

2023-2024
Parent Handbook



St Michael and All Angels' Early Learning Center

A Ministry of St. Michael and All Angels' Episcopal Church

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website: www.saintmichaelepiscopal.org
FEIN: 57-600-7817
SC DSS License # 16556
Joanne Vaughn, Director
Cathy Brown, Assistant Director



Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Michael's ELC. We are excited that you and your child have become a part of the St. Michael and All Angels' family, and we look forward to having the opportunity to nurture the growth and development of your child. We will encourage your child intellectually, physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually and will provide a safe, quality environment where your child will learn, grow, and develop by

- giving each child a stable, nurturing, and stimulating learning environment that is age appropriate,
- providing experiences that will promote growth and independence, social competence, and a positive self-concept in each child, and
- offering opportunities for parent participation and involvement based on open communication.

Please read each section of this handbook carefully. It contains information on our programs, guidelines with regard to regulatory agencies, and all of the policies and practices that we use at St. Michael's ELC.

Please sign and date the form found on the back page of the Handbook as an acknowledgement that you have read and understand our policies and practices and that you will abide by them. The form may be turned into the office or to your child's teacher.

We look forward to working with your child and with you.

Sincerely,

Joanne Vaughn

childelc@saintmichaelepiscopal.org

Director

St. Michael's ELC

2023-2024 School Calendar

Any Changes to the calendar will be immediately announced via electronic media and will be reflected on the website calendar.

Day of the Week	Date	Description	Time	Notes
Thursday	August 3	Last Day of Summer Camp	All Day	
Friday	August 4	Closed for Teacher Workday Back to School Bask	<u>Closed from 7am-5pm</u> Open 5pm-7pm	Closed & Back to School Bash is from 5-7
Sunday	August 13 th	Blessing of Backpacks 1 st Kid's Choir Blessing of Teachers	10 am	Join the SMAA Kid's Choir & Blessing of Back to School
Thursday	August 17 th	VIP Breakfast Very Important People to St. Michael's Day	7:00 am-9:00am	Come enjoy a drop in breakfast (parents/guardians)
Monday	September 4	Labor Day	All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Monday	September 11	Grandparents Picnic	11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Bring a picnic lunch from 11-12 with grandparents
Tuesday	September 12	Parent Teacher Organization Meeting	5:30pm – 6:30pm	Come and talk about upcoming events and ways you can help around the ELC
Monday-Friday	September 11 –September 15	Scholastic Book Fair	7:00am-5:45pm every day	
Friday	September 15	Parent's Night Out	6:00pm-9:00 pm	
Monday	September 25	Family Picnics Popsicles with Parents	11:00am -12:00pm 3:30pm	If you can't make the picnic, come have a popsicle later in the day
Thursday	September 28	Teacher In-service	School closing @ 2pm	CLOSING @ 2
Friday	September 29	Teacher In-service/training	School Closed All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Tuesday & Wednesday	October 10 – October 11	Fall Pictures	7:30am – 11:00 am	Schedule to come out later
Saturday	October 21	Fall Festival & Trunk or Treat	10 am – 6 pm	Fall Festival, Vendor Fair, Pumpkin Patch & Trunk or Treat @ SMAA
Tuesday	October 31	Halloween Parade & Dance Party	9:30 am	
Monday	November 13	Parent Teacher Organization Meeting	5:30pm – 6:30pm	Come and talk about upcoming events and ways you can help around the ELC
Thursday	November 23	Thanksgiving Holiday	All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Friday	November 24	Thanksgiving Holiday	All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Saturday	December 2	Carolina Carillon Christmas Parade	Times to be determined	Come join us and march in the Carolina Carillon Christmas Parade
Monday-Friday	December 4 – December 8	Christmas Around the World		

Friday	December 8	Parent's Night Out	6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	
Friday	December 8	Special Movie Day/ PJ Day	All Day	
Friday	December 15	Christmas Programs & Cookies w/ Santa	Time TBD	
Friday	December 22	Christmas Break	All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Monday	December 25	Christmas Break	All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Tuesday	December 26	Christmas Break	All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Monday	January 1	New Year's Break	All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Monday	January 15	Martin Luther King Day	All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Tuesday	January 17	100 th Day of School Celebration	All Day	
Monday-Friday	January 22- January 26	St. Michael Career Week	All Day	Parent's Volunteer to talk to classrooms about their careers
Saturday	February 3	Sweetheart Dance	5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	
Monday	February 19	President's Day-Teacher Professional development	All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Monday – Friday	March 4- March 8	Read Across America Week PJs & Pancakes Friday	All Week	Parent Volunteers Needed
Friday	March 8	Parent's Night Out	6:00 pm – 9:00 pm	
Tuesday & Wednesday	March 26 & March 27	Spring Pictures	7:30 a.m.–11:30 a.m.	Schedule to come out later
Friday	April 12	Family Cookout and Annual Art Show	530pm – 7:00pm	
Monday – Friday	May 6 – May 10	Teacher Appreciation Week	All Week	
Friday	May 10	Pastries with Parents!	7:00am – 9:00am	Drop in and have a Muffin to celebrate Mother's Day
Friday	May 17	Field Day	All morning	Parent Volunteers Needed
Wednesday	May 22	4K Kangaroo Graduation	11:00 am	
Monday	May 27	Memorial Day	All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Friday	May 31	Last Day of School	All Day	
Monday	June 3	Summer Camp Begins	All Day	
Friday	June 14	Donuts with Grownups!!	7:15 am – 9:30 am	Drop in and have a Doughnut to celebrate Father's Day
Wednesday	June 19	Juneteenth	All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED
Wednesday	July 3	Popsicles with Parents	3:30 pm	Come have a popsicle with your children
Thursday	July 4	Independence Day	All Day	SCHOOL CLOSED

Calendar Subject to Change

OUR PROGRAM

Philosophy

As an Early Learning Center, we support the research that children learn best in an interactive, loving, relationship-based environment. We further believe that all areas of development (intellectual, social-emotional, physical, and spiritual) are inter-related. These beliefs are reflected in our choice of curriculum, materials, and our learning environment. The following statements are about how children grow, develop, and learn, and about how teachers support their development, guide our professional practices.

- Children are developmentally complex with their own individual growth and behavior patterns.
- The interactions and relationships that form between adults and children are the most important ingredients in the care and instruction of young children.
- Children thrive on supportive, positive, and individualized adult-child interactions.
- Our atmosphere for learning is one of acceptance, mutual respect, pleasure, fairness, consistency, expectations, and encouragement.
- Learning is an active process. Children learn through the use of all their senses.
- Children learn best when given a wide range of learning activities.
- Children learn responsibility by making age-appropriate decisions in a predictable, organized environment, with caring adults who have clear expectations and give appropriate consequences.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a safe, loving, developmentally appropriate environment in which we nurture the whole child and introduce them to the Christian faith.

Program Characteristics

The following elements of quality are characteristic of the program at St. Michael's ELC.

1. The program is led by a Director and Assistant Director with degrees in early childhood education and educational leadership and teachers who have early childhood credentials and training.
2. The Director, Assistant Director and teachers are committed to providing an early childhood program that is physically and emotionally healthy and safe. All staff members are certified in infant and child CPR.
3. Spiritual development is an important part of our program. Children pray before snacks and lunch. Children three and older participate in a weekly chapel conducted by St. Michael's Vicar. Bible stories are shared with the children regularly. The children participate in music activities with the church Music Director, and the older children can take part in our St. Nicholas Choir.
4. Our program fosters growth in self-confidence. Positive guidance is used to guide children's behavior. Children begin to learn the Center's rules which are: *Be Kind. Be Safe. Respect your Friends. Treat others the way you want to be treated.*
5. Positive Discipline and Guidance: Our teachers are trained to use positive techniques of guidance including redirection, reinforcement, role modeling, and encouragement. Anticipation

and elimination of potential problems are techniques we successfully apply. Consistency is used in our daily schedule to establish routines. St. Michael's ELC discipline policy forbids any form of corporal punishment.

Code of Conduct

All members of the ELC family are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful manner towards others. Parents are asked to treat the ELC staff in a courteous manner with dignity. If you have a concern, open communication directly with the teacher and director is encouraged. We respectfully ask parents to avoid speaking with other parents about concerns as negativity and gossip sows discord.

Curriculum

Curriculum is specifically ordered for each class based on the age and developmental level of the children in the classrooms. Our classrooms are designed to engage children in happy, unhurried learning. Our Learning Centers described below are play-based and represent the best practices for young children. Our curriculum is in line with the *Good Start, Grow Smart, South Carolina Standards in Early Education*.

