



St. Paul Early Learning Center
2025-2026 Parent & Student Handbook
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Welcome Letter

Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Paul Early Learning Center! In choosing St. Paul Early Learning Center, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education. This same commitment is anticipated as you enter a partnership with St. Paul Early Learning Center.

St. Paul Early Learning Center Parent Handbook reflects the policies of St. Paul Early Learning Center for the 2025-2026 school year. Please read this document carefully and sign the agreement on FACTS. This agreement states you intend to abide by the policies of St. Paul Early Learning Center during the **2025-2026** school year. Failure to uphold this agreement may result in your child's termination from the school.

The faculty and staff of St. Paul look forward to working with you to promote the growth and development of your child and to create a positive school experience.

Together let us ask God's blessing as we work together to teach our children and help them reach their potential, and for His ongoing protection.

Sincerely,

Wendi Murray, Director

601-278-4808

Susan Irby, Assistant Director

601-955-1255

Diocesan Office of Catholic Education Mission Statement

The Diocese of Jackson Office of Catholic Education supports and sustains learning its communities to foster disciples who pursue academic excellence in a Christ-centered environment.

General Information

Philosophy and Goals

Catholic Education is an expression of the mission entrusted by Jesus to his Church and is concerned with the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, aesthetic, and physical growth of each child. The goal of St. Paul Early Learning Center is to encourage and support each child to reach his/her potential in a multifaceted society.

Center Mission Statement

Christ-centered. Quality care. Early education for the whole child.

Center History

St. Paul Early Learning Center opened its doors in 1990 and is a ministry of St. Paul Catholic Church and a part of the Diocese of Jackson.

Accreditation/Licensing

St. Paul Early Learning Center is accredited by Cognia (formerly AdvancED) a research-based, international educational accrediting agency focused on school improvement through student and stakeholder engagement.

St. Paul Early Learning Center is licensed by the Mississippi Department of Health

Parental Cooperation Policy (Diocesan Policy 5111)

As the primary educators of their children, parents/guardians freely make the choice of a Catholic education for their sons/daughters. Registration in a particular Catholic school/center is an agreement by the parent/guardian to accept and abide by the rules and regulations of the institution and to support its philosophy of education.

A cooperative relationship between the school/center personnel and a parent/guardian is essential for the overall education of a student. It is critical that a cooperative relationship be maintained through constructive dialogue with the parent/guardian.

If a parent/guardian refuses to abide by the rules and regulations of the school/center or by word or action is unsupportive of its goals or otherwise fails to meet his/her obligations under school/center or Diocesan policies, the administrator may require the parent/guardian to withdraw his/her child or children from the school community.

Additionally, parents/guardians will be held to the same standards of respect as students are in regard to their interactions with administrators, teachers, staff, and students.

Parents Role in Education

We, at St. Paul Early Learning Center, consider it a privilege to work with parents in the education of children because we believe parents are the primary educators of their children. Therefore, it is your right and your duty to become the primary role models for the development of your child's life---physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically. Your choice of St. Paul Early Learning Center involves a commitment and exhibits a concern for helping your child to recognize God as the greatest good in his/her life.

Good example is the strongest teacher. Your personal relationship with God, with each other, and with the Church community will affect the way your child relates to God and others. Ideals taught in school are not well rooted in the child unless these are nurtured by the example of good Catholic/Christian morality and by an honest personal relationship with God in your family life.

Once you have chosen to enter into a partnership with us at St. Paul Early Learning Center, we trust you will be loyal to this commitment. During these formative years, your child needs constant support from both parents and faculty in order to develop his/her moral, intellectual, social, cultural, and physical endowment. Neither parents nor teachers can afford to doubt the sincerity of the efforts of their educational partner in the quest of challenging, yet nourishing, the student to reach his/her potential. Evidence of mutual respect between parents and teachers will model good mature behavior and relationships.

Together, let us begin this year with a commitment to partnership as we support one another in helping your child to become the best person they can become.

Parents as Partners

Parents are the prime educators of children, and it is St. Paul Early Learning Center's task to assist them in this work. St. Paul Early Learning Center recognizes the differences in students' abilities and potential, and therefore strives to develop:

- Basic Christian attitudes and values
- A strengthening of character
- Integrity through self-discipline
- A desire for personal achievement and life-long learning
- A reverence for oneself, others, and all creation

Policies

Admissions

Before admission to St. Paul Early Learning Center, the following must be submitted on FACTS: Application/Enrollment Form, Parent-Center Agreement, and Immunization 121 Form.

