



ASCENSION

**Episcopal Kindergarten and
Preschool**

**Parent Handbook
and
Directory**

2021-2022

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

CALENDAR - 2021-2022

August:

Wednesday, August 11- Friday, August 13: Teacher Work Days/Professional Development
Monday, August 16 and Tuesday, August 17: Parent Orientation Day
Wednesday, August 18: First Full Day for Students
Monday, August 23: Aftercare Begins

September:

Monday, September 6th: No School - Labor Day

October:

Friday, October 8th: No School for students - Parent/Teacher Conferences
Monday, October 11th: No School - Columbus Day Holiday
Tuesday, October 12th: No School - Professional Development
Thursday, October 28th and Friday, October 29th: Class Halloween Parties

November:

Thursday, November 11th: No School - Veteran's Day
Wednesday, November 17th: Thanksgiving Feast - 10:45 am
Monday Nov. 22nd - Friday, Nov. 26th: No School - Thanksgiving

December:

Wednesday, December 8th: 4K and 5K Christmas Pageant - 11:00 am
Thursday, December 16th and Friday, December 17th: Class Christmas Parties

Monday, Dec. 20th-Tuesday, Jan. 4th: No School - Christmas Holidays

January:

Wednesday, January 5th: School Resumes
Thursday, January 6th: 5K Informational Meeting - 9:15 am
Friday, January 7th-Thursday, January 13th: Registration for 2022/2023 begins
Monday, January 17th: No School - MLK Day

February:

Friday, February 18th: No School - Professional Development
Monday, February 21st: No School - Presidents Day
Wednesday, February 23rd and Thursday, February 24th: Parent Appreciation Days

March:

Monday, March 28th-Friday, April 1st: No School - Spring Break

April:

Friday, April 15th: Good Friday, Inclement Weather Day - No School

May:

Wednesday, May 4th: No Extended Day
Thursday, May 5th: Mother's Day Tea and Art Show/No Aftercare - 9:30 am
Tuesday, May 17th: School-Wide Pizza Party and Sock Hop - 10:15 am
Friday, May 20th: Last Day of School/5K Graduation (10:30 am)/No Extended Day

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 1:00-3:00 for students in 2K-5K.

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.

For dismissal, parents or caregivers of children in the infant/toddler room, 2K, and 3K 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 4K and 5K 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. Please come to the door to get your child **only in an emergency**. Please come prior to carpool time if your child must be picked up quickly.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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. Following an illness, please be sure your child has been free of fever for 24 hours without fever reducing medication before returning to school.

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.

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, MDO 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.

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 check are also accepted and can be sent through your child's bag 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.

FORMS ON FILE

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

1. Photo Release Form
2. Physical Form (new students only)
3. Hospital and Dental Release
4. Notarized Affidavit for Parent/Guardian
5. Certification of Immunization

CLASS RATIOS

Infant/Toddler Room - 3:1

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.

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 is offered all five days of the week from 1:00-3:00. You may choose a Tuesday/Thursday, Monday/Wednesday/Friday, or Monday through Friday option. Aftercare students will have a snack around 1:30. Students attending aftercare should bring an extra snack in his/her school bag. Occasionally, we will provide special treats, such as popcorn or popsicles, for our aftercare students. Aftercare teachers will be alerted of any allergies of students in their care.

Picking up your child from aftercare:

You may pick up your child any time between 1:00-3:00. We ask that you call the school phone number (205) 979-8711 when you are pulling into the parking lot to pick up your child. That way the teachers can have your child gather his/her belongings and will be ready when you get there. In the event of rain or other weather conditions that prevent us from going outside, children will participate in indoor play in the 4K classroom. You can still call the number and pull up under the covered driveway outside of the church office. You can then walk through the building to pick up your child from the 4K classroom, or a teacher may be able to meet you at the double doors if enough staffing is available at that time.

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 school bag. 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 infant/toddler room, you may contact Kelly Gould directly via email (aekpreschool@gmail.com) or on her cell phone (334-412-2737).

Messages and/or questions for the director should be sent directly to her email. That way your question won't get lost among your communication with your child's teacher.

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 are notified that the incident occurred. The name of the other child will not be shared.
3. An incident form will be filled out on Brightwheel 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 and the child may receive a one week suspension from the program.

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

At this time, all field trips are put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Teachers may choose to “take” children on virtual field trips if they learn of an opportunity that enhances a unit of study. If and when we are able to reinstate field trips, the following information applies.

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 vehicle must have 2 adults (driver and supervisor)
5. Each child must be properly restrained with seat belts/car seats. Children must have appropriate car seats or booster seats.
6. Each child must hold hands with the supervising adult and/or other children when walking to and from the vehicle and the destination.
7. 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.
8. 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 3's, 4's and 5's 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 2's 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 in 2K-5K will be given an AEK school bag when they begin as new students. If a bag is soiled or misplaced, a new bag can be purchased for \$10.

Please send this bag to school with your child each day. Students in 4K and 5K may choose to bring a personal backpack to school. Please ensure that the backpack is large enough to carry a standard size folder.

Students in our infant/toddler class may use a small backpack or diaper bag, or they may purchase an AEK bag for \$10.

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. Infants/Toddlers 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.

NAPS

Parents of students in the infant/toddler room should send a "nap mat" or a small blanket to be used during a short rest time each morning. The school will provide a padded nap mat.

Parents who have signed their child up for aftercare and want their child to take a nap during aftercare, should also send a nap mat or small blanket to be used on top of the provided plastic mat.

Blankets will be sent home at the end of each month for washing.

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. At this time, because of the nature of the Covid-19 pandemic, parents will not be permitted to class parties.

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

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.

FIRE/WEATHER DRILLS

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

COVID-19 PLAN and Protocols

Listed below are the provisions that AEK is taking to ensure the health and safety of our students and teachers.

These action items are subject to change due to updates from the Health Department's regulations and suggestions.

1. All teachers are vaccinated against the Covid-19 virus. Teachers will remain masked while indoors with the children.
2. Large school events will not take place until further notice. Parents will not be permitted in the building unless permission is granted by the director or assistant director. All parents and adults, regardless of vaccination status, must be masked when at the school.

3. Classes of students will remain with each other as much as possible so as to prevent cross contamination among classes in the case of a positive case.
4. Hand washing will be implemented into the daily routine in all classrooms with the goal of everyone cleaning their hands at least once per hour.
5. Surfaces, toys, and common areas will be sanitized regularly throughout the day.
6. Many activities will take place outside when possible.
7. All students aged 2 and older will be required to wear a mask while indoors. **(AMENDED 8/31/21)**

Quarantine Protocols:

In the event that...

A student or teacher at AEK tests positive for Covid-19

- the unmasked students in that classroom will be considered a “close contact” meaning those students must quarantine for 10 days and monitor for symptoms.
- A student or teacher who tests positive for Covid-19 must quarantine for 10 days before returning to school. That person should also be fever and symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Masked students within the classroom will not be required to quarantine for 10 days. **(Amended 8/31/21)**
- All parents of students within the classroom will be notified of a positive case and will be given details about if their child and/or the positive child was properly masked when in the classroom. **(Amended 8/31/21)**

A child has a close-contact exposure to Covid-19 outside of school

- They will not be permitted to school for a minimum of 10 days while they monitor for symptoms. A negative covid test may be required to return to school.

A vaccinated teacher has close contact exposure to Covid-19 outside of school

- That teacher can continue to come to school, but must remain masked at all times, including while outside. The teacher will remain 3 feet away from students at all times. The teacher may be asked by the director to stay at home for a minimum of three days, determined by the severity of the exposure (ex. A family member living within their home).

A child shows symptoms of Covid-19 while at school

- That student will be isolated in the sick room and their parents will be contacted immediately. Parents will need to pick up their child within 30 minutes.
- The student must be symptom free, without medication, for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. A negative Covid test may be required to return to school.

Please contact the director with any questions or concerns regarding our Covid-19 protocols. The health of our teachers and students are our greatest concern. We will consistently follow the guidelines of the CDC and Alabama Department of Health.