- SC Early Learning Standards: SC has early learning standards for children 6 weeks- 5 years of age. They are organized according to age and stage of development and cover developmental domains such as approaches to learning, social and emotional development, language development and communication, mathematical thinking and expression, health and physical development and cognitive development. Teachers receive college credentials and training in how to apply these standards to their weekly lesson plans.
- Read Together, Talk Together: Ages 2-3: This is a research based dialogic reading program. Teachers read to children and prompt them with questions, expand on their answers, and praise their growing storytelling abilities. This results in stronger language development and cognitive learning. This curriculum is designed for children ages 2 to 3 and grows with them. Teachers will use the book of the week to develop inter-related lessons to include math readiness, science, social studies, based on the Links to Learning skills of the month.
- Learning Without Tears: This curriculum consists of six 6-week unit studies created to prepare children for kindergarten. It is a multisensory curriculum and very hands-on. It meets all the early learning standards for all developmental domains. Teachers can supplement as needed and will add a weekly Bible lesson or Christian characteristic to their lesson plans.
- Handwriting without Tears: This curriculum takes a multisensory approach to handwriting and coordinates with Learning without Tears. There are pre-writing activities such as games and songs. Each letter has a story to help the child remember its formation. Visit <https://shopping.lwtears.com/product/GSSAPPS/products-by-grade?m=Retail> if you'd like to purchase an app for ipads to use at home. This curriculum is designed for 4K.
- Learning Centers: Learning Centers constitute a large part of our curriculum at St. Michael's ELC as we support play-based learning. The centers include home living, dramatic play, science and nature, puzzles, transportation, manipulatives, creative art, music, blocks, and

books. The Learning Centers are changed to reflect the thematic emphasis used in the classroom.

Educational Assessment

Educational assessment is the process of documenting, usually in measurable terms, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs. We gather information in diverse ways so that we can be sure that our children are developing well and that our programs are sound. We use the following methods of assessment in the Center as well as informal observations by the teachers.

Portfolios: Each child has an individual portfolio which is kept up to date with samples of work and anecdotal record entries.

South Carolina Early Learning Standards. The South Carolina Early Learning Standards (mentioned under curriculum) are used to ensure that each child is meeting or exceeding state standards. These standards are available in our office or on the web at <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/64/documents/EarlyLearningGoodStart.pdf>.

Classrooms (NEW Rates as of 8/7/2023)

Children are placed in classrooms based primarily on their age, but other factors such as physical, social-emotional, cognitive development, and rules regulations regarding classroom size may determine a child's placement. Rates are subject to change with a 30 day notice.

Incredible Infants \$215.00/week

Must be 6 weeks to begin
Class maximum: 10 children
Teachers: 3 Full-Time
DSS minimum teacher/child ratio 1:5
St. Michael's ELC teacher/child ratio 1:3

Tiger Twos \$195/week

Must be 24 months to begin
Class maximum: 20 children
Teachers: 3 Full-Time 1 part time
DSS minimum teacher/child ratio 1:8
St. Michael's ELC ratio is 1:6

Crawling Caterpillars \$215.00/week

Must be 6 months to begin
Class maximum: 8 children
Teachers: 2 Full-Time, 1 part-time closer
DSS minimum teacher/child ratio is 1:5
St. Michael's ELC ratio 1:4

3K-Elephants \$180.00/week

Must be 3 months by September 1st
Class maximum: 20 children
Teachers: 2 Full-Time, 1 part-time closer
DSS minimum teacher/child ratio is 1:12
St. Michael's ELC ratio is 1:10

Tiny Toddler Turtles \$200.00/week

Must be 12 months to begin
Class maximum: 12
Teachers: 3 Full-time
DSS minimum teacher/child ratio 1:6
St. Michael's ELC ratio 1:4

Koalas \$180.00/week

Combination 3 & 4 year old class
Class maximum: 12 children
Teachers: 1 Full-time, 1 part time
DSS minimum teacher/child ratio is 1:12
St. Michael's ELC ratio is 1:6

Toddler Toucans \$200.00/week

Must be 12 months to begin

4K Kangaroos \$175.00

Must be 4 by September 1st

Class maximum: 12 children
Teachers: 3 Full-Time
DSS minimum teacher/child ratio is 1:6
St. Michael's ELC ratio is 1:4

Class maximum: 20
Teachers: 2 Full-time
DSS minimum teacher/child ratio is 1:17
St. Michaels' ELC ratio is 1:9

Staff

- Background checks:
- The ELC Director, teachers, and support staff must be registered with the South Carolina Department of Social Services which requires FBI and SLED fingerprint and background checks of all registered childcare providers every 5 years as well as Central Registry background checks. If a situation arises where there is a need for an employee to start before the appropriate checks are completed, DSS allows for provisional employment, the required paperwork and an additional SLED check (SLED Catch). Provisional employees are under the direct supervision of a lead teacher.
- Education: Staff members at St. Michael's ELC are certified child care professionals. Each member of our teaching staff is required to pass the college-level course, ECD 101, and to hold a *South Carolina Early Childhood Credential*. Many of our teachers hold additional Early Childhood Credentials, our 4K teachers have AA degrees in Early Childhood Education plus many credit hours towards BS degrees in education, and a few have bachelor's degrees in related fields. Many of our assistant teachers are college students in education or related fields. The Director holds a bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education Administration and a masters degree in Early Childhood Education Leadership.
- Training. Each calendar year, the Director participates in over 25 clock hours of training, and all teachers receive a minimum of 20 clock hour of training in early childhood development, guidance, health & safety, curriculum, etc. All staff members are required to be certified in Infant/Adult CPR/First Aid and in the handling of Bloodborne Pathogens.
- Child Abuse and Sexual Exploitation Training: All staff members are required by the Episcopal Diocese of Upper South Carolina to complete Safe Church Training every 3 years.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Childcare providers are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. If child abuse or neglect is suspected by a staff member, the suspected abuse will be reported to Child Protective Services.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Entrance Requirements

Children six weeks to four years of age are accepted at St. Michael's ELC. Children may remain at the Center until they enter Kindergarten.

The following completed forms are required for admission to the Center.

1. Updated *South Carolina Certificate of Immunization* (SC Law 44-29-180/SC Code of Regulations 61-8) Certificate must be completed according to form instructions by a licensed Practitioner of Medicine, Surgery, or Osteopathy, or by his/her authorized representative.
2. Completed and signed *Emergency Contact Form and Release Authorization*
3. Completed and signed DSS Form 2900 *Parent Information Sheet*
4. Signed *Financial Policies Statement*
5. Signed *General Policies Statement*
6. Various signed permission slips

Hours of Operation

St Michael’s ELC is open year round, from 7:00 PM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday. Families are assigned a door code which they must use to enter the building and access certain areas of the ELC. After registering for Brightwheel your assigned 4 digit code will be used to clock in and clock out your child(ren). Family codes are activated at 7:00 AM and will not work after 6:00 PM. When parents bring their child into the ELC, they must bring their child into the classroom to be received by a staff member before their departure. We ask parents to be cognizant of who is coming into the building with them and to not allow other parents to "hitchhike" or "piggyback" into the center on their code.

Attendance:

The child will be signed in and out of the classroom using the Bright Wheel app. This is the parent’s responsibility to sign in and sign out your child on the app. If a child receives the ABC Scholarships, parent’s must ensure they are signing in and signing out your child as this may affect your scholarship status.

Children are asked to arrive at school by 9:00 am.

St. Michael's teachers and staff consider the children we serve as family. Please notify the ELC Office in advance, or as early as possible, regarding a child's absence.

Holidays

St. Michael’s ELC will be closed for the following holidays:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Labor Day | Thanksgiving (2 days) |
| Christmas Day (2-3 Days) | New Year’s Eve/Day |
| Martin Luther King Day | Memorial Day |
| Juneteenth (June 19 th) | Independence Day |

The ELC will be closed for Teacher In-Service Training on the following days:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Friday Aug 4 th | Closing @ 3pm Thursday September 28 th |
| Friday Sept 29 th | Monday Feb 19 th |

Free and Full Access/Classroom Visits

Free and full access is given to parents of children enrolled in the ELC unless there is a court order that indicates otherwise. Parents are welcomed and are encouraged to visit at any time, without notice. We encourage parents to participate in activities within the classroom. Visitors will not be allowed to visit without advance written permission from the parents.

Parking/Vehicle Idling

The parking lot is accessible from Bridgewood Road and is a one-way lot. The circular drive in front of the school may be used. Vehicles must be turned off when parked both in the parking lot or in the drive.

Release of Children

1. The ELC must have written authorization (hand written note or an email from the parent's email of record) to release a child to anyone other than a parent. These individuals must be listed on the *Release Authorization Form* which will be kept in the child's record. It is the responsibility of the parents to update the list of authorized individuals who may pick-up their child.
2. Identified biological parents will not be denied to pick up a child unless a court order prohibits them from doing so. If the parents are not married, the noncustodial parent will have to provide proof that he or she is the child's biological parent by providing either a birth certificate proving maternity or paternity or a court order.
3. ID Verification : Authorized persons must present a picture I.D. (drivers license, student I.D., military I.D.), which will be photocopied and placed in the child's file, before a child can be released into their custody. The ELC reserves the right to make the ultimate determination in the release of the child.