Please note: We have an extensive waiting list at the Early Learning Center, you may have to pay in advance to hold your child's spot in the nursery. The Early Learning Center's budget is based on all positions filled throughout the year. (Addendum added 11.16.23 – approved School Advisory Council)

Ages Served

St. Paul Early Learning Center serves children ages 8 weeks to five years old.

Withdrawal and Disenrollment

St. Paul Early Learning Center requires at least two weeks' notice if a child is withdrawing from the Learning Center.

For various reasons, some children and/or families have difficulty adjusting to the child-care environment. In such cases, St. Paul Early Learning Center may ask you to withdraw your child. If this should happen, you will receive at least two weeks' notice in order for you to make other arrangements for your child's care.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Educational Institutions in the Diocese of Jackson admit students of any race, color, gender or national origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students. Catholic schools seek primarily to serve Catholic parents who want a Catholic education for their children. Children of other faith traditions may be accepted if enrollment openings are available.

Financial

Tuition payment effective June 1, 2025:

Infants-Older Infants - \$840.00

Walkers –Toddlers - \$810.00

Twos-Fives - \$780.00

Sibling Discount - \$10.00

Registration

A non-refundable registration fee of \$150 is paid to hold a child spot upon acceptance. Registration is paid each year and is due by March 17th for the 2025-2026 school year. After March 17th, the fee will be \$300.

Tuition

- The tuition set forth in your enrollment agreement is due and payable on the first day of each month. St. Paul Early Learning Center uses FACTS.
- There **will not be a** discount or reduction for days in which the Center is closed due to holiday, staff development days, inclement weather, or a pandemic.
- Tuition is due whether your child is present or not each day of that month.
If you choose to remove your child from the Center for the summer months, your child may lose his/her spot.

Late Fees

- **A charge of \$30.00 will be assessed for insufficient funds.**

Any account becoming thirty (30) days past due could result in the cancellation of your child's enrollment at the Center. Habitually late tuition payments violate the enrollment agreement and will result in the removal of your child from the Center.

Additional Fees

There is an annual Supply Fee of \$150.00 per child. This fee is due **August 15, 2025**. A Capital Improvement fee of \$150.00 per child is due **January 15, 2026**. **These fees are automatically withdrawn through FACTS, are mandatory and non-refundable.**

Custodial Information and Policies

Parental Custody Issues

All subpoenas, requests for documents, court or administrative orders, and other legal documents received by St. Paul Early Learning Center must be reviewed by the Diocesan attorney. The St. Paul Early Learning Center will bill the legal fees incurred to the parent, guardian, or party who sent the documents.

Cases Involving Legal Action

If a teacher (or other St. Paul Early Learning Center employee) is subpoenaed to testify in a legal proceeding or a St. Paul Early Learning Center employee is required to provide documents pursuant to a subpoena, request for documents, court or administrative order, or other legal document, St. Paul Early Learning Center will assess the parent, guardian, or party who sent the document the cost associated with obtaining a substitute teacher and /or all costs and attorney's fees incurred by St. Paul Early Learning Center or employee in producing the documents and/or appearing in the legal proceeding.

Buckley Amendment and FERPA

St. Paul Early Learning Center chooses to adhere to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) regarding privacy of student records and the rights of non-custodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal. In the absence of any court document, St. Paul Early Learning Center will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child.

Non-Custodial Parents

In the absence of a court order, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's progress. St. Paul Early Learning Center reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra records sent to more than one home address.

Procedures

Arrival and Pick-up

Center Hours

St. Paul Early Learning Center is open from 7:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M.

Arrival and Pick-Up

Children must be picked up by 6:00 P.M. There will be a \$5.00 charge for every minute the child remains at the Center after 6:00 P.M.

Children should arrive by 10:00 A.M. Children **may not** be dropped off between 11:00-2:00 except in the Nursery. We want the children to nap peacefully without disruption.

Children should not stay eleven(11) hours a day on a consistent basis.

Communication

General Communication

St. Paul Early Learning Center teachers in the Nursery, Older Infants, Walkers, Toddlers, and Twos communicate regularly with parents through the daily activity sheet and Remind.

A monthly newsletter, menu, and calendar are sent out at the first of the month to inform parents of activities and events. Information about the St. Paul Early Learning Center can also be found at www.saintpaullearningcenter.com and on our Face Book page.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

St. Paul Early Learning Center schedules two parent conferences a year. The first conference will be in the Fall and the second one in the Spring. Parent-teacher conferences may be requested at any time. Please call the Office and we will arrange the time.

