



ASCENSION

**Episcopal Kindergarten and
Preschool**

**Parent Handbook
and
Directory**

2022-2023

**Ascension Episcopal Kindergarten
1912 Canyon Rd, Vestavia, AL 35216
(205) 979-8711
aekvestavia@gmail.com**

ASCENSION EPISCOPAL KINDERGARTEN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

HOURS

Kindergarten hours are 9:00 am until 1:00 pm, Monday-Friday. Aftercare is offered Monday - Friday from 1:00-2:00 for students in 2K-5K.

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment forms for the following school year will be sent out in January. Priority will be given in the following order: current AEK families, members of the Church of the Ascension, and then children on our waitlist. At that point any available spots will be open to public enrollment.

FORMS ON FILE

The following forms must be on file in the school office on the first day of school:

1. Photo/Directory Release Form
2. Hospital and Dental Release
3. Notarized Affidavit for Parent/Guardian
4. Certification of Immunization

CLASS RATIOS

Infant/Toddler Room - 4:1

Two-Year-Old Class - 8:1

Three-Year-Old Class - 10:1

Four-Year-Old Class - 12:1

Five-Year-Old Class - 12:1

We reserve the right to place one (1) child over quota in the classroom in extenuating circumstances.

FEES AND TUITION

Tuition payments are **due by the second day** of each month. We ask that you pay electronically through the Brightwheel platform. It is recommended that you set up Autopay so that you won't accidentally miss a payment. Cash and/or checks are also accepted and can be sent through your child's backpack folder by the 2nd day of the month. Checks should be made out to AEK.

Please call if other arrangements need to be made. **Refunds cannot be made for illness or absences of any kind.** We ask that all payments be made on time. A late charge of \$5 per day that a payment is late may be issued after a one-week grace period.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Children may arrive no earlier than 8:50 am before school. The director and/or another adult will assist your child or children in getting out of the car when you stop in front of the double doors in front of Ware Hall. Teachers will be posted inside the building to make sure the children arrive in their classrooms safely. This assistance will take place every weekday morning from 8:50 am - 9:10 am. All students, except for 2K, will be dropped off in the upper carpool line. 2K students will be dropped off in the circular drive outside of the church. Families with multiple children will use the carpool line for the youngest sibling in the family, regardless of if that sibling is in attendance at school that day.

For dismissal, parents or caregivers of children in the MDO room, 3K, 4K, and 5K will line up in their cars on the playground side and along the outer perimeter of the parking lot to pick up their children in the front of Ware Hall. The first car should pull all the way up to the orange cone, and teachers will load children into the car.

Parents of students in 2K will pick up in the circular drive in front of the church. As you pull into the drive from Canyon Road, follow the curve to the right and teachers will load children into the cars. Then cars should proceed to exit the circle back onto Canyon Rd.

Carpool numbers will be given during orientation days before the first day of school. Please hang your carpool number from the rearview mirror of your car and keep it visible during carpool pick-up.

CARPOOL SAFETY

PLEASE do not park anywhere except in the spaces provided before, during, or after school. The blue-marked parking spaces are reserved for the handicapped. Fire laws require that the pathways remain clear of any parked unattended vehicles.

1. Please do not use your cell phone during carpool pick-up or drop-off.
2. Please place your carpool number on the rearview mirror. Please keep it up until your child is loaded.
3. For the safety of the children and for liability reasons, teachers will walk children to the cars and open doors ONLY. Parents are requested to load and buckle children who need assistance. Children who are capable of loading and buckling themselves may do so at the parent's discretion.
4. Teachers will not walk children between cars. If your child needs to be loaded on the driver side of the car, please exit your car and walk them around or instruct your child to crawl through from the passenger side. Teachers will only load children from the right side of the car.
5. If you are sending someone to pick up your child, we must have a note or call to that effect. If it is during loading times, please call the church office at 822-3480.

6. If a car seat is left at school for later use, it must be labeled with your child's name. The adult who picks up the child must install the car seat. The adult will need to pull up in front of the line to install the seat.