Intoxicated or Impaired Parent or Guardian

1. Any parent, or other person who is authorized to pick up a child enrolled at the ELC , who comes to the ELC intoxicated or in an impaired physical condition will not be allowed to pick up the child.
2. In the event that a parent or other authorized person arrives at the ELC while intoxicated or in an impaired condition, staff will use their best judgment in determining if the person is in a condition which may prevent him/her from assuring the child's welfare.
3. If it is determined that the authorized person is in a condition that prevents him or her from assuring the child's welfare, staff will:
 - a. Make alternative arrangements for child pick-up by contacting another person on the Authorized Child Pick-up List.
 - b. Notify the following individual(s) in writing:
 - *The parent(s) of the child (if they are not the ones who are intoxicated or impaired)
 - *The intoxicated/impaired person;
 - * Parents of other children the person has been authorized to pick-up.
 - c. After one written warning, the person will be removed from the list of individuals authorized to pick up a child after the second occurrence.

Lunch and Snacks

St. Michael's ELC follows USDA, DHEC, and DSS guidelines for quality nutrition, health, and safety guidelines for serving food.

1. Snacks. A morning snack (between 8:30 and 9:00 AM) and an afternoon snack (between 2:30 and 3:30) is provided by the ELC except in the Infant & Caterpillar rooms. All food is brought by the Infant and Caterpillar parents.
2. Lunch. Lunch is served at 11:30 am. 4K eats at 12:15 pm. Parents are responsible for providing their child's lunch, except on Friday when children in Turtles, Toucans, Tigers, Elephants, Koalas, & Kangaroos may sign up for Friday Fun meals at a cost of \$5 per week. Lunches are plated before they are served. There is a apartment-size refrigerator and microwave in each room for lunches.
3. Hands will be washed and blessings said before lunch is served, and hands and faces are cleaned after the children have finished eating.
4. Milk. We provide 2% milk for children two and above and whole milk for 12 to 24 months. Milk will be served with lunch. If a child requires a special milk, it must be provided by the parent.
5. Sippy Cups. Caterpillars, Turtles, & Toucans may bring sippy cups for use in the classroom, but a separate, clean cup must be sent for each use. We supply paper and plastic cups. Children in the Tiger, Elephant, Koalas, & Kangaroos may not have sippy cups. If your older child travels with a sippy cup in the car, please do not allow it to be brought into the classroom.

Rest Time

Rest times are required by DSS for children aged 6 years and under. Children in the Infant Room and Caterpillars have individual cribs provided by the ELC . Each child in the Tiny Turtles, Toddler Toucans, Tigers, 3K Elephants, Koalas, and 4K Kangaroos rooms is required to have a nap mat with his or her name on it. "Kindermats" may be purchased individually, or you may buy one from the ELC for \$20. Nap mats are not shared and are disinfected weekly. We ask that parents provide a nap mat cover, crib sheet, or two king-sized pillowcases, labeled with your child's name in 2 inch lettering, to act as sheets for the mats. The pillowcases will be sent home on Friday for laundering. You may bring a small blanket or pillow that will fit in your child's cubby. These items may not be left in the cubby over the weekend. Naptime is 12:00-2:00 for Toddlers through 3K. 4K goes down for a 1 hour nap at 1:00 pm. Quiet bags may be provided for 4K students who no longer fall asleep. They must remain quietly on their nap mats even if they do not sleep. Disruptive children during naptime may be sent home. Teachers will not actively keep children awake as we are required to give them this time to rest and/or sleep.

Outdoor Play

Children at St. Michael's ELC go outside to play every day that weather permits. Each classroom has two outside playtimes each day. When outdoor conditions are above 90 degrees or below 40 degrees, we follow the DSS recommendations for outside exposure. During sunny weather, we request that sunscreen be applied before your child leaves home. With written parental permission, we will reapply sunscreen and insect repellent before outdoor play. The parent must provide the sunscreen and insect repellent and have it labeled with their child's name.

Birthdays and Celebrations

Birthdays may be celebrated during snacktime with a simple treat. Since not all children are able to celebrate their birthdays at school, we do not allow balloons or party favors. Birthday party invitations for off campus parties may be distributed at school only if the entire class is included.

Inclement Weather

The director, asst. director, and Vicar will decide on opening delays, early closings and school closures. A message will be sent out via Brightwheel and posted on the parent Facebook page. A posting on WIS-TV will also be sent out.

Child Records

St. Michael 's ELC keeps a separate record for each child.

- (1) The file will be kept in a locked file cabinet in a confidential manner. The Center will have a written policy to safeguard the confidentiality of all records.
- (2) The child's record shall be maintained on file at the ELC and made available for review on-site by the Department of Social Services and SC DHEC.

Confidentiality

St. Michael's ELC understands that information concerning you, your child, and your family is private and personal. Trust and confidentiality are essential to building trusting relationships. St. Michael's ELC will not disclose information, without parental permission, pertaining to a child, parent, or any other family member in any form including, but not exclusive to, print or electronic communications, or by word of mouth, except as required by law or when there is a threat to the health and safety of the individuals and families. Staff members are required to sign a confidentiality agreement upon hire.

Clothing

Please send two complete sets of clothing labeled with your child's first and last name. We are not responsible for missing or misplaced items. We ask that children wear closed-toed shoes, sneakers or sandals that fully cover their toes and have a strap across the heel. They may not wear flip-flops or thong sandals. Please do not allow the children to wear jewelry. Hair bows and clamps must NOT be small enough to fit into a child's mouth. Shorts or bloomers must be worn under dresses.

Choking

Choking is a very real risk for young children. Please be vigilant in making sure that food is properly chopped and do not send foods such as hotdogs, meatballs, cantaloupe, or honeydew unless they are chopped into very small pieces. Hairclips that are small enough to fit into a child's mouth are not allowed at the ELC.

Combining Classes

The Tigers, Elephants, Koalas and 4K Kangaroos classrooms may be combined between the hours of 5:30 PM to 6 PM, as needed. The Infants and Crawlers and the Toddler classes may be combined between 7:00 am and 8:00 am and 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm, as needed. Turtles & Toucans may be combined between 7:00 am and 8:00 and between the hours of 5:00 pm and 6:00 pm if needed.

Early Learning Center-Parent Teacher Organization

The purpose of the ELC Parent Teacher Organization, PTO, is to provide information to parents about ways to volunteer around St. Michael's. St. Michael's PTO will help coordinate the sense of family and community within the ELC and help enhance parent volunteerism within the center. The PTO will be informed of events and help gather support needed for these events to be successful. The PTO will not make policies or handle parent concerns. The PTO will meet on assigned dates every other month, and all parents and teachers are encouraged to come to help foster the sense of community at St. Michael's. The director, assistant director and our teacher rep will also be directly involved with the PTO. The purpose and goal of the PTO is to help coordinate and foster a sense of community and volunteerism among the parents, teachers, and leaders of St. Michael's.

Parent Advisory Board

The purpose of the Parent Advisory Board is to provide valuable feedback from the parents of the ELC and to help keep the Director, Asst. Director, and Vicar informed. The PAB will meet once a month and help discuss any new policies or procedures to put forth to the Mission Council. The PAB will also be responsible for Christmas and Teacher Appreciation events within the ELC. The PAB will help the director/asst. director coordinate any special events that may need support from the parents to be successful. One or Two parents from each room will be selected and work together to communicate with their parents and attend monthly PAB meetings.

Grievance Procedures

Parents are encouraged to bring any concerns to the Director. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, the parent can request a meeting with the Vicar, who will hear all sides and make a final decision.

Family Engagement Opportunities

St. Michaels offers many opportunities during the school year for parents to work together in partnership to support children's learning. There are many opportunities for parents to volunteer through-out the year as well as parenting workshops and family events to attend.

Communication:

1. Bright Wheel

Bright Wheel is a parent communication application that enables two way communication with the school and the child's teachers throughout the day. The app includes features for parent communication, photos and videos, digital check-in and check-out, reports, meal tracking, daily sheets, lesson plans, and many other features. The app may be used on Apple, Android, and Kindle devices. The Director uses the messaging feature to communicate all important ELC information so it is important to check app for messages. **We ask parents to check in and check out their child in the Bright Wheel app.**

2. Newsletter/Calendars

A monthly or bi-monthly newsletter is sent electronically through the Bright Wheel application to all families enrolled at the ELC by the Director. Please take time to check these calendars as they will keep you informed of events and activities within the ELC. A printed copy of the newsletter is provided to each classroom and is posted on the bulletin board at the entrance of the ELC. If parents do not receive a newsletter, please contact the Director to ensure we have your correct email address.