Center Policy for Addressing Local Issues

The Diocese of Jackson, in concert with the Office of Catholic Education and St. Paul Early Learning Center, seeks to resolve concerns and complaints of students and parents whenever possible.

The most efficient and timely way to resolve such issues remains at the level of issuance.

1. Parents/students must first notify the center official wherein the conflict lies (i.e., teacher, teacher assistant, etc.).
2. If there is no resolution at that level, the parent/student should speak with the Director, who will make every effort to obtain a solution.
3. Still, if the concern has not been resolved at the administrative level, the parent/student should contact in writing the pastor or canonical administrator for the school. St. Paul Early Learning Center's canonical administrator is Fr. Gerry Hurley.
4. Finally, If the avenues described above have not yielded a resolution, parents should contact the Office of Catholic Education via email at education.office@jacksondiocese.org. Please be prepared to include the policy or procedural violation in the email.

Health and Wellness

Please call the Learning Center or email to stpaullearningcenter@gmail.com if your child will be absent or **send a Remind message to the teacher.**

If a child becomes ill, parents are asked to come immediately for the child. Parents are asked to keep children at home if illness is suspected.

If a child has a fever, diarrhea, vomiting, or flu-like symptoms, please keep your child home for twenty-four hours symptom free. If your child has a contagious illness, please bring a doctor's excuse that clearly states when the child may return to daycare.

St. Paul Learning Center reserves the right to request that a child be examined by a physician for any illness that may be contagious to others.

If your child has a communicable disease, the Center should be notified as soon as possible. Upon the child's return, the Center must have a statement from the doctor stating that the child is no longer contagious and can return to day care. The child must be FREE of symptoms like fever, (without fever-reducing medication) diarrhea, etc. for a 24 hour school day before returning to the center.

If your child has a temperature of 100.4 degrees, you will be asked to come get your child. If a child has a loose stool or if the director/assistant director deems it necessary, you will be asked to come get your child.

CONTAGIOUS CONDITIONS LIKE LICE, PINK EYE, RINGWORMS, IMPETIGO, etc

Contagious conditions such as head lice, pink eye, ringworms, impetigo, etc, require treatment before the child will be allowed to return to the Center.

If you find lice in your child's head, please call the Learning Center **before** returning to school.

Pandemics

The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff is a top priority. In the event of a pandemic, such as the coronavirus disease of 2019, the administration works in consultation with the Diocese of Jackson Office of Catholic Education to determine the necessary actions regarding the closure and/or reopening of the Center. Center and diocesan administration makes decisions relating to school environment and procedures in consideration of state and local government directives, as well as recommendations and guidelines issued by the Mississippi Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A task force, comprised of persons representing parents, educators, business, legal, and medical professionals, sets forth the requirements and procedures to be followed.

Allergy Policy

Any food allergies must be noted on the enrollment form completed by the parent on FACTS. All immunization policies of the Mississippi Department of Health are strictly enforced.

Medication Policy

St. Paul Learning Center staff, with written permission from the parent will:

- Give one (1) breathing treatment per day, per child.
- Administer over the counter anti-gas medication and teething medications to infants.
- **Use EpiPen as needed.**

Behavioral Expectations

Discipline is a form of guidance. Its purpose is to help the child learn acceptable behavior through understanding rather than force. The child's age, intelligence, emotional make-up, and his/her experience will be considered when re-directing and guiding the child's behavior. Encouragement and praise of good behavior will be used.

If a child's behavior is endangering himself/herself or others, teachers will ask the child to go to the "quiet corner" until the child has gained his/her self-control, or the teacher may ask the director/assistant director for help to walk the child to the Learning Center Office to talk and/or calm down.

If a child is removed from the group in the classroom for disciplinary reasons, he/she will always remain within sight of a staff member.

Behavior guidance for individual children can include the following measures:

- Positive guidance in the form of encouragement, choices, directions that are brief, a quiet, confident voice, or redirection are utilized.
- Informal discussions with parents or guardians about ways to encourage positive behavior at school and at home.

A "Positive Behavior System" for the students to use a colored "Clip Chart" to help monitor behavior and give our students a visual understanding of their actions. Students will be able to physically move the clips according to their behavior choices for our PreK 3 and PreK 4 classes.

Role Model-Pink

Outstanding-Purple

Good Day-Blue

Ready to Learn-Green

Think About It-Yellow

Teacher Choice-Orange

Parent Contact-RED

We also remind children: Be safe. Be neat. Be kind.

