



## **St. Aidan's Day School Family Handbook**

St. Aidan's Episcopal Day School is a coed, ecumenical school that does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policy, financial aid and other school programs. The Code of Virginia, section 22.1-289.031, allows child day centers operated by religious institutions the opportunity to file for an exemption from licensure by meeting documentation and other requirements specified within the religious exemption law. In compliance with the Code of Virginia, section 22.1-289.031, this Center is religiously exempt from licensure and is classified as a "religiously exempt child day center." Certain statements included in this handbook have been prepared and distributed, in part, to meet the requirements of the religious exemption law.

### History and Grounds

St. Aidan's Day School has served as an educational and outreach ministry of St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in Alexandria, VA since 1966. The Day School and Church share a campus of approximately 8 acres, which includes the Day School, a discrete two-story building which includes a kitchen that is available for preschool use, eight classrooms, a preschool office, and a library; the Church building, a parish office and hall, a playground, a wooded nature trail, and a large front lawn with an outdoor labyrinth. As a parish in the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia, St. Aidan's adheres to policies and worship practices set forth by that Diocese. Leadership of the Day School is shared between the Day School Director, who is responsible for the mission and administration of the School, and the Rector, who is responsible for the entire community of the Church and School. The Church and Day School take pride in a long history and reputation as a community which, following the example of Jesus Christ, is concerned with serving our neighbors and loving, respecting, and caring for all persons. Past and current Day School families

are always welcomed and encouraged to participate in the Church's worship and sacraments, service projects, education classes and social events.

Day School families are also welcome to use Church grounds or facilities after coordination with the Church office. Notably, the outdoor labyrinth is always available for meditation and the playground is open outside of school hours. In accordance with Diocesan and Church policy, no alcohol may be consumed on the campus without prior permission of the Rector or the Rector's designee. Based on availability, garden plots in the St. Aidan's Community Garden may be rented each spring. The St. Aidan's grounds and facilities are also used by Boy Scout Troop 1509 and Cub Scout Pack 1509, which are sponsored by the Church, and both actively support Church and Day School programs and events. Pack 1509 welcomes boys and girls in grades K-5 to participate.

#### St. Aidan's Day School Board

The St. Aidan's Day School Board provides management and oversight of the Day School. The Board includes the Rector of St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, parishioners of the Church, parents of current Day School students, and two teacher representatives. The Director provides advice to the Board as it carries out its responsibilities.

#### Enrollment

The Day School offers classes for children age 2 through Junior Kindergarten (JK). The maximum number of children to be present on any one day is 99.

#### Teachers

Day School lead teachers have both education and experience. In each classroom, at least one and typically both teachers have at least a 4-year college degree in a variety of fields. We believe our diverse backgrounds provide a rich school environment. Teachers are selected based on their ability to connect to young children, as well as an interest in early childhood development. All staff members are caring teachers who love spending time with children and want to help the children of our community. All staff members are certified annually to be free from any physical disability that would prevent them from caring for children. - Documentation is on file at the school. The staff is trained in First Aid, CPR, and child abuse awareness, including the Episcopal Church program "Safe Church." Each year, staff members are required to undergo 10 hours of continuing education in the field of early childhood education.

### School Days and Closures

The school day at St. Aidan's begins at 9:00 am. Most classes dismiss from the church's covered breezeway at 12:00 noon. After the two year old students have adjusted to the school day, they are picked up in their classrooms at 11:45 am. Junior Kindergarten has an extended day with students bringing a bag lunch. The Junior Kindergarten class dismisses at 1:00 pm.

St. Aidan's policy for closing during inclement weather or an emergency is as follows:

<u>Fairfax County</u>	<u>St. Aidan's</u>
Open 2 hours late	Open 1 hour late
Closed	Closed
Close 2 hours early	All students dismiss at noon, after-school activities are canceled
Virtual Learning	Closed

As a general rule St. Aidan's does not make up lost snow days.

### Safety and Security

All doors to the school will be locked at all times. During the AM drop off a staff member will greet you at the front door. If you need to enter the school during school hours, please ring the doorbell and a staff member will direct you to the Day School office. Visitors will need to sign in. If outside of the regular drop off/pick up times, parents need to meet with a staff member.