3. ZOOM or Face-to-Face meetings with teachers and/or directors will be scheduled upon request.

Parent-Teacher Communication

St Michael's ELC strives to maintain good relationships with families. The staff looks forward to sharing information about your child's day with you. Please refrain from discussing a child in his or her presence or the presence of others. Communication can be through our Bright Wheel app or through emailing the director. Staff should not use personal email accounts, personal mobile phones, or social media to contact parents. All communication between parents and teachers must go through Bright Wheel or the Director's office via email: childehc@saintmichaelepiscopal.org as the Director is required to monitor communication.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences will be held any time one is requested by the parent(s), teacher, or Director.

Photo/Media Release Form

Please complete the form located at the back of this handbook and return it to the ELC.

Potty Training

The teachers in the Tiger Room are potty training gurus. Please bring at least three pairs of extra clothes, including socks, if your child is being potty trained at school. Label all clothing with your child's name. Also, bring an extra pair of shoes. Let us know what parents decide on if little boys will sit or stand. Wet or soiled clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag. Children must be potty trained to enter the next class which is either the Elephants or Koalas.

Tracking Children

Teachers keep daily attendance records in the classroom as well as signing in and out on Brightwheel. Teachers mark a child's presence on the class tracking sheets every half hour by matching the names to the faces, and tracks the child to the playground, or to the bathroom when he or she leaves the classroom in the same manner. Children are also checked in and out on the Brightwheel app.

Transportation/Field Trips

We will not transport any child in a vehicle. If field trips are scheduled, each family is responsible for transporting their own children.

Toys and Personal Belongings

The ELC provides ample toys and materials for children to share. Bringing toys from home creates difficulty when they are lost or broken, and some toys pose choking risks. Of course, a special lovey or blanket is always welcomed at naptime. Please do not allow your child to bring toys to school, except on days of announced *Show and Tell*.

Transitions into Different Level Classrooms

Children are placed in classrooms according to their age by September 1st in accordance with the school district. It is our goal to only transition children once a year at the beginning of each new school year. We understand there may need to be exceptions. If this is the case, children may be transitioned up on a case-by-case basis based on their developmental level and special needs of the child. Depending on the child's readiness to transition, there is a one to two-week transition period to move a child to a different classroom. Generally, the child is in the new class for one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon and works up to longer periods until they are in the classroom for the entire day. Please feel free to ask questions, meet the new teachers and relax as we guide parents through this process.

Screen Time

In the formative years, children's brains and bodies are going through critical periods of growth and development. It is important for infants and young children to have positive interactions with parents, teachers, and peers and not sit in front of a screen (TV, tablet, computer, smartphone, etc.) that takes them away from social interactions with people. Therefore, St. Michaels will not use screen time except for special occasions.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Handwashing Policy

The Department of Health and Environmental Control Policy requires that children in childcare wash their hands **before entering the classroom**. We ask parents to wash their hands, as well. Please wash your child's hands, either at the sinks in the children's bathrooms, in the sink in the back hallway, or by using the sinks in the classrooms. Children, parents, and teachers need to wash their hands:

Recommended Handwashing Method. Use warm, but not hot, running water. Wet hands first. Then use soap. Wash the front and back of both hands and between the fingers. Remember to clean under nails. Wash for at least 15 seconds. (Sing, *The Alphabet Song* or *Tops and Bottoms*.) Rinse well. Dry your hands with a fresh paper towel. Then use the paper towel to turn off the faucet.

Medical Policy

The Staff at St. Michael's ELC asks that parents keep children who are contagious at home. Assessment of every child admitted to the ELC each day is a DSS regulation. If your child appears to have an infectious or contagious condition, parents will be asked to take him/her home or to a pediatrician immediately in order to avoid infecting the other children.

Please do not bring your children to the ELC if they have experienced any of the following symptoms in the past 24 hours:

- A fever of 100.0
- Signs of a newly developed cough or a severe cough.
- Diarrhea, vomiting, or an upset stomach.
- Unusual or unexplained loss of appetite, fatigue, irritability, or headache.
- Any discharge or drainage from the eyes, nose, ears, or open sores. This includes cold sores (herpes simplex) if the condition is still active.

Children who are experiencing the symptoms above will not be allowed to stay at our Center. We do not have provisions to care for mildly ill children. If a child becomes ill at the ELC, parents are expected to pick the child up as soon as possible.

Children may not return to school for 24 hours after being sent home. Before returning to school, the child must be free of fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea for 24 hours and without the use of a fever reducer. A child may return to the ELC with a written statement from a physician stating that the child is not contagious.

Exclusion List of Illnesses

A copy of the DHEC *School and Childcare Exclusion List* is available in the office. Illnesses or symptoms that require parents to keep your child at home include:

- Conjunctivitis/Pink Eye: Red, itching, oozing or matted eyes are all signs of infection. Your child must be picked up and be on antibiotic drops 24 hours before returning to school.
- Coughs: A child who is coughing with a cold or bronchial infection is contagious as long as the cough is moist. If the infection is bacterial and the child has been on an antibiotic for 24 hours, the child may return to the ELC.
- Diarrhea/Vomiting: A child must be free of diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours before returning to the ELC. If your child has diarrhea or vomiting while at the ELC, parents will be called to pick up the child.
- Fever: A child with 100.0-degree fever or above must remain at home and be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school. Please do not administer a fever reducer and send your child to the ELC.
- Head Lice: Please notify the Director if your child becomes infected with, or has come into contact with other children who have been infected with head lice. Head lice must be treated before the child may return to school.
- Open Wound: Open wounds must be covered with an adhesive bandage.
- Seasonal Allergies: Children with seasonal allergies need to have a doctor's statement on file. If the child experiences extreme coughing, respiratory distress, or severe head congestion parents may be asked to take the child home. We cannot keep your child in another classroom or in the office during playground time. If the child is not well enough to play outside, he or she is not well enough to be at the ELC.
- Infectious Skin Diseases: A child with chicken pox, impetigo, ring worm, or other infectious skin diseases must be cleared by a physician before returning to the ELC.

- Hand, foot, mouth: A child with open blisters with discharge, blisters in the mouth causing excessive drool, or a fever is contagious and must stay home until these symptoms are no longer present for 24 hours.
- COVID19: See COVID 19 section.

Administration of Medicine

Medications should be administered by a parent or guardian before or after school hours, whenever possible. Initial doses of a medication that a child has never taken before will not be given at school. Signed consent: Medication, or special medical procedures will be administered to a child only when there is a prior written, signed, and dated request from the parent/guardian. Please complete and sign a copy of the *Permission to Administer Medication* form found at the back of the Parent Handbook. The medication administration instructions may not be PRN or “as needed”.

Medication Log: Each medication administered by a staff person is to be recorded in the class medication log specific to the child for which the medication is to be given. The name of the medication, dosage, time and name of the person administering the medicine will be entered into Brightwheel.

Food/Insect Allergies: Parents of children with life-threatening allergies to foods or insects must provide the Director and teachers with a note to post in their child’s file and in the emergency medical station that explains all of the symptoms and treatment procedures related to the child’s particular allergy. The ELC will take all reasonable precautions to meet your child’s special needs.

Incident Reports: An incident report will be completed by any staff member who witnesses an injury of a child that requires first aid, including the administration of an ice pack. If a parent observes an injury after hours that they think may have occurred at the ELC, the parent should bring it to the attention of the teacher or the Director on the following day.

Medication Errors: Failure to administer a medication at the prescribed time, or administering an incorrect dosage or wrong medicine, will be recorded in the child’s record. The parent will be immediately notified verbally and in writing. The same notification will occur if a child is suspected of having an adverse reaction to the medicine.

Medical Release: A medical release from a physician stating the child is well enough to return to school is required if a child has an illness or an accident that requires physician care.

Storage of Medicines: All medicines must be brought and kept in their original containers with the child’s name clearly printed on the label. Medicines will be kept in a locked box in each classroom. This requirement includes prescription and nonprescription medications as well as diaper cream.

Emergency Medical Procedures

Emergency Medical Treatment: In the event of an injury to your child or an illness, every attempt will be made to contact the parent/guardian. The parent’s signature on the Parent Handbook Acknowledgement of Policies and Practices gives permission for first aid to be administered by staff members currently certified in First Aid/CPR. If the illness or injury requires emergency medical treatment, the acknowledgement gives consent for treatment by qualified emergency medical personnel and releases the staff members or St. Michael and All Angels’ ELC from any liability expressed or implied which may result from such services. An ambulance will be called and the child will be transported to Richland Children’s Hospital. The Director, Lead Teacher of the child’s class, or designee, will accompany the child on the ambulance, if the parent has not arrived at the ELC.

Emergency Contact Forms: Each child in the ELC will have an Emergency Contact Form in his or her record. It is important that parents update the Emergency Contact Form when changes are needed. Failure to provide an updated emergency phone numbers/contacts will be grounds for termination of services.

