

**St. Timothy's Episcopal Preschool**  
**630 Mississippi Ave.**  
**Signal Mountain, Tennessee 37377**  
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*Mission Statement*

*The purpose of the preschool is to glorify God by creating a community of Christ's love that nurtures growth for ministry to others.*

This handbook has been prepared for you, the parents of the children attending St. Timothy's Episcopal Preschool (STEPS), to help you understand our program, its objectives and procedures.

St. Timothy's is a non-profit, self-supporting school for children two through five years of age. The preschool was established by the church in 1985 to serve its parishioners and the community of Signal Mountain and is licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. We are a member of the National Association of Episcopal Schools, National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Chattanooga Association for the Education of Young Children. Since 2002, the Tennessee Department of Human Services has awarded our preschool a "three star" rating-the highest rating a preschool can earn.

The preschool employs a professional staff and maintains an adult child ratio of not more than 1:12. As additional enrichment to the program, resource teachers come into the preschool to provide specialized activities for the children.

Our purpose is to meet the needs of the children of the parish and community by offering a nurturing, play centered and positive learning environment. It is our desire that St. Timothy's will be a rewarding experience for both you and your child. If this handbook leaves any questions unanswered, please contact the preschool director.

## ADMISSIONS

St. Timothy's has classes for children ages two through five. Children entering classes for each age level must be that age by August 15 of that school year. Exceptions to put children in a higher or lower age group may be made on an individual basis.

A completed registration form, a registration/supply fee and a documented visit are required to reserve a place.

Children must be fully potty trained to be in the 3's, 4's and Pre-K classes. With the exception of the two's class, **pull-ups are not allowed**. Pre-registration opportunities will be given to children presently attending, siblings of present and former students and parishioners (in good standing) of St. Timothy's.



## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of STEPS include the following:

- Provide a learning environment and experience which helps the children develop physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.
- Establish patterns and expectations of success which will create a climate of confidence for the child's present and future learning efforts.
- Enhance the child's mental processes with particular attention to verbal and conceptual skills.
- Encourage the social competence of the child.

## OPEN CLASSROOM EDUCATION

The preschool provides an open education learning environment which is child centered and invites independent and group learning through teacher guided investigation. The classroom learning environment has been carefully planned to challenge the child and to make use of a variety of materials which provide for all areas of development, including the specific social, motor and cognitive requirements of early childhood. Individual needs, interests and abilities are addressed.

Open classroom education is based on these beliefs:

- Learning is something a child does, rather than something that is done to him/her.
- Play is a child's way of learning and working.
- Each child develops and grows at an individual rate which is sometimes unrelated to chronological age.
- A child is naturally curious and eager to learn.
- Children learn from each other. They learn to experience a sense of achievement and responsibility, to respect themselves and others.
- Each child is unique and must be valued and appreciated for his/her individuality in all areas.
- The development of self-reliance and initiative is encouraged in an atmosphere of trust and structured freedom.
- Basic skill development is essential in the learning environment.
- A variety of creative approaches to learning and teaching are vital to foster positive learning experiences.
- The basic learning devices for a young child are sensory and concrete materials.
- The learning environment should invite discovery and exploration.

***“Play is the highest form of research.”***

*Albert Einstein*

## **ORIENTATION (FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL)**

Your required orientation will be on your child's phase in day. Please check your child's folder for the following items. Children will not be allowed to begin school until all files are complete.

**REGISTRATION FORM**-Please introduce us to your child through this information sheet.

**HEALTH FORM**-In order to comply with state licensing, we must have a current sheet before your child can attend school.

**EMERGENCY INFORMATION CARD**-Fill this out completely/make changes. **Phone numbers must be kept up to date.**

**ENROLLMENT AGREEMENT**-Tuition checks may be made out to STEPS and are due on the first school day of the month.



## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The policies and procedures as well as the administrative responsibilities of the preschool are under the direct control of the Rector and Vestry of St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, who delegate responsibility to the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors is composed of members of St. Timothy's and preschool parents. Ex-officio members include the Rector, the preschool director, a preschool staff representative and a member of the Vestry.

**ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL-Children should not arrive before 9:00 a.m.** Our staff is busy preparing for the day or involved in meetings from 8:30-9:00. **Everyone must enter the school (mornings and afternoons) through the main glass door beside the office.** Several doors are then available for exiting the building.

Please park in the lower lot in the mornings and afternoons. It is important for you to escort your child to and from the classroom. For the safety of your child, **do not** simply drop your child off and watch him/her walk to the building. Make sure someone is in the classroom to receive your child, especially when arriving late and on chapel days.

“Sign In/Out” sheets are posted outside each classroom. Please sign (don’t just initial), enter the time and note any pertinent information (examples-who will pick child up, will pick up early, arriving late due to appointment, etc.).

Please do not engage the teachers in lengthy conversations at the door. However, if you need to talk with a teacher at length, please schedule a personal or telephone conference time with her. Messages, checks, etc. may be handed to your child’s teacher or brought to the preschool office. Please do not send breakfast to school. Leave toys, pacifiers, etc. in the car.

Children in the 2’s class must be in clean diapers/pull-ups **upon arrival.** Changing facilities are available in the classroom.

The children are **dismissed at 2:00.** Please notify the office if someone other than a parent is to pick up a child. **Children will not be permitted to leave with anyone unknown to us without written or verbal permission.**

Children should be picked up promptly out of concern for their fears and consideration for teachers who have other schedules to meet. Children left after 2:15 must be picked up in the director’s office. There will be a minimum **late charge of \$5.00.** Please call the office if an emergency arises which prevents you from picking up your child on time.

If you need to pick your child up early, please send a note that morning. When picking up early, please come by the office. It is less distracting for a staff member to enter the classroom.

**BEHAVIOR**-Emphasis is placed on reinforcement of good behavior. However, there are times when unacceptable behavior will have to be dealt with by warning, time out, a visit to the office or notification of parents. The school reserves the right to require the withdrawal of any child whose presence in the school is detrimental to the student or the school.

**BIRTHDAYS**-Each child's birthday will be celebrated at school. Parents may add to the occasion by sending a special snack (**PLEASE-NO CUPCAKES**). A special day during the school year may be chosen for children with summer birthdays.

**BUTTERFLY BRUNCH**-The Butterfly Brunch is our school's only fundraiser held each year in the spring. It is a brunch, raffle and silent auction for the women of our preschool, church and community. Proceeds from the Butterfly Brunch have allowed us to make both big and small improvements to our school. For this event to be successful each year, it requires involvement from **ALL** of our families.

**CHAPEL**-A brief chapel service once a week will address the spiritual needs of the children. Chapel consists of Bible stories, music, and prayers and will be led by a member of the clergy, the youth director or preschool director. Parents are welcome to attend Chapel with their child.

**CHARITIES**-We participate in giving to charities such as Operation Christmas Child (shoeboxes) and Signal Mountain Social Services. You are never obligated to participate.

**CLASS ACTIVITIES-**We welcome participation of parents who might talk about careers, share a hobby/interest or help in other ways. Please tell us about your talents.

**CLOTHING-**Children should not be too dressed up to participate in messy activities. Shoes that fit and tie or velcro are less likely to cause accidents than floppy shoes like sandals and crocs. Belts, suspenders and buttons in the back are difficult for children to manage in the bathroom. Layers are best in cold weather. Mittens are easier than gloves. **Please label all lunchboxes and outer clothing. Every child must have a change of clothes,** including socks and underwear, to be left at the preschool for use in case of emergencies. Please label each piece and send in a clear ziplock bag. Remember to replace soiled clothing the next day.

Please provide at least two diapers a day for two year olds who are not yet potty trained. For the convenience of our teachers, please purchase side release/fasten pull-ups for preschool use.

**EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURE-**In the event of a medical emergency, EMS will be summoned first. Then every effort will be made to contact the child's parents or, if they cannot be reached, the person authorized to act in an emergency. If no one can be reached, the preschool will contact the child's physician and proceed on the advice of the medical personnel. **Please keep all contact numbers current.**

**ENRICHMENT-**Due to recent changes in DHS regulations, we do not take "away from school" field trips. Instead we invite outside resources to come to our preschool.