We will try all means to work with you and your child to encourage positive behavior and to protect the safety of your child and others. If any child's behavior endangers the child or others, we will institute the following if there are:

- Three or more documented incidents of violence toward other children
- Three or more documented incidents of violence toward adults
- Three or more documented incidents of self-endangerment behavior

Parents will receive written notification at the time of the incident. After the third incident, the St. Paul Early Learning Center will send a written request to the parent requesting a mandatory meeting with the teacher and director to discuss referral to First Steps Early Intervention Program or an alternative.

Based on the First Steps' assessment and input from the St. Paul Early Learning Center staff, a plan will be developed and implemented. If the Center is unable to successfully meet the child's needs, a written notice to the parent, signed by teacher and director, recommending a transfer to another school that would better serve the needs of the child will be given. Two weeks' notice will be given to the family.

Center Safety

Children always have adult supervision.

No photographs will be made of a child, except by Center staff for instructional or public relations purposes, without written authorization by the parent or guardian.

The Center will comply with all applicable state and federal laws regarding suspected abuse and neglect of a child.

Center staff will not divulge information about the health, development, residence, or family of a child to any non-center employees without the permission of the parent or guardian.

Emergency Procedures

If an emergency were to occur and St. Paul Early Learning Center needed to evacuate, we would relocate to Highland Bluff Elementary School, 5970 Highway 25, Brandon, MS 39232, (across the street from St. Paul Learning Center) or Circle of Friends, 602 Luckney Road, Flowood, MS, 39232.

Inclement Weather

In case of inclement weather that necessitates early dismissal and/or center closure, St. Paul Early Learning Center will follow the Rankin County School District Emergency Plans. The Learning Center may also close at the Director/Assistant's Discretion if necessary. We will contact parents through text, telephone and/or email if it is necessary to close the Learning Center. We will also post information on Face Book, Instagram, email, and our website. We also use Remind to send out texts in an emergency.

Fire Drill

St. Paul Early Learning Center practices fire drills and tornado drills once a month.

Tornado Drill

St. Paul Early Learning Center practices fire drills and tornado drills once a month.

Unknown Person on Campus

St. Paul Early Learning Center has lockdown procedures in place.

Playground Safety

St. Paul Early Learning Center follows the guidelines for general safety procedures.

Meals and Snacks

We are a peanut-free facility.

Parents of children in the nursery and older infant room are responsible for providing baby food, formula, juice and milk. **All baby food and bottles must be properly labeled with the child's name.** Parents should bring written instructions concerning feeding.

Children in the Walker, Toddler, Two-, Three-, Four-, and Five-year-old classrooms are served breakfast, lunch, and two afternoon snacks.

Children should not bring food or drink from home into the St. Paul Early Learning Center in the mornings. The monthly menus are posted on the bulletin boards in the classrooms and in the cafeteria. Menus are approved by the Mississippi State Board of Health Division of Child Care Services. Enrollment forms require parents to list all food allergies.

Parties and Celebrations

Birthdays are a special day in the life of a child, and we invite parents/guardians to celebrate in the following ways:

- Check **in advance** with your child's teacher about the day. Birthday refreshments are served at afternoon snack time.
- You may supply refreshments such as cookies, donuts, or individual ice cream cups. **Please do not send cupcakes.** Birthday treats must be **store bought** with the ingredients listed.
- Invitations to a party outside the school must be given to all the children in the class or if it is a girls' party, all the girls must be included, a boys' party, all the boys.

Curriculum

St. Paul Early Learning Center uses Frog Street for their curriculum. Frog Street uses early brain development research as the framework for instruction. It offers strong daily routines that develop key social and emotional skills. It balances intentional instruction with child-directed play and values individual differences. Frog Street provides comprehensive, integrated, thematic activities in all domains. It encourages caregiver and child interactions to develop rich oral language and vocabulary as well as strong social and emotional connections. Frog Street also provides materials and strategies for maintaining healthy parent partnerships and professional development. Most of all, the program embraces the joy of learning.

Annual Promotion to new groups/teachers

St. Paul Early Learning Center begins a new school June 1st. Most children stay in the same classroom until the school year ends the following May. Sometimes children move up during the school year as openings become available.

General Information

St. Paul Early Learning Center Advisory Council

Regular meetings of the St. Paul Early Learning Center Advisory Council are held on the third Wednesday of the month. The Council operates under the policies in the Diocesan manual. It is a consultative council.

Field Trips

St. Paul Early Learning Center children in the walker, toddlers, young two, older two, PreK 3, and PreK 4, classes take one field trip each year. Parents provide transportation and must accompany their child on the field trip. St. Paul Early Learning Center does not provide care on the morning of the field trip if a parent chooses for his/her child to not attend the field trip.