Emergency Telephone Calls: Parents will be telephoned for the following reasons:

1. When a child becomes ill or injured while at the ELC . The emergency contacts will be called if the parents cannot be reached.
2. When child is left at the ELC beyond 6:00 pm without the parent making previous arrangements.
3. If the ELC must close due to extenuating circumstances such as a weather emergency a message will be sent out via Brightwheel. The Director will determine the opening or closing of the ELC . No discounts or refunds will be given in the event of school closing. If the Director decides to close early due to inclement weather or other safety reason, parents are expected to pick their children up at the time designated for closing.
4. Any incident that occurs at the ELC which requires the attention of a parent.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

- Fire: St Michael's ELC practices routine fire drills to ensure the children and teachers are prepared and knowledgeable of the route to take when leaving the building in an emergency. Evacuation exit maps are posted in each classroom. Teachers take the tracking sheets for their class to ensure that all children are present. Emergency First Aid Kits and Walkie Talkies are required. Lead teachers report the numbers of children to the Director and the Director will check the numbers against the morning Sign-In count.
- Tornado: St Michael's ELC practices routine tornado drills for the purpose of preparing the children in the event of a tornado. When a tornado warning occurs, the teachers take the children to designated safe areas until the threat has subsided. The Director and teachers use the same accountability procedures as for fire.
- Code Yellow & Code Red: A Code Yellow is activated when there is suspicious activity in the area such as schools within a 5 mile radius of SMAA. Children will be kept indoors and any person entering the ELC will be escorted into the building. No outside play will be allowed during a Code Yellow. A Code Red will be activated if an immediate threat is located on SMAA Grounds or inside the school. Teachers will lockdown in classrooms and no one will be allowed to enter or exit the building. Parents will receive Brightwheel messages whenever a Code Yellow and/or a Code Red has been issued at SMAA.
- Evacuation of the ELC : In the event that emergency officials order the immediate evacuation of the building during school hours, the staff will evacuate the children on foot and in cribs and strollers to:

Forest Lake Presbyterian Church
6500 North Trenholm Road
Columbia, SC 29206
(803) 787-5672

The church is located at the corner of North Trenholm Road and Rockbridge Road, a block away from the ELC. We will make every attempt to contact parents. A map to this location and telephone numbers will be posted on our ELC 's entrance doors.

Emergency Plans: A copy of the St. Michael's ELC emergency plan has been forwarded to the Child Care Regulatory Services Regional Office.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

Facility Director	Joanne Vaughn	803-206-4755
Assistant Director	Cathy Brown	803- 239-3206
Emergency		911
Police	Forest Acres Police	803-782-9444
Sheriff	Richland County Sheriff	803-691-9000
Fire	Capital View Fire Dept.	803-783-1763
Poison Control	Palmetto Poison Control	803-777-1117
DSS	Child Care Licensing	803-898-7601
Licensing Specialist	Carol Jefferson	803-898-0036
Alternative Evacuation Site	Forest Lake Presbyterian	803-787-5672
ABC Call Center (emergencies only)		800-262-4416
Child Care Services Disaster Response Line		800-556-7445

Medical Emergencies:

Medical conditions under which emergency care and treatment is warranted include the conditions listed below:

- loss of consciousness
- semi-consciousness
- breathing difficulties
- severe bleeding
- unequal pupils of the eyes
- seizure
- neck or back injury
- continuous clear drainage from nose/ears after a blow to the head
- severe headaches
- stiff neck or neck pain when head is moved
- hives that appear quickly
- very sick child who seems to be getting worse quickly
- repeated forceful vomiting
- vomiting blood
- severe abdominal pain that causes a child to double over
- possible broken bones
- shock
- sudden high fever

Steps to be followed in a Medical Emergency: Staff Trainings are held in February, June, August and October and at other regular intervals throughout the year. All Staff members are required to be certified in Adult/Infant CPR and First Aid and in the handling of Bloodborne Pathogens. In the event of a medical emergency, a staff member will follow the procedures listed below.

- Call **911** immediately upon recognizing signs and symptoms that require medical attention.
- Call child's parent or guardian immediately after calling **911** to inform them of symptoms and where their child will be transported for care.
- Provide first aid as trained in an approved First Aid Training Course until emergency personnel arrive.
- Director or Lead Teacher accompanies child and takes the child's file and emergency forms to Palmetto Richland Children's Hospital and stays with the child until parents or emergency contact arrives.
- Additional staff will join the Assistant Teacher to continue supervision of children in classroom activities. The Director will call DSS to report the emergency.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

Early Learning Center Payment Options and Deposit Policy:

Parents who are current on their child's Tuition will have an option of which payment plan is best for them. Out of pastoral concern, any family who is having difficulty paying the tuition is encouraged to speak with either the ELC Director or the Vicar privately. If, at the sole discretion of the Vicar, there is a legitimate pastoral concern, funds from the vicar's discretionary fund may be used to cover the tuition owed.

Options:

1. Weekly Payment: Due on Mondays of each week (the amount will be communicated to the parent through a letter from the assistant director) 52 payments.
 - A. If the payment has not been received by Wednesday at 9:00 am of each week, a \$25.00 late fee will be assessed to the account and a delinquent letter issued.
 - B. If the account is more than two weeks delinquent another \$25.00 late fee will be added, and a delinquent letter issued. At that time, the parents will need to pay the balance in full or agree to a payment plan. When you agree to a payment plan then your weekly payments plus the agreed upon amount is due on time or Childcare services will be terminated.
2. Monthly Payments: Monthly payments will be due the first Monday of every month. Your monthly amount will be determined by the number of Mondays in a month. (Some months have 4 weeks, and some have 5 weeks)
 - A. If payment is not received by the fifth of every month, then a \$25.00 late payment will be issued to your account and a delinquent letter issued.
 - B. If your monthly payment is not received by the 10th of the month, an additional \$25.00 will be issued to your account and a delinquent letter issued with a payment plan. If the

payment, or a payment plan arrangement, is not made by the 15th of the month, childcare services will be terminated by the ELC. If at any times parents fail to honor the payment arrangements termination of services will occur.

All payments are due in advance. If a payment is late and/or a payment plan must be arranged, then the account will be reverted to the weekly option.

If paying in cash, please see the Director or Assistant Director for a receipt. The Director or Assistant Director will place the money in the safe. Payments may be mailed if your child is not in attendance for any reason. See address on cover sheet.

At this time, St. Michael's takes payment only in the form of Cash, Checks, money orders, and ACH.

Late fees: A late fee of \$10.00 will be added to your account when picking up your child between 6:01 and 6:05pm, and an additional \$2.00/minute will be added after 6:05 pm. If the ELC has not made contact with a parent/guardian/emergency contact and the child has still not been picked up, the ELC will notify Forest Acres Police Department and/or SC Department of Social Services at 6:30 pm.

Deposits: Deposits will be made each Wednesday of the school week.

Statements: Parents can use Bright Wheel to print statements. If you need a statement, please email the Assistant Director or the Director.

Registration Fee: A \$175 **annual** registration fee **per child** is due in February to register you child for the upcoming school year.

Supply fee: There's a \$100.00 supply fee due each September 2nd and each January 2nd.

30 Day Written Notice of Withdrawal: Parents are required to give a 30 day written notice of withdrawal. Tuition is due for that 30 day period. There will be no pro-rated refunds for withdrawal. Summer camp withdrawal is handled differently. One must register for the entire summer. We must secure enough children to cover costs and last minute cancellations make this difficult for a short time-frame such as summer camp.

Holidays, Vacations, Absences, Inclement Weather, & Unforeseen Emergencies: Tuition is due in full for all holidays, inclement weather, and all other unforeseen emergencies when the Center is closed. Tuition is due in full when a child is absent for any reason. You are paying for your child(ren)'s spot in our program, not for actual services rendered. No discounts or refunds will be given in the event of a school closing. COVID19 closings will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The ELC does not currently have a Vacation Week credit. If a financial hardship arises, please call the ELC Director or the Vicar of St. Michael and All Angels' Episcopal Church to discuss payment arrangements.

Fun Fridays: An optional Fun Friday meal is provided each Friday for children in the Tiny Turtles, Toddler Toucans, Tigers, 3K Elephants, Koalas, and 4K Kangaroo classes. This is a wholesome

meal, which meets USDA meal requirements, that is provided by the ELC for parents who wish to participate in the program. The cost of the program is \$5 per week. If paying monthly the number of Friday's will determine the amount charged. Our assistant director will contact new parents and transitioning the Turtles & Toucans about the program. Tiny Turtles will be able to participate in January of 2023.

Sibling Tuition Discount: There is a ten dollar (\$10) tuition reduction for the older sibling. Only one discount is available to families.