If you would like us to release your child to another individual, such as another child's parent, a visiting relative, babysitter, etc, please send permission either in a written note or email to the Director and be sure to list that person as an approved pickup in brightwheel. Please also explain our drop-off and pick-up procedures to anyone dropping off or picking up your child.

In the event of an unforeseen emergency before, during, or after school hours, you will be notified by phone, text, email, or Brightwheel.

### Curriculum

In the St. Aidan's curriculum, the child comes first. We place a strong emphasis on Social/Emotional Development and know that when a child feels safe, secure, self-confident and cared for, they are best able to learn. Optimal learning occurs

when children actively participate in their education.

St. Aidan's provides a stimulating environment through hands-on, interactive, play-based activities, developmentally appropriate for young children. Our teachers create an environment that stimulates growth in all of the developmental areas (Social/Emotional, Gross and Fine-Motor, Communication and Cognitive Development). Every child learns and develops differently and we pride ourselves on meeting children where they are and moving them forward at their own pace. Curriculum goals have been developed at each age level based on Virginia Early Learning and Development Standards and NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice. In addition, The Pre-K and JK classes incorporate the "Learning Without Tears" handwriting program into their curriculum. The multi-sensory approach engages children through audio, visual and kinesthetic experiences. This program uses interactive tools to sharpen fine-motor development.

St. Aidan's has a large outdoor setting that includes a beautiful playground, wooded walking paths, two outdoor classrooms and an expansive front lawn. With all of these outdoor options, the children spend ample time outdoors exploring and engaging in nature-based activities during the day.

In addition to the classroom curriculum, students participate in chapel, movement, music and library. Children benefit from the expertise of a variety of trained staff members during this time.

At St. Aidan's, we provide a safe, fun-filled environment that builds the foundation for a lifetime love of learning.

In addition to lots of singing and movement in the classroom, children enjoy a music class on Mondays. Each Wednesday, children attend chapel to sing songs, hear simple bible stories, and recognize birthdays being celebrated during that week. Classes meet weekly for a Movement program that emphasizes coordination, balance, rhythm, and dance. Several class celebrations are held each year, including a Halloween Parade and Songfest, field trips for the pre K and JK classes, and in-school field trips for the younger children.

#### St. Aidan's Library

Classes enjoy a weekly storytime in the library based on their class schedule. We also have books on child development and parenting that are available to our families. Starting in October, Mrs. Mulhern holds a Storytime for Little Ones, at 9:15 immediately before the 1st Chapel of every month. This is a great time for

younger siblings or Tuesday/Thursday students to visit the library. Afterwards, families are then invited to join us for Chapel at 9:30.

### Chapel

On Wednesday mornings at 9:30 am, all classes gather for chapel with the Rector or the Children's Minister. Children sing songs and may learn about a bible story. Families, including younger siblings, grandparents, and caregivers, are always invited to attend chapel. During Chapel Happy Birthday is sung to the children celebrating a birthday during that week.

### Parent/Teacher Conferences

Conferences to discuss your child's development are held in November during Thanksgiving week for children attending a 3-day, 4-day, 5-day program, or Junior Kindergarten. Students do not attend school on November Conference Days. Conferences may also be held anytime during the year at the request of either a parent or teacher.

For children attending a 2-day program (Tues/Thurs), conferences to discuss your child's development are held in January. These conferences are held during school hours with substitute teachers providing extra coverage in the classroom. All parents are encouraged to consult informally with teachers prior to registering for the following academic year.

An abbreviated conference, or "Touch Base," may also be held in the spring to discuss progress on issues brought up in a November conference.

### Extended Day

St. Aidan's offers an extended day program Monday through Friday. Extended Day is a time for free play and developing new friendships in a supervised setting. Children enrolled in the 3 Year Old and Pre-K classes must be fully potty-trained and comfortable staying at school with an adult that might not be their usual teacher. They bring their own lunch and stay until 1pm. Enrichment classes are held from 1-2 on certain days of the week. These classes are for Pre-K and JK classes only. On most days when there is not an enrichment class, stay and play is offered as another opportunity to extend your child's day from 1-2.

Extended Day reservations are sent out monthly via email. Families can sign up by completing the online reservation form and will be invoiced through Brightwheel. Reservations allow us to ensure we have adequate teacher supervision. We will always maintain legally required teacher-student ratios. If

you have not signed up in advance you may check with the Director to see if “drop-in” space is available at an additional cost.