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

Regular attendance is necessary to create a feeling of security and to ensure continuity of the program. However, we know there will be times your child will be absent from school. Please let your child's teacher know when your child will be absent from school. This communication helps with planning purposes.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY POLICY

Each child will have an opportunity for the appropriate amount of active play each day (30-45 minutes for all children). Active play shall take place outdoors when weather and environmental conditions permit. When the weather and/or environment do not permit outdoor activity, active play shall take place indoors. Daily schedules, including the allowance of physical activity, are posted in each classroom. Children who are given a time-out during recess time will not be made to sit longer than 5 minutes. Children who have misbehaved during classroom hours will not be made to remain indoors as punishment.

SCREEN TIME POLICY

Screen time is the use of television, videos, video games, and computers. AEK students do not typically use any screens except for the occasional special day, such as our 4K Polar Express Day. Sometimes teachers may show a short video to enhance a topic of study, but such videos will be age appropriate and will be used sparingly. Screen time is limited to no more than a total of 1.5 hours per week. Screen time is prohibited during meal or snack time and is completely prohibited for children younger than 2 years.

ILLNESS POLICY

If your child shows any sign of illness we ask that you keep him/her home so as not to infect other children. All children must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine before they are allowed to return to school.

Parents will be notified of any “outbreak” of a contagious virus within their child’s classroom. We appreciate extra diligence in taking necessary precautions against contagious viruses, such as washing hands and wearing masks. All students and teachers are encouraged to keep up to date with available vaccinations against the Covid-19 virus.

AEK follows the recommendations set forth by the Alabama Department of Health and the CDC in regards to quarantine and isolation times for Covid-19 exposures and infections.

The following policy regarding communicable diseases is required to be included by the Department of Health.

POLICY FOR PREVENTION OF COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

1. Common Communicable Diseases:

No employee shall be allowed to work while having an illness diagnosed by a health practitioner due to norovirus, hepatitis A, Shigella spp, Enterohemorrhagic or Shiga Toxin-producing Escherichia coli, Salmonella Typhi, or Nontyphoidal Salmonella.

2. Detection of Illness:

In order to control the spread of communicable diseases in the child care center, it is important that the caregiver recognize illnesses early. Children

who exhibit signs of a communicable illness will be isolated immediately and the parents or guardian will be contacted so that the child can be removed from the center. Staff will be alert to the following symptoms:

1. Severe coughing causing the child to get red or blue in the face or make a high-pitched croupy or whooping sound
2. Breathing trouble
3. Yellowish skin or eyes
4. Pinkeye/Conjunctivitis - tears, redness of eyelid lining, irritation, swelling and discharge of puss
5. Unusual spots or rashes
6. A lesion such as a blister, boil, pustule, or infected wound that is open or draining
7. Feverish appearance
8. Lethargy
9. Diarrhea
10. Vomiting
11. Unusual Behavior (less active, cries more than usual, shows discomfort, pulls at ears, difficulty swallowing)
12. Frequent scratching of the body or scalp

INCLEMENT WEATHER

AEK closes during severe weather whenever Vestavia Hills schools are announced closed. AEK will send an announcement on Brightwheel, via email, and on Facebook in the event we are closing.

FIRE/WEATHER DRILLS

These will be conducted regularly to keep in compliance with the Jefferson County Health Department.

SNACKS

Children have midmorning snacks each day. Please send a healthy snack with your child every day in a clearly marked container. This container should be a different container than your child's lunchbox for ease in deciphering what is intended for snack that day. **Please make sure we are aware of any allergies or dietary restrictions that your child has.**

LUNCH

Each child should bring a lunch and a drink in a clearly marked lunchbox. We are not permitted to heat lunches, so please send food that is ready to eat. We ask that items are sent in containers that children can easily open themselves. Our goal is to teach each child independence and this is the perfect opportunity to practice that skill. Children will eat in their classroom. Please be sure to include any necessary utensils in your child's lunchbox. All items should be labeled clearly with your child's name. If you include an item that should be refrigerated, please let your child's teacher know.

AFTERCARE

Aftercare provides an excellent opportunity for our AEK children to spend some extra time at school to play with their friends. The majority of the time is spent on the playground, weather permitting, allowing children to engage in free play while supervised by AEK teachers.

Aftercare is offered Monday through Friday from 1:00-2:00 for any AEK student in the 3K-5K classes. Accommodations may be made for 2K students to attend the aftercare hours at the discretion of the director.