Church Membership Tuition Discount: Primary caregiver(s) who are communicants in good standing at St. Michael and All Angels' Episcopal Church are entitled to a tuition discount for children attending the Early Learning Center. A communicant in good standing is a church member who, for the previous year, has been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and has been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God. The application for the tuition reduction will be reviewed by the Vicar to determine the status of the caregiver. If approved, the discount will be applied the following month and will continue as long as the caregiver remains a communicant in good standing at the church. Discounts are limited to one per family. The discount is \$20.00/child for church members.

Waiting List fee: The ELC maintains a waiting list for admission in the event that the ELC is full. Waiting list applications are date stamped at the time of receipt.

The following criteria are used to determine the order of acceptance.

1. The applicant has a sibling at St. Michael's ELC or is a teacher.
2. The applicant is a member of St. Michael and All Angels' Episcopal Church
3. The age of the child
4. The length of time the parents have been on the list.

There is an optional \$75 non-refundable fee for placement on the waiting list. The wait list form and/or fee does not guarantee enrollment. The wait list fee does not move you ahead of others on the wait list who are not siblings or members.

St. Michael's and All Angels' ELC is an ABC Quality child care provider and accepts ABC Scholarships.

All rates and fees are reviewed annually and subject to change with a 30 day notice.

Inclusion Policy

Policy Statement

St. Michael and All Angels' ELC welcomes all children and is committed to providing developmentally appropriate early learning and development experiences that support the full access and participation of each child. We believe that each child is unique, and we work in partnership with families and other professionals involved with the child to provide the support every child needs to reach their full potential.

Procedures

Admissions/waiting list

Children of all abilities are accepted into St. Michael and All Angels' ELC, and families interested in having their child attend the program will be given an equal opportunity for admission.

Inclusive Environment

Staff members at St. Michael's ELC use developmentally appropriate practices and consider the unique needs of all children when planning. Staff will make every attempt to make any adaptations or modifications necessary to meet the needs of the children. Schedules, routines, and activities are flexible and early childhood educators will work with therapists, special educators, and other professionals to integrate individual accommodations, modifications, and strategies into classroom routines and activities. Any adaptations will be reviewed with families and other professionals supporting the child.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality applies to all verbal and written information about potential, enrolled and previously enrolled children and their families. All staff will be briefed on the need for confidentiality and will be expected to fulfill their obligation to respect the protection of privacy. Written records will be stored in a secure location with access limited to the director and the child's teacher. No information will be released about a child and the parent/legal guardian during enrollment or transition to another receiving program or school without first receiving the written permission of the parent/guardian. This excludes the responsibility held by early childhood educators as mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect as outlined in South Carolina law or when information is subpoenaed by the court.

Family Centered Practices

St. Michael's ELC acknowledges and respects the priorities each family has for their child. Families are encouraged and supported to collaborate with staff to ensure that each child has an opportunity for optimum success. St. Michael's ELC communicates with each family daily and has regular meetings to discuss the child's successes and challenges.

Professional Development and Support for Staff

Training and support are provided to ensure that all staff are comfortable, confident, and competent to meet the developmental and educational needs of all children. All staff receive an orientation on inclusion policies and attend training focused on effective inclusion and/or other disability topics whenever possible. We work closely with The Inclusion Cooperative to provide training, coaching, modeling, and resources for our teachers. The Director provides additional support and resources as appropriate. St. Michaels will do everything we can to work with exceptional children to help them to be successful in the classroom. If the parents are not satisfied with the care or the care becomes disruptive to the class on a regular basis, St. Michaels may ask the parent to provide an aide in the classroom.

Collaboration with Other Professionals

Many children with disabilities or other special needs are supported by developmental and educational professionals such as therapists, teachers, and others. St. Michael's ELC welcomes those professionals and works with them to assure the child's success. The service provider is encouraged to provide services to the child in the context of the early childhood classroom environment, and the child's teacher and the service provider work collaboratively to determine the best strategies to support the child in the group setting. St. Michael's ELC supports the teacher's

participation in Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

Nutrition Policy

Policy Statement

Good nutrition is vital to children's overall development and well-being. To provide the best possible nutrition environment for the children at our facility, St. Michael's Early Learning Center has developed the following nutrition policies to encourage the development of good eating habits that will last a lifetime. Food will never be withheld as punishment or used as a reward. Food products will not be used as fundraisers.

Nutrition

We will follow the nutrition guidelines of the CACFP, Child and Adult Care Food Program, for our morning and afternoon snacks. St. Michael's Early Learning Center will provide a balanced snack that include fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and limit foods and beverages that are high in sugar and/or fat. We also ask that parents provide a healthy and balanced lunch for your child that include fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. We ask that parents not send desserts or beverages containing additional sugar or high fructose corn syrup. The following is the CACFP nutrition guidelines:

Our Snacks will include:

- Whole grain and low sugar snacks.
- Milk at least 1 times a day
- Whole grain foods at least once a day.
- Other snacks include cheese and yogurt

Beverages

We do not serve fruit juice or sugar sweetened beverages. We serve whole milk to children in Turtles & Toucans. We serve 2% milk to children in the Tiger, Elephants, Koloas, and Kangaroo classes.

Meal and Snack Times.

Meal and snack times are planned so that no child will go more than 3.5 hours without being offered food. We provide a variety of nutritionally balanced, high-quality foods each day. Our snack menu is posted each month in Brightwheel and in each classroom. Contributions of fruit are always appreciated.

Nuts and other allergies

Some of our students have peanut and tree nut allergies, therefore we are a "Nut free" facility. This includes peanut and other nut butters. Sunflower seed butter is acceptable. All children's allergies will be posted in their classroom. Substitutions will be made for those children.

Celebrations and Religious Beliefs

For a birthday celebration, parents may send a treat for lunch or for a snack. We encourage healthy snacks in lieu of sugary ones. For holiday celebrations, a sign-up sheet with specific foods and beverages will be placed on the classroom bulletin board. We respect different religious beliefs and post dietary restrictions in accordance and make substitutions for these children.

Physical Activity Policy

Policy Statement

St. Michael's Early Learning Center recognizes the importance of physical activity for young children. Implementation of appropriate physical activity practices supports the health and development of children, as well as assisting in establishing positive lifestyle habits for the future. Closed toed shoes are required for the safety of your children during physical activity.

Physical Activity

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children in our care are supported and encouraged to engage in active play and develop fundamental movement skills appropriate for their age. To promote physical activity and provide all children with numerous opportunities for physical activity throughout the day, St. Michael's Early Learning Center will use the following guidelines:

Daily Outdoor Play

- Provide infants (8 weeks to 12 months) with at least 60 minutes of daily outdoor active play opportunities across 2 or 3 separate occasions.
- Provide toddlers (ages 1 through 2-year-old) with at least 60-90 Minutes of daily outdoor active play opportunities across 2 or 3 separate occasions.
- Provide preschoolers (ages 3 through 5-year-old) with at least 90 – 120 minutes of daily outdoor activity play opportunities across 2 or 3 separate occasions.
- Increase indoor play time, in the event of inclement weather, so the total amount of play time remains the same.
- Take children outside every day unless the temperature is below 40 degrees or above 90 degrees and in case of weather advisories. Under these weather conditions, we will follow the recommendation of DHEC.
- Parents are asked to dress children appropriately for outdoor play including closed-toe shoes.

Roles of Staff in Physical Activity:

- Provide teacher planned physical activities (e.g., games and exercise) lasting 5 -10 minutes at least 2 times a day while inside.
- Will encourage children to be physically active indoors and outdoors at appropriate times.
- Will encourage physical activity during group learning times in the classroom.

Indoor and Outdoor Play Environment:

- Provide a variety of play materials for children to use that promote physical activity indoors.
- Provide a variety of outdoor portable play materials and/or equipment (hoops, wheeled toys) for children to use.
- Infants are provided mats for unrestrictive play in order to promote proper physical development of larger muscles.

- Use of restrictive apparatus will only be used with infants who must be elevated after eating due to acid reflux according to Dr's orders.

Physical Activity and Punishment

Staff members will not withhold opportunities for physical activity except when a child's behavior is dangerous to himself/herself or others. Staff members never use physical activity or exercise as punishment. Playtime or other opportunities for physical activity are never withheld to enforce the completion of learning activities or academic work. See discipline policy signature page at the end of this handbook.

Screen Time

In the formative years, children's brains and bodies are going through critical periods of growth and development. It is important for infants and young children to have positive interactions with parents, teachers, and peers and not sit in front of a screen (TV, tablet, computer, smartphone, etc.) that takes them away from social interactions with people. Therefore, St. Michaels will not use screen time except for special occasions. Physical activity will be planned during inclement weather utilizing tunnels, balls, ribbons, music, planned games, etc. during inclement weather rather than screen time.

Enhancement Programs:

Soccer Shots

Soccer Shots is the national leader in youth soccer development for children ages 2 through 8. Innovative lesson plans are developmentally appropriate and tailored specifically to the three distinct age groups: Mini 2- to 3-year-olds, Classic 3-to-5-year-olds, and Premier 5 to 8 year old's (possibly during summer camp). All equipment will be provided. Children do not need soccer shoes; sneakers will suffice. The cost is \$45.00/month with a \$30.00 annual registration fee. Children will receive a jersey. Register online and pay by auto debit. A link will be provided to those who are interested.