If a child is sick on his or her Lunch Bunch day, every effort will be made to reschedule without charge. If a child decides not to stay or a parent forgets, we cannot provide a refund or reschedule.

### Health and Safety

The primary concern at St. Aidan’s Day School is the health and safety of children and staff. The purpose of this section is to outline the health and safety policies of the school. Please direct any questions related to these policies to the Director.

St. Aidan’s Day School requires the Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health Form MCH213G to be completed by the student’s primary physician prior to the first day of school for new students. All returning students are required to have an updated record of any new immunizations submitted annually.

If a child has a severe allergy requiring use of any medication (including anti-histamines and/or epinephrine pens), the school must have a Written Medical Consent Form signed by the child’s primary physician on file in the office. A Written Medical Consent Form is deemed valid for the entire school year. Any active medication must be given to the Director prior to the first day of school. All allergy medication will be kept in a safe, central location for access by licensed MAT trained staff members only (in the event of an emergency). In the event that a staff member must utilize an epinephrine pen, 911 will be called and the parent will be notified immediately.

Sick children do not benefit from a day at school and may unintentionally spread illness to other students and staff members. Children with bad colds may not feel up to a full morning of activities at school. Please be considerate and keep a child home if he or she has any new symptoms of illness (including fever- subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, chills, cough, congestion, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, fatigue, headache, muscle or body aches, poor feeding or poor appetite, new loss of taste or smell, or any other symptom of not feeling well), until cleared by the Director for your child to return. If a child becomes ill at school, a parent will be notified immediately, as Virginia law does not permit us to keep a sick child at school. Additionally, Virginia Department of Health requires that we report certain communicable diseases (These illnesses include, but are not limited to: COVID-19, Varicella (Chickenpox), Diarrheal Diseases, Bacterial Conjunctivitis, Fifth’s Disease,

Influenza, Norovirus, etc. If children are exposed to a communicable disease at school, parents will be notified by note or email.

The COVID-19 pandemic has at times required the school to amend policies to this health and safety document as necessary to protect the health and safety of our students and staff. Any new policy change will be communicated to parents via email as soon as possible. We utilize the guidelines and advice set forth by the Virginia Department of Health, Centers for Disease Control, and American Academy of Pediatrics.

If any minor injury (ie. skinned knee, sand in the eyes, or minor fall) occurs at school, the teacher may call, email, or speak to you at dismissal. We are especially vigilant and cautious with respect to injuries to the head or face. We will assess the situation for severity, render first aid, and an “Incident Report” may be sent home for your signature. Please sign the report and return it to school the following day. For the safety of all students, all teachers and staff are trained in basic first aid and CPR.

Playground time occurs every day. Children should come to school dressed in clothing and shoes intended for active play. Crocs and flip-flops are not appropriate shoes for active play, as they can be treacherous on climbing structures, causing a child to lose their footing. They may also fly off and strike someone else when a child is swinging. Tennis shoes are the preferred footwear for school. Each child should have a spare set of clothes at the school in case they get wet, muddy, painted, or have a toileting accident.

Toys and other items may be brought for special sharing times as indicated by your teacher, but guns, war toys, or other toys of destruction are not allowed at St. Aidan’s. Pets are also not allowed at St. Aidan’s as some children can be quite fearful or allergic. Special arrangements with the Director or your child’s teacher should be made before bringing a live animal to school.

Lastly, abuse and neglect are serious public health issues that impact the overall health and well-being of children and families. Please be aware that the Day School staff are mandated reporters by law and are trained in identifying and reporting these situations to Child Protective Services, as outlined by Virginia Law.

#### Drop Off & Pick Up Procedures

For everyone’s safety, cell phone use is prohibited on school grounds when dropping off or picking up children.

