included in the orientation packet.

DRUGS & ALCOHOL

St. John's UCC prohibits the use of tobacco, controlled substances, and illegal drugs, or consumption of alcohol while one is participating in a ministry or program serving children or youth. Tobacco, drug, and alcohol products are NEVER allowed on church properties. Electronic smoking devices are also prohibited.

REQUIRED SAFETY PRACTICES

The staff, Nursery School Ministry, and St. John's Church take the safety of your children very seriously. To keep the children safe, it is our practice to:

- Never let a student unattended.
- Obtain written information about any special needs of your child.
- Obtain written permission as to who may or may not pick up your child.
- Control parking lot traffic.
- Maintain door security by implementing regulated access times.
- Train the staff in CPR and First Aid.
- Obtain a Child Abuse and Criminal Background check on each staff member and volunteer.
- Provide each classroom with a telephone and a two-way radio.
- Conduct timely and directional fire drills.
- Adhere to the Weapons Policy and the Drugs & Alcohol Policy of St. John's United Church of Christ.
- Use *ClassDojo* to notify parents of emergencies.
- Follow the St. John's Church Safe Church Policy found online at www.sjucc1811.org.

COMMUNICATION AND SHARING CONCERNS

The Nursery School Ministry is the governing body that sets the programs, policies, procedures, daily operations, and administrative details for the Nursery School. If you have a concern within the Nursery School setting, you should first contact your child's teacher who will work to reach a solution. If your concerns persist, contact the Nursery School Director at nsdirector@sjucc.net or 717-264-8224.

CHILD ABUSE POLICY and HEALTH CONCERNS

As mandated by State Law, St. John's Nursery School Staff will report any incidences of suspected child abuse to appropriate agencies. The goal of the law is to protect children from abuse, to ensure their opportunity for healthy growth and development, and whenever possible, to preserve and stabilize family life. As we respond to the expectations of the law and seek to ensure your child's safety, please do not be offended if we inquire about your child's well-being. All staff members are Mandated Reporter trained and certified.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

St. John's Nursery School takes pride in providing a caring, nurturing, accepting, and safe environment for children. In order to maintain this environment, it is sometimes necessary to discipline children for inappropriate behavior. Each classroom teacher has his/her own discipline management system based on redirection and positive reinforcement to help correct the inappropriate behavior. Areas of concern that may impact enrollment status within the Nursery School include, but are not limited to, the following: causing physical harm to self or to others, disrespect of authority, use of inappropriate language, aggressive behavior, disruptive behavior, destruction of school property, and/or the inability of the Nursery School program to meet the specific needs of the child.

- If it is determined that a particular child is not able to comply with the rules of the classroom and a serious behavior problem persists, the administration and the classroom teacher will meet with the parents to share concerns. During this meeting a remediation plan, which includes daily communication with the parents, will be developed to address areas of concern and a probationary period will be established.
- The child's responsiveness to the remediation plan will be assessed by the administrator and classroom teacher. The results of this assessment will be reported to the parent(s) at a meeting at the conclusion of the remediation/probationary period.
- The child will be dismissed from the program if behavior remains inappropriate and/or disruptive. The decision as to whether a child shall continue in the program shall be made by the Nursery School Administration in its sole discretion and shall be final and binding.
- The Nursery School Administration exclusively retains the right to initiate procedures for withdrawal at any time. Parents will be notified if their child's enrollment status is under review. The Nursery School Administration shall include:
 - Pastor of Record
 - Chair of the Nursery School Ministry and/or designee
 - Nursery School Director
 - Classroom Teacher
- Registration and/or tuition fees are not refundable for any child dismissed from the program.

SCHOOL FORMS

The forms listed below **must be returned within one week** of the start of class. These forms are provided in your child's orientation packet.

____ Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form
____ Photo Release Form
____ Handbook Confirmation Form

____ Tuition Choice Form
____ Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) Form
____ Child Interest Form