Dance

Ashley Tolson received her BA in dance from Winthrop University and will be teaching a socially distanced dance program. The students will learn pre-ballet and ballet technique in a fun and nurturing environment to achieve better motor skills and coordination.

Dance is being offered to the following classes: Tigers, Pandas, and Kangaroos. Dance will take place on Monday afternoons. Tigers are \$35.00/month. Pandas and Kangaroos are \$45.00/month for a ballet/tap class combo. Payments are made to Ashley Tolson via Venmo, PayPal, cash or check. See registration form. There will be a formal recital for the Pandas and Kangaroos.

Karate

Genova Karate provides a socially distanced program that improves concentration, discipline, respect, listening skills, and overall physical fitness.

Amazing Athletes

This program offers an introduction to 10 different sports as well as an active health lesson each class. Children learn about a specific fruit or vegetable and its "superpower". They also learn about one muscle each class. Direct correlation is made between the choice of healthy eating to healthy

muscles needed to perform the featured sport. Children 18 month and up may participate. Equipment and lesson plans are developmentally appropriate for the age of the children in the class. The owner and coach is Coach Andy.

Breastfeeding Policy

Breastfeeding mothers will be provided a private place to breastfeed or express their milk.

Breastfeeding mothers, including employees, are provided a clean, private area in which to breastfeed or express milk. There is an outlet available and a sink nearby. Mothers are also welcomed to breastfeed in the infant classroom is so desired.

A refrigerator will be made available for storage of expressed breast milk.

Breastfeeding mothers and employees may store their expressed breast milk in the refrigerator in the infant classroom. Mothers should provide their own containers, clearly labeled with name and date.

Staff shall be trained in handling breast milk.

All center staff will be trained in the proper storage and handling of breast milk, as well as ways to support breastfeeding mothers. The center will follow human milk storage guidelines from the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to avoid waste and prevent food borne illness.

Breastfeeding employees shall be provided flexible breaks to accommodate breastfeeding or milk expression. Breastfeeding employees shall be provided a flexible schedule for breastfeeding or pumping to provide breast milk for their children. The time allowed would not exceed the normal time allowed to other employees for lunch and breaks. For time above and beyond normal lunch and breaks, sick/annual leave may be used, or the employee can come in earlier or leave later to make up the time.

The center will provide information on breastfeeding, including the names of area resources should questions or problems arise. In addition, positive promotion of breastfeeding will be on display in the center.

Discipline and Classroom Management Policy

Our guidelines for positive discipline are to foster and teach children to be independent learners who can monitor their own behavior in a Christian environment. This will be achieved through behavior guidelines provided by teachers.

- St. Michael's ELC teachers use positive techniques of guidance which include but are not limited to redirection, anticipation and elimination of potential problems, positive reinforcement, role modeling, and encouragement.
- St. Michael's ELC forbids any form of corporal punishment.
- Food is never withheld as punishment not used as rewards.
- Consistency in our daily schedule helps children establish routines. This allows our children to understand how their day will proceed.

Teachers at St. Michael's ELC will provide verbal guidance by:

- Modeling Christian values.
- Speaking kindly to children.
- Avoiding comparisons between children.
- Giving positive directions and suggestions.

- Providing positive verbal praise when interacting with children.
- Giving clear instructions.
- Promoting positive self-esteem.

St. Michael's teachers will:	St. Michael's teachers will NOT:
1. Praise, reward, and encourage children.	1. Spank, pinch, slap, or physically punish a child.
2. Set limits for the children.	2. Leave children without supervision
3. Listen to children.	3. Deny food or rest as punishment.
4. Ignore minor behaviors.	4. Criticize or belittle a child, children's parents, families, or ethnic groups.
5. Provide alternatives for inappropriate behavior to the children. Redirect children to other area and/or activities.	5. Shame or punish children when bathroom accidents occur.
6. Modify the classroom environment to attempt to prevent problems before they occur.	6. Make fun of, yell at, threaten, or verbally abuse a child.
7. Treat children and their needs, desires, and feelings respectfully	7. Allow another child to discipline a child.

Mental Health Policy

Mental health of our children, families, and staff is important to St. Michaels' ELC. St. Michaels partners with the PEAR network which offers free counseling, coaching, and professional development for our teachers and families. If the teachers suspect a mental health issue, a parent teacher conference will be held with the Director present to discuss observations and concerns. If at that time, we feel the need for a referral to PEAR, our mental health partner and child psychologist, we will make that referral for you.

Child Screenings and Referrals

We partner with Easter Seals who come in the fall and spring to evaluate the children for developmental delays and mental health. They are able to make referrals for early intervention based on their screenings. If our teachers suspect a delay based on a series of observations, then the Director will observe, and the proper referrals will be made after meeting with the parents. St. Michaels' ELC also provides annual vision and hearing screenings through community partnerships. These agencies will suggest referrals when needed.

We have resources in the following areas in which we can make referrals:

- Autism

- Down Syndrome
- Early Intervention/Easter Seals and Baby Net
- Family Connections (Support, resources and education for special needs and health issues)
- Hands on Health (Disabilities and Special Needs)
- LDA off SC (Learning Disabilities)
- Ability First (Special Needs)
- Speech therapy

Discipline, Suspension and Expulsion Policy

St. Michaels practices Positive Discipline. It is our goal to work closely with children and families when it comes to discipline. It is our practice to set reasonable and developmentally appropriate goals and use recorded observations and data to monitor progress. When needed, referrals will be made for interventions and developmental and behavioral screenings. We are an inclusive school and work closely with the Inclusion Collaborative and the PEAR network for teacher coaching and education. The PEAR network offers family counseling as well. We participate in annual Conscious Discipline training to help educate our teachers on ways to help children learn to self-regulate. We also work closely with Richland County First Steps and have a Technical Assistance provider who coaches and assists our teachers with areas of concern and with coaching and professional development. St. Michaels provides a Be Well, Care Well wellness program through USC for our teachers with education and activities to promote teacher health. This is to strengthen their ability to Care Well in the classroom. It is our practice to equip our teachers with the knowledge, education, and skills to prevent behavior that might lead to suspension or expulsion. It is our goal to greatly limit suspension and expulsion.

In the event of recurrent challenging and/or disruptive behavior, children may be sent home if that behavior keeps others from learning, napping or presents a safety issue in the classroom. Sending children home will be decided on a case-to-case basis based on the current and recurrent behaviors. Children are expected to help keep themselves and their classmates safe by listening to their teachers. Before sending children home, teachers must have exhausted all available options to correct disruptive behaviors. This includes but is not limited to attempts at helping the child to self-calm and modeling proper calming methods as well as including Conscious Discipline lessons weekly. All incidents will be documented on Brightwheel. Other methods used are:

- Redirection/Non-verbal Warning: The teacher will direct the child to another activity.
- Verbal Warning: The teacher will talk to the child about the situation at hand.
- Quiet Time: The child will have a very short amount of time away from the other children but close to the group (chair in classroom, bench when outside, office) to regroup. The amount of quiet time will not exceed the child's age in minutes. The child will be able to return as soon as they have had time to calm down and talk, or as soon as the difficult situation is resolved.
- Parent Phone Call or Conference: When the teacher has done all of the above and the child is still showing the behavior, the teacher will partner with the parent to discuss other strategies. The parent may be asked to speak to their child on the phone or come to the school to speak with their child. If the behavior continues, the child may be sent home for the remainder of the day.

If all options have been exercised and a resolution has not been found, a review would be made by the ELC Parent Advisory Committee. If the behavior continues on a recurrent basis, a longer suspension may be decided upon, an individualized behavior plan may be agreed upon, or the child may be removed from the program. Although we would only dismiss a child under EXTREME circumstances, we must take all matters into strict consideration to maintain the quality of our program, as well as, to protect the safety of all children enrolled. Please note that corporal punishment is NEVER used under any circumstances. This is an acknowledgement of the DSS policy number 114- 506B (2). Again, expulsion is an absolute last resort after all other means have been tried to resolve the issues resulting in expulsion.

Bullying Policy Zero Tolerance

St. Michael's has a zero percent tolerance policy for bullying. Bullying is defined as seeking to harm, harass, intimidate, or coerce someone perceived as vulnerable. Examples of this are constant hitting, pinching, pushing, hair pulling, name calling, negative gossiping, etc. with the intent to harm another. Young children do not understand the concept of bullying and will need positive guidance and a behavioral screening or mental health referral before being suspended or expelled if they display this type of behavior. However, school-aged children who attend summer camps are old enough to understand and will be given only one warning before being expelled from the summer camp program.