Because of the multiple age groups attending aftercare, it is important that all children who attend are potty trained and capable of spending the extra hour at school without a nap. We do encourage 4K and 5K students to attend aftercare so that they can get accustomed to spending the longer hours at school, but it is certainly not required.

Flexible Schedule

So that we can ensure we have proper staffing, we appreciate you signing your child up for aftercare by August 1, 2022. You can choose how many days you want your child to attend each week. You can also choose which days work best for your schedule. Simply create your preferred schedule on the sign-up sheet!

Cost

Aftercare fees will be included on your monthly tuition statement. The monthly cost is based on how many days per week your child attends aftercare.

1 day a week: \$30 per month

2 days a week: \$60 per month

3 days a week: \$85 per month

4 days a week: \$115 per month

5 days a week: \$140 per month

Costs for aftercare in December and May will be half of the normal monthly cost to accommodate the fewer attendance days due to holidays and shorter months.

Drop-In Days

Drop-in days are also available as long as there is space on the day you wish your child to attend. Drop-in days are the perfect solution for parents who do not need aftercare on a normal basis but have the occasional need for the extra hours. Simply contact Rebecca at least one day before you wish your child to stay and ask if there is availability for the day(s) needed. If space is available, your child will be added to the list for that day and charges will be applied to your invoice for the following month. The cost per drop-in day is \$15.

COMMUNICATION

We will use the Brightwheel platform for all communication purposes. Please be sure your phone notifications for the Brightwheel app are turned on so that you don't miss any important information. Monthly school newsletters, daily teacher reports, and billing communication can all be found on that platform.

Please also make it a habit to check your child's bag for any notes or information that the teachers may send home. These notes will be in the folder inside his/her backpack. You should also use this method to send notes or checks to us, if you do not do so through the Brightwheel app.

Please feel free to contact your child's teacher and/or the Director with any questions at any time. The happiness and well-being of your child is of utmost importance to us and we believe in open communication at all times. We ask you to understand that if you try to contact your child's teacher during the school hours, she may not be able to check messages or respond to you as she is giving her attention to the children in her care. You can send messages directly to your child's teacher through the Brightwheel app. For more urgent matters, you are welcome to call the school office (979-8711), contact the director via cell phone (601-238-5484), or email (aekvestavia@gmail.com) and she will make sure the teacher receives the message. For the MDO room, you may contact Kelly Gould directly via email (aekpreschool@gmail.com) or on her cell phone (334-412-2737).

Messages can be sent directly to the director and assistant director through Brightwheel by selecting the toggle that says "Administration to parent."

COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS

We want to make sure you are happy with the service you are receiving at AEK. If you have a question, suggestion, or complaint that pertains to your child's specific class, we ask that you approach the classroom teacher first. If you have something that needs to be addressed for the whole center, please direct that communication to the director. We ask that you do not take your complaints or suggestions to the board without prior communication to the faculty and staff at AEK. We honor your privacy and anonymity in all matters.

CONFERENCES

Conferences may be scheduled by your child's teacher when necessary. You may also call at any time to schedule a conference. Significant events such as a move, the death of a relative or pet, illness, divorce, etc. need to be communicated to your child's teacher and the Director. We want to give extra understanding and hugs to help your child through a difficult time. Please do not try to have a conference when you are bringing your child to school or picking him/her up.

DISCIPLINARY POLICIES

Discipline will be handled in the following order:

1. The child is first removed from the trouble-causing situation. The amount of time removed depends on the severity of trouble. Responsibility of the act is discussed.
2. Privileges are taken from the child. Example: toy, game, favorite center of play.
3. The child is sent to the Director's office for discussion of the child's responsibility and **assurance of love**.
4. Parents are notified if disruptive behavior continues, and new methods of discipline are worked out.

5. Parents are urged to contact the child's physician to find the cause of the problem if disruptive behavior continues.
6. The staff of AEK is not qualified to handle behavioral problems that require extra personnel. AEK will recommend placement in another situation that provides a more appropriate learning environment.

BITING POLICY

Biting is unfortunately not unexpected for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If biting occurs, the following steps will be taken.