At the beginning and end of every day, we strive to have an orderly and safe dismissal process that safeguards the children, families, and staff of St. Aidan's Day School. In order to maintain an efficient drop-off/pick-up process, please be advised of the following policies around method of transport:

- **Drop Off/Pick Up (Walk Up)** - All families are always welcome to park their vehicles in the parking lot and accompany their child into and out of school.
  - **Morning Drop Off:** Families park and walk their child/children into the school to each child's classroom.
  - **Afternoon Pick Up:** Families park and access the walk-up line located along the brick path, which runs from the breezeway to the parking lot, to retrieve and accompany their child/children back to their vehicles.
- **Drop Off/Pick Up (Vehicle Line - Standard Road Vehicles only)**
  - The drop-off/pick-up line is only for Standard Road Vehicles (i.e., cars, trucks, SUVs, minivans, vans).
  - All Standard Road Vehicles in the Vehicle Line must have an adequate number of car seats installed for each child placed in the vehicle . We will not place a child in a car without a car seat.
  - All other vehicles, such as motorcycles, Low-Speed Vehicles (e.g., golf carts), etc., shall park in the parking lot and walk their child to and from the school using the appropriate procedures for Morning Drop Off and Afternoon Pick Up.
  - It is very important that anyone in the car remains in the car at all times while teachers help children into or out of the passenger side of the car.
  - At pick up please display a sign with the name(s) of any child being picked up. Drivers should then proceed into the parking lot to buckle children into a car seat.
- **Drop Off/Pick Up (Bicycles/Scooters)** - Families arriving by bicycles, scooters (or other similar transport) should park in the brick circle, located to the right off of the sidewalk path to the breezeway, and then follow either the **Morning Drop Off** or **Afternoon Pick Up** procedures defined above under **Drop Off/Pick Up (Walk Up)**.
- **Drop Off/Pick Up (Walking with Dogs)** - Families who bring dogs with them to drop off or pick up children should not bring dogs with them to the school doors or the walk up line. At pick up, please remain in the brick



circle with your dog and a teacher will walk your child over when they are able.

### Snacks

Students provide their own water bottle and snack daily. Parents are invited to send other snacks to be shared by their child's class, including celebrating birthdays and holidays. Some classrooms may have special restrictions because of food allergies so it is important to coordinate in advance with your child's teacher before sending in snacks.

### Birthdays

At chapel each Wednesday at 9:30 AM, "Happy Birthday" is sung to children celebrating a birthday during that week. Parents and siblings are invited to attend. Children often bring a special snack on their big day (coordinated in advance with the teacher) or have their parents come in and read one of their special books to the class. Birthday party invitations should not be sent to school because they can be lost or misplaced, leading to hurt feelings by both parties.

### Potty Training

Typically developing children are expected to be toilet trained (or working on it) by their 3rd birthday. We recognize that not every child will reach this developmental milestone at the same time. We are happy to work with parents to support their efforts. Children in the 5Day 3s program must be potty trained by the first day of school. If a child enrolled in the 5Day3s class appears to not be potty trained, we may communicate with the parents the need to move the child to a 3Day 3s class. All PreK and Junior Kindergarten children must be potty trained.

We recognize that everyone has bathroom accidents and are happy to help children get cleaned up and changed. We may call a parent or caregiver to come to school to help a child who routinely needs assistance during the day.

### Discipline

We help children find acceptable ways to express their anger, negotiate to get what they want or need, and handle aggression directed toward them by peers. Positive intervention is our main source of discipline. When necessary, a child may be given an appropriate "take-a-break" away from other children in order to have some time to regain self-control.

If at any time a child expresses overly or dangerously aggressive behavior, parents may be called to pick up the child. Repeated instances of aggression towards other children or adults will not be tolerated, and children who engage in such behavior

may be asked to find a different school setting.

### Opportunities for Parent Involvement

St. Aidan's is a wonderful community of families. All parents are encouraged to get involved at the school. There are lots of opportunities for involvement to fit all schedules and interests. Teachers seek Room Parents who coordinate with other classrooms on certain school-wide activities during the year. Teachers also seek parents to volunteer to bring in party snacks or to drive and chaperone on field trips. If interested in reading a story or talking to a class about an area of expertise, parents may reach out to the teacher. Parents interested in being a substitute teacher should contact the Director. The Parents Committee also needs parent volunteers to help with evening, weekend, and fundraising events.

### Parents Committee

The St. Aidan's Day School Parents Committee functions like a PTA. The Parents Committee sponsors family-oriented activities like: Cookies with Santa, Family Fun Night, Kinderfest at the Church's Oktoberfest, Marketplace and Art Show. The Parents Committee also fundraises to provide financial support to the school. Our primary fundraisers are Oktoberfest in the fall and a Read-a-thon in the spring. All families are encouraged to get involved in the Parents Committee as a way to meet other parents and support the school.