Accommodations for Learners/Dual Language

Teachers are responsible for working with parents and specialists on any modifications or adaptations needed in the classroom for each child to best meet their needs. This includes modifications to lesson plans, materials, room arrangement, additional time to complete tasks, etc.

Teachers create an environment that includes children's home language. Technology can be used to listen to stories in their native language. We will create opportunities to model English as well as including Spanish in the 3K and 4K classrooms and any other classrooms where there is a Spanish speaking child.

Social Media and Communication Policy

St. Michaels' ELC recognizes the benefits and challenges of using technology and social media sites. The following policy is for St. Michaels' Early Learning Center employees and parents who participate in social media. Social media includes but is not limited to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Google Plus, personal blogs and other websites. This applies whether employees are posting to their own sites or commenting on other sites.

The policy aims to provide good ethical practice and applies to all members of staff at the school and members of the ELC family. This policy is provided in both the parent handbook and staff handbook. The staff policy includes more comprehensive guidelines and may be viewed by the parents upon request.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Protect the safety and privacy of our students, families, and staff.

2. Protect the school from legal risks.
3. Ensure that the reputation of the school, its staff, and clients are protected.
4. Safeguard all children's privacy.
5. Ensure that any users can clearly distinguish where information provided by social media is legitimately representative of the school.

Staff and parent guidelines when using social media sites include but are not limited to:

1. Follow the Code of Conduct in the staff and parent handbooks.
2. Staff and parents must not share confidential or proprietary information about St. Michaels' ELC and must maintain student and staff privacy.
3. Be professional, use good judgement and be accurate and honest in communications.
4. No photographs taken within the school setting or special events are to be posted for public viewing, except those of your own child unless you have permission from the parents of other children in the photograph. Teachers may post pictures on Brightwheel according to the media release forms signed by parents. Administrators may post pictures on the Church website or school FB page according to the media release forms signed by the parents.
5. Staff and parents must not post negative comments about anything, or anyone connected with St. Michaels' ELC.
6. Staff and parents must be mindful that everything posted online is public, even with the strictest privacy settings. You must assume that everything is permanent & may be shared.
7. Apply a "good judgement" test for every social media post you make as you only get once chance to make a first impression.

St. Michaels' ELC has several Facebook pages available: One for the school, a Parent page, and a teacher FB page. We will use these to:

1. Promote events such as social events.
2. Update parents on staff training and school closures.
3. Deliver news and reminders.
4. Share activities and photos of the daily activities.
5. Share prayer requests.
6. Share enrollment status and openings.
7. Give hints and tips for home learning.
8. Suggest classroom activities.
9. Post daily schedules at the beginning of the school year.

COVID 19

****Our COVID Policy will update as new guidelines are released and will be communicated with parents after the new policy is accepted by the Mission Council.**

St. Michaels' ELC will provide all parents with safety protocols suggested by the CDC and established by the ELC. Updates and changes will be communicated as they are made. We will also provide DHEC guidelines for managing suspected or confirmed cases and update parents as DHEC updates the ELC. COVID19 has been declared a worldwide pandemic and is extremely contagious. All teachers and parents must commit to following the safety protocol established to help minimize the

risk to the ELC. Even with the implementation of preventative measures, there is still a risk of exposure and the ELC cannot guarantee that you or your child will not become infected with COVID19.

By signing the acknowledgement page at the end of the handbook:

- You acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID19 and that you or your child may be exposed or infected by attending St. Michaels.
- You agree to follow all established protocol to reduce risk to the ELC.
- You release and hold harmless St. Michaels' ELC, Directors, and teachers from all claims in any way related to attendance, including but not limited to any claims of exposure/infection.

**COVID19 Safety protocols and policies for
St. Michael and All Angels' Early Learning Center
(Taken from DSS, DHEC, and CDC suggestions)**

SICKNESS & EXPOSURE: Children whose parents exhibit COVID19 symptoms will not be permitted. Sick children will not be permitted.

If a classroom has a COVID exposure that class will be notified. The classroom will only close if 20% of that class tests positive. If the class reaches 20% and must close, it will remain closed from 10 days of the first positive test.

Staff will not come to work if sick with any symptoms and will be required to test negative or have a medical evaluation that determines if their symptoms are due to another cause. They will need a Dr note to return. Staff may participate in the Test-to-Stay program and will remain at work if tested and the test is negative.

Children in Infants, Caterpillars, Turtles, and Toucans must remain out of school 10 days from a positive COVID test, or 10 days from the start of symptoms. Children in the Elephants, Kolas, and Kangaroos must remain out at least 5 days if symptoms are drastically improved and no fever they may return after 5 days and must wear a mask for 5 days.

Closures may occur if COVID has a direct impact, causing the ELC not to meet the SC DSS Ratios. Therefore, the ELC may close that classroom or limit the hours of operation for the center or for particular classrooms.

If you have more than one child at the center and one child tests positive, the sibling cannot attend until they have tested negative 5 days from the exposure/positive test from the sibling.

St. Michaels' ELC Biting Policy

Children bite for many reasons. It is not unusual behavior for some children and many toddlers who have yet to learn to communicate verbally. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to the staff. This biting policy has been developed to address how biting will be handled in the classroom. Our goal is to help identify the triggers that may be causing the biting and put steps in place to help the biter learn appropriate behavior. Providing a safe environment for all children is our number one priority.

When biting occurs:

For the child that was bitten:

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the wound is covered with a bandage. The child is comforted and encouraged to express his/her feelings "I'm sad", "I'm hurt" and reassured they are safe.
2. Parents are notified.
3. If the skin is broken, DSS is notified by the center director.
4. An incident report is entered into our Life Cubby app. The report is printed out and signed by the parent, teacher, and director and placed in the child's file.

For the child that bit:

1. The teacher quickly gets the biter's attention to stop behavior "Henry-stop"
2. The teacher deals with the negative behavior on the child's level with firm, yet positive communication "Biting hurts." "Biting makes Sally sad." "Let's help Sally feel better."
3. The teacher helps the biter hold the ice on their friend's bite while repeating "Biting hurts" "Teeth are not for biting."
4. The teacher redirects the children to other activities.
5. The teacher notifies the parents.
6. An incident report is entered into our Life Cubby app. The report is printed out, signed by the parent, teacher, director, and placed in the child's file.

When biting continues:

1. The child will be shadowed as much as is possible to help prevent biting incidents.
2. The child will be observed by the classroom staff and the director to determine what is causing the biting (teething, frustration, lack of verbal skills, feels threatened, seeking attention, power/control, space too crowded, too few toys, too much waiting, etc.) and strategies will be developed to correct the behavior. The director will view the biting incidents on camera as well to help determine the cause.
3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

When biting becomes excessive:

1. If the child bites 3 times in one week (5 days) in which the skin of another child is broken, bruised, or a significant mark is left, then a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified. An individualized

action plan will be developed, signed by the parents, ELC Director, and lead teacher and the plan implemented immediately.

2. If the child again bites 3 times in a one-week timeframe (5 days) in which the skin is bruised, broken or a significant mark is left, then the parents will be required to provide a private shadow to attend school with the child until the behavior has ended for at least a two-week timeframe (10 days).
3. If the child again bites 3 times even with the aid of a private shadow, then the parents will be asked to make other childcare arrangements.
4. If the child bites twice in a 4-hour period, then parents of the child will be required to be pick up the child from the ELC for the remainder of the day.

If a child who has been through steps 1 and 2, goes 3 weeks without biting (15 business days), then we will go back to step 1 if the child bites again.

**St. Michael's Early Learning Center
Photo/Media Release Form**

GRANT PERMISSION

I give my permission for my child, _____ (Child's Name)
to be photographed during school activities and events for the following purposes:

Please initial any or all the situations where your child may be photographed.

- _____ Classroom and hallway displays within the school (to include canvas pictures & in-school slide show)
- _____ Postings on Bright Wheel app for ELC Parents only
- _____ Private Facebook Page for Parents Only
- _____ Church website/local community webpages or Facebook

Parent's signature

Date

DENY PERMISSION

_____ I DO NOT give permission for my child, _____
(Child's name) to be photographed for preschool displays (including classroom activities,) for posting
on the Center website, or for publicizing the Center in the Media.

Parent Signature

Date

We do not post pictures of children on our website nor do we post pictures in the local media.
Posting a child's picture on a staff member's personal Facebook page or personal webpage is strictly
prohibited.

(Child's/Children's Name/s)

Parent Signature

Date

Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook and Policies

I have received a copy of the *2023-2024 St. Michael and All Angels' Early Learning Center Parent Handbook*. I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the written policies in the Parent Handbook which are compliant with regulations for private and public child care centers. (South Carolina DSS 2953).

I understand that if policies are added, amended, or changed, I will be notified of any and all changes in writing. I also understand that all changes to all paperwork by either parent must be made in writing and signed by both parents or legal guardians.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Please print children's names here:

Please sign and return this page to St. Michaels' ELC.