For the child that was bitten:

1. The child that is bitten will be given first aid including cleaning with soap and water and covering with a bandage, if needed.
2. The parents will be notified that the incident occurred. The name of the other child will not be shared.
3. An incident form will be filled out on Brighwheel for the injury

For the child that bit:

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child "No! Do not bite!" And the child will be placed in time out for no longer than the child's age (2 years old = 2 minutes)
2. The parents will be notified
3. An incident form will be filled out on Brightwheel

If biting continues:

1. If a child inflicts 3 bites in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised, a conference will be held with the parents to determine next steps.

CLOTHING

Please mark all sweaters, jackets, coats, etc. with your child's name. Children should wear comfortable play clothes that can withstand dirt and paint. Children play outside every day except in extreme weather. Please dress your child accordingly.

Dress them in rubber-soled shoes for their safety. We recommend you apply sunscreen each morning. Please do not send umbrellas.

We will have occasional dress-up days throughout the year. These are fun opportunities for your child to partake in various celebrations.

FIELD TRIPS

Field Trips are set up to enhance the curriculum. The cost of all trips is not included in the enrollment fee but will be collected prior to the field trip. All trips begin and end on the school grounds.

The staff of AEK is deeply committed to making each trip as safe as possible for all participants. For safety reasons and because of insurance requirements, AEK requires that the following rules be observed by the transporting parents/teachers:

1. Drivers must have a current driver's license and must follow all the applicable rules-of-the-road under Alabama law.
2. Vehicles must be in safe mechanical condition.
3. Drivers and supervising parents/teachers should inspect the vehicles for potentially dangerous objects such as tools, electronic equipment, firearms, etc. and remove any potential problem items from the passenger compartments where the children will be riding. **Please check carefully under all seats and in all compartments accessible to children.**

4. Each child must be properly restrained with seat belts/car seats. Children must have appropriate car seats or booster seats.
5. Each child must hold hands with the supervising adult and/or other children when walking to and from the vehicle and the destination.
6. A head count from a written roster must be made prior to leaving school, in the vehicle, and at the destination. The same procedure must be followed on the return trip.
7. Each child should wear an Ascension shirt and have a name tag on with proper identification including AEK's phone number and the child's phone number.

SCHOOL T-SHIRTS

Ascension t-shirts are required for **ALL** children in the 3K, 4K and 5K classes. The children will wear these t-shirts in the spring music program, on field trips, and on special AEK Pride days at school. T-shirt orders will be taken on the first day of school. Children in the 2K classes are welcome to purchase Ascension t-shirts. We also offer adult sizes and would love to see you around town showing off your Ascension pride

SCHOOL BAGS

All children must bring a backpack to school each day. The backpack should be large enough to hold a 9x14 folder. It is helpful for the bag to be large enough to also hold your child's lunchbox, snack, and water bottle.

Please check for notes and art work after every school day. These will be sent home in a take home folder inside your child's bag. Any important notes or money should be sent back to school using this same folder. Please do not attach keychains or other toys to your child's school bag. They are heavy and dangerous when bags swing around. Please do not attach bottles of hand sanitizer to your child's school bag. The children love to play with these at carpool time and we have had problems with the gel

getting into children's eyes. Children will be given plenty of opportunities to wash their hands and each classroom is equipped with hand sanitizing gel.

TOYS

Your child may not bring toys to school **unless** the teacher requests it in a note. MDO students and two-year-olds may bring one "security" item, but the teacher will encourage the child to keep that item in their bag during the school day as much as possible.

PARTIES

There are six scheduled parties for each year: Halloween, Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Easter, and End of the Year. Sign up sheets will be sent out as the parties approach to ask for volunteers to send items for the party. Parties are kept short and simple. We do not typically invite parents to these parties except in special circumstances. We love to have parents attend other special events throughout the year, but have found that parent participation during a party often causes more stress on the children in the classroom.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

We love to celebrate birthdays at AEK! Your child may celebrate his/her birthday at school by sharing cupcakes, cookies, etc. with his/her classmates. Please arrange your plans ahead of time with your child's teacher. Children will be invited to pick something out of the birthday box and will receive a birthday blessing during our weekly chapel service.

AEK reserves the right to change any of the above policies throughout the school year. Any policy change will be presented to parents in writing and will be posted on the school website.