Room Parents

Room parents are assigned to each classroom. We have a Room Parent Coordinator for the Learning Center. Room parents help communicate with fellow parents about the St. Paul Early Learning Center activities, organize monthly birthday treats for teachers, parties for the classes and special events.

Clothing

Children in all classrooms should wear comfortable, washable clothing that they can manage easily, and shoes appropriate for outside play. **Velcro shoes are preferred. Flip flop shoes are not allowed. Each child needs at least two seasonally appropriate changes of clothes.** All clothes should be labeled with your child's name.

Potty Training

Potty training begins in the older two-year-old classrooms. The director, teacher and parents will work together to decide when the time is appropriate.

At St. Paul Early Learning Center, we know that toilet accidents are natural events in the lives of young children. We never criticize or punish children for toilet accidents.

We help children with toileting and toilet accidents without talking about accidents. For example, we might say, "Johnny, let's get some dry clothes now," instead of "Johnny, you've wet your pants! We have to change your pants right now!"

Toys/Jewelry

St. Paul Early Learning Center provides a variety of toys and games in each classroom. We ask that children **not** bring toys and/or jewelry from home to the St. Paul Early Learning Center.

Children are not allowed to wear teething beads.

Holidays

June 19, 2025 – Juneteenth Holiday

July 4, 2025 – July 4th Holiday

July 28, 2025 - Diocesan Professional Development

September 1, 2025 – Labor Day

October 13, 2025 – Columbus Day

November 26, 2025 – Professional Development

November 27-28, 2025 – Thanksgiving Holidays

December 22-26, 2025 – Christmas Holidays

December 31, 2026 – New Year's Eve Holiday

January 1, 2026 – New Year's Day Holiday

January 19, 2026 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

March 12, 2026 – Professional Development

March 13, 2026 – Spring Holiday

April 3, 2026 – Good Friday

May 26, 2026 – Memorial Day Holiday

Appendixes

Photo and Video Release

PHOTO-VIDEO RELEASE

I hereby give permission for my son/daughter _____ to be photographed or videotaped at St. Paul Early Learning Center. I realize that the photo may be published in the newspaper, a magazine, the school website, social media, or other publication. The video may be used for informational or educational purposes regarding the programs or curriculum at St. Paul Early Learning Center.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Return by _____

Mississippi Immunization Requirements

Child Care Immunization Requirements

The MSDH regulations governing the licensure of child care facilities mandate that each child in a licensed facility have immunizations according to the table shown below. Children ages 0 – 4 years of age and enrolled in licensed child care facilities are expected to be age appropriately immunized^a.

Range of recommended ages									
Vaccine	Birth	1 Mo	2 Mos	4 Mos	6 Mos	12 Mos	15 Mos	18 Mos	24 Mos
Hepatitis B (HepB)^b		#1		#2	#3				
Inactivated Polio (IPV)			#1	#2	#3				
Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP)			#1	#2	#3	#4			
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b^c (Hib)			#1	#2	(#3) ^c	#3 or #4 ^c			
Pneumococcal^d (PCV)			#1	#2	#3	#4			
Measles, Mumps, Rubella^e (MMR)						#1			
Varicella^f (VAR; aka Chickenpox)						#1			

- a* - Children who are not up to date for age should be vaccinated following the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) 2011 catch-up schedule, available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/default.htm>. Where an age range for a vaccine is shown, the vaccine is NOT required until the END of the age range.
- b* - An infant between birth and 2 months of age may receive one or more doses of Hep B vaccine.
- c* - The number of recommended doses of Hib vaccine will vary according to the age at which a child receives the 1st dose of Hib and the type of Hib vaccine administered.
- d* - Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV) is required for all children aged 0-4 years entering a child care facility, effective January 1, 2008. Children age ≥ 5 years of age entering daycare, child care or after school care will not be required to receive PCV.
- e* - MMR vaccine will only be waived if there is a documented physician's diagnosis of previous infection with measles, mumps and rubella disease or serological confirmation of immunity to measles, mumps and rubella.
- f* - Varicella vaccine will be waived for evidence of past infection: including past history of chickenpox or a serologic confirmation of immunity to chickenpox.

Center’s Right to Amend

Right to Amend

St. Paul Early Learning Center reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via the school or through e-mail communication.

Parent Signature Page

Parent Signature Page

I have read the 2025 – 2026 Parent/Student Handbook and agree to follow the school policies and procedures as stated.

Family Name _____

Parent signature

Date

Parent signature

Date