**HEALTH RECORDS**-Each child is required to have a Tennessee Certificate of Immunization (available from Health Department or Health Care Provider) on file in the preschool office. Those entering STEPS for the first time must have this certificate turned in **BEFORE** beginning school. Religious exemptions **are not** accepted.

Medical exemptions are accepted according to the Tennessee Department of Health Rule 1200-14-1-.29:

*Physician or health department authorized to indicate specific vaccines medically exempted (because of risk of harm) on the new form (TN Certificate of Immunization). Other vaccines remain required.*

Please notify the teacher of any allergies your child has. Before a two year old is accepted into the program, we must also have a statement from a physician showing proof of the child's physical examination within three months of admission.

**ILLNESS**-Parents must keep children home during the infectious stages of colds, digestive upsets, viruses and other illnesses. **DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD TO SCHOOL IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING HAS OCCURRED IN THE LAST 24 HOURS:** diarrhea, vomiting, conjunctivitis (pink eye), impetigo, cold sores, chicken pox, head lice, strep, colored discharge from the nose (yellow, green, or gray) or fever. Children should be free of fever **without medication** for at least 24 hours. If head lice are present, **before the child returns to school**, a doctor's statement verifying that the child "has been treated and is free of lice" must be presented. In case of ringworm (which is very contagious), child may only come to school if under treatment and if wound remains covered.

- Please notify us when your child is ill so that other parents can be alerted to watch for symptoms.
- Prescription or nonprescription medication will not be administered by teachers or aides except in an emergency.
- If your child is sent home for any illness, please do not bring your child back to school that same day.



**INCLEMENT WEATHER-Only** in the event of school closings and delays, will we follow the Hamilton County/Signal Mountain public school schedule. Should the schools delay opening, the preschool will delay the same number of hours. Should they dismiss early, we will close at 12:00 for the purpose of easing pickup procedures. Please be aware of these possibilities and listen for announcements on local broadcasts or check the preschool Facebook page.

Working parents, please notify the office about arrangements for your children during these times.

Please use your own judgment on days when road conditions may be hazardous. If schools are not closed, but your situation is not safe for driving, then please enjoy a day at home with your child. We do not want anyone to have an accident trying to get to preschool.

**LUNCHESES**-Please do not send items which require refrigeration or microwave preparation. Do not send carbonated drinks or glass containers. Please keep sweets and chips to a minimum and make every effort to send a well-balanced lunch. **To prevent choking hazards, foods such as grapes, hot dogs, etc., should be cut into small pieces.**

In compliance with DHS requirements, the preschool will supplement lunches lacking in fruit, dairy or vegetable components. Please select things that are easy to open and don't require a lot of assembly. In the event that you forget to send a lunch for your child, the school will provide one at a cost of \$2.00.

**MUSIC**-Music will be offered to each class about once a week. This will be a fun time of singing, playing instruments, using finger plays and whole body activities which teach rhythm, steady beat and matching pitch. The children will present a musical program at least twice a year.

**PARENT PARTICIPATION**-Our monthly newsletters, weekly emails, Facebook page, and notes from the teachers will keep you informed of events. The children will bring their important papers home most Thursdays in a reusable bag. Please search this carefully and **read all communications from the school**. Send the emptied bag back to school with your child each Tuesday morning. No backpacks are necessary.

**PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES**-Conferences (for children in 4's and Pre-K classes) will be held in the spring when you will receive a written report on your child's progress. However, if you would like to discuss your child with their teacher at any other time, please contact her to make arrangements.

Please do not expect the teacher to discuss your child in their presence or in the presence of other children. Teachers are instructed not to discuss concerns about any child with anyone other than that child's parents or the appropriate professional channels.

**PICTURES/FACEBOOK**-Pictures of our children may occasionally be in the newspaper, church newsletter or preschool website. If you do not wish to have your child's picture published, there is a form you must sign. Please do not post pictures of staff or children on your personal Facebook page without permission. Please send pictures/videos of preschool events to our school email for posting on our STEPS Facebook page. Look for our **St. Timothy's Episcopal Preschool-STEPS and St. Timothy's Butterfly Brunch** pages and "Like" us.

