

The Sparrow's Nest

Parent's Day Out



The Sparrow's Nest

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Employee Handbook

Welcome to the Sparrow's Nest!

The Sparrow's Nest is a ministry whose purpose is to assist in developing children spiritually, emotionally, and academically to soar as they leave the nest. It is important for us to work together to accomplish this goal. Your contribution to this ministry will make a huge impact on children and families in our community. We want to provide a loving environment where our students grow and thrive, and it cannot be done without each and every one of you. Every employee of the Sparrow's Nest will play an important part of our ministry, and the work you do will have a lasting impact on many young lives and their families. I am so thankful that God led you to our school!

This handbook is to help answer specific questions about our school's guidelines. It is expected that every employee be familiar with the policies and procedures of our preschool. It can also be used as a reference throughout the year should questions arise on the job.

The Sparrow's Nest wants to provide a safe, loving climate for our students. We will work as a team to ensure this mission is accomplished at our school. When we as a staff show respect and concern for others, it helps ensure the best quality education for our students. I want all of us to strive to be good examples of citizenship and character in our community.

I look forward to working with all of you and creating a workplace that honors and glorifies God as we work together to do His Kingdom work.

Sincerely,

Betsy

March 3, 2025

Talk to us Open Door Policy

It is important to have open communication in the workplace. We want you to come to us with concerns, questions, and suggestions. Your ideas will help make our school a better place. You are important to us, and we value your opinion.

Problems or disagreements should be discussed and resolved in a respectful manner. If a problem arises with a co-worker, please spend time trying to work it out in a positive manner between the two of you. If this does not resolve the issue, please bring the situation to the attention of the director. Our goal should be to build each other up with our words and actions. We want the Sparrow's Nest to be a safe place to work without fear of harassment from others within our organization.

Spiritual Growth

All staff members must be an active member of a local church. It is important for the staff to make sure they are being fed spiritually, so they can be ready to serve our preschool families. It is difficult to constantly give of yourself, if you are not being filled spiritually on a regular basis.

Professional Conduct

The Sparrow's Nest wants to maintain a friendly and professional work environment. A positive work attitude, flexibility, good attendance and punctuality are all important parts of your job. Gossip or negative talk about students, parents, coworkers or our school is not appropriate behavior for our staff. Let's work together to create a school that honors God in all we say and do.

Lead teachers need to make sure the curriculum is followed, and their lesson plans and activities are developmentally appropriate for their students. Please be open to sharing ideas with other staff members, so we can provide the best possible education for our students. We are not competing with each other, but we are here to support each other and work as a team.

Dress Guidelines

It is important to dress professionally yet comfortably and modestly as a preschool teacher and assistant. You will be down on the floor often, dealing with paint, clay and other messy craft items, and you will be outside for recess. Comfortable jeans, capris or knee-length shorts are all great choices for working with preschoolers. Leggings may be worn as long as your top reaches the middle of your thigh.

Employee Application and Reference checks

All employees will fill out an application to be kept in their employee records. We are relying on the accuracy of the information provided on the application. It is the policy of the school to check references and complete background checks for each employee. These records will be kept confidential in a locked file in the school office.

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Payday

For the 2023-2024 academic year, school days will be from 8:30am – 2:30pm. Director will be paid for a maximum of 20 hours per week during the school year, only (August-May-Lead teachers will be paid for 6 hours per school day and assistant teachers will be paid for 5 ½ hours per