### Admission Age Requirements

Age requirements for our programs are as follows:

Two-year-old program	2 years old by August 30
Three-year-old program	3 years old by September 30
Pre-K program	4 years old by September 30
Junior Kindergarten	5 years old by December 31

### Registration Process

New families may apply as early as November 1 by filling out an enrollment application found on the school's website. All applicants are placed on the school wait list at no charge.

Current families and church members will be provided registration materials in January, and returning students are guaranteed a spot for the following year (though not necessarily their first choice class). Enrollment is limited for the Junior Kindergarten and subject to teacher references.

After Church member and current family registration is completed, the Director

will begin contacting applicants on the waitlist to offer available class spots. Legacy families are given a priority in enrolling.

Once accepted, you will be provided a contact for you to sign and return. At that time, you will need to pay a registration fee and submit all required documents.

On May 1, the first of 9 tuition payments is due. This payment is the last step in the registration process.

### Enrollment Requirements

Fairfax County requirements are as follows:

1. Proof of Birth – For identification purposes, a copy of each child’s birth certificate or passport must be provided.
2. Immunization – Each child must be adequately immunized against rubella, measles, whooping cough, diphtheria, polio, chicken pox, and mumps before admission, unless the parent or guardian submits an affidavit that such immunization is contraindicated on accepted medical or religious grounds.
3. Physical Examination – Each child must have a Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health Form on file **prior** to starting school. We request these forms be provided no later than August 1. No child will be allowed to stay at school without this form. Returning students must submit a signed updated immunization record when the child is given additional shots.

Forms are available online at

<http://www.vahealth.org/childadolescenthealth/> or in the Day School office.

4. Additional Forms- Each child must have a Child Profile Questionnaire and Emergency Information Form completed and submitted with their registration. These are included in the Registration Packet.

### Tuition Payment Procedures

St. Aidan’s utilizes the school app Brightwheel. Each family is required to set up a Brightwheel account to be used for school and classroom communications, online

bill pay, registration, photos, and more.

Tuition payments are due on or before the first day each month, beginning in May after Registration, then continuing in September when school begins, and concluding the following April. The preferred method of payment is through Brightwheel. Please contact the Director to inquire about additional payment methods. A \$20 late fee will be charged if payment is received after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month. In addition, a \$30 re billing fee will be charged if the outstanding tuition is not received by the first school day of the subsequent month. If tuition is not received for two consecutive calendar months, the student will not be allowed to return to school until all payments are received or payment arrangements have been made with the Director. A non-sufficient funds fee is charged each time a payment is returned for insufficient funds.

Any family dealing with financial difficulties should speak to the Director as soon as possible. We have financial assistance available to help with short-term financial difficulties that may arise during the year. Any request is kept confidential with the Director, Rector, and School Board Chair.

#### Withdrawals and Terminations

Families need to give 30 days notice of withdrawal. Tuition Payment #1, due in May shortly after registration, is nonrefundable. To avoid being billed for Tuition Payment #2, which would be due September 1, a family would need to give notice of withdrawal by the end of July. To avoid being billed for Tuition Payment #3, due October 1, a family would need to give notice of withdrawal by the end of August.

If a child is kept home temporarily because of illness, family vacation, or other reasons, tuition obligations shall continue. If the school is closed temporarily as a health precaution, because of weather conditions, or for any other reason beyond the control of the school, tuition obligations shall continue for no more than 30 days.

Our goal at St. Aidan's is to meet the social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of each student. In the rare case where the Director and the School Board, in consultation with the teacher, determine that the school cannot meet a child's needs, or that the attention required by a child jeopardizes the safety and care of others, the Director may request that a child be withdrawn from the school. Before a withdrawal request will be made, there shall be a minimum of 2 meetings with the parents at which the teacher and Director shall be present. If a withdrawal request is made, the liability for tuition ceases on the date of the request.

In some cases, we may be able to keep a child enrolled at St. Aidan's with the assistance of a third adult or shadow, paid for by his or her parent. Any such shadow is subject to the approval and oversight of the Director.

#### Records

We maintain files for each child and are happy to provide copies of records like the Virginia Student Health form that you may need for camps or other schools. Records will be kept at the school for 4 years after the student is no longer attending our school.

#### Insurance

In accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, the school is covered by public liability insurance that provides coverage in the event that someone brings suit for personal or bodily harm suffered during the operation of the school as a result of negligence.