**PLAYGROUND**-Our playground is enjoyed by our children during preschool hours and is also available to our children and parents after school hours, Mondays, Fridays and weekends. Our playground rules are posted outside and you have received a copy with your registration materials. Please become familiar with our rules and **follow them when you are on the playground after school hours.**

**SNACKS-**You will be asked to provide snacks for your child's class 3-4 times during the year. Whenever your child is the class "leader" it will be your turn to be the "snack" parent. Please remember to check the snack list and mark your calendar. If you can't help as scheduled, please exchange with another parent and inform the teacher of the change. Please don't send overly sweet food or things that require preparation. Send a variety of foods for snacks and send enough food for the week for all the children in the class. Some suggestions for appropriate snacks: fruit, cheese, crackers, popcorn, pretzels, carrot sticks, graham crackers. We serve water with snacks and the school will provide napkins, cups, and plates.

STEPS is **not** a "peanut free" preschool. If a child has food allergies of **any** kind, the parents need to provide the child's teacher with a list of approved snacks. Also, please supply "safe" snacks for times when provided snacks are not acceptable.

**TELEPHONE CALLS/MESSAGES-**The preschool number is 886-3713. You may leave a message and we will return your call as soon as possible. Notes to teachers or the preschool director may be placed on the office desk, in the plexiglass container on the office door or may be handed directly to a staff member.

**TOILET TRAINING-**Children entering the 3's, 4's and Pre-K classes must be **completely** toilet trained. You have the option of paying tuition to hold a spot for your child until training is completed or leaving younger threes in the two year old class if space allows and the child can fit comfortably in this age group. DHS rules will not allow us to change a child in the 3's, 4's or Pre-K due to a lack of changing facilities. You will be called if your child has an accident.

**TOYS/PERSONAL ITEMS-**Classrooms are well equipped with toys and games. Please do not allow children to bring toys, money, pacifiers, blankets or other personal items not needed at school (unless specified by a teacher.)

**TUITION AND FEES-**

Registration Fee - \$100.00      Enrichment Fee - \$80.00

	<b>Annual</b>	<b>Monthly</b>
Tuition for all children	\$2,350.00	\$235.00

**For your convenience, annual tuition is divided into ten equal payments.** The first tuition payment is due June 1. From September through May, tuition is due the first school day of the month. Please make checks payable to STEPS. Fees will be adjusted for children entering after the first of the school year. Our school year begins the last full week of August and runs through the middle of May.

There can be no refunds for children’s absences, scheduled holidays or snow days (which are built in to our schedule). We will, in good faith, try to make up excessive inclement weather days. Thirty days notice is required when a child withdraws from the program.

Since the preschool depends entirely on tuition to meet its financial obligations, it is important that tuition be paid on time. **There will be a \$10.00 late fee for tuition paid after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month and for returned checks. Non-payment of two tuition payments will result in the forfeiture of the child’s place in the program unless you talk with Susan or Heather.**

Checks may be brought to the office and placed in tuition basket, on director’s desk or in the plexiglass container on the door. If paying in cash, hand deliver the payment to the office and wait for a written receipt.

St. Timothy’s has some scholarship funds available for families in financial need. Application must be made at the time of registration. Contact the director for information.



While preschool children are alike in many ways, no other child is exactly like your child. And no one knows your child better than you do. You know how your child learns and reacts to new situations, so you can help your child's teachers. If you share with us what is happening to your child at home – the arrival of a new baby, the death of a family member or pet, nightmares, temper tantrums, trips, separation, or divorce – we can understand your child better. We can support positive and difficult events through reassuring stories, soothing art activities, imaginative dramatic play, and extra love and attention.

## **OUR MINISTRY**

Our ministry with your child is a real joy and a great responsibility for us all. We feel that being available to parents is a major part of what we do. We are happy to answer questions, hear suggestions, loan books, share good news or talk about your concerns. We look forward to getting to know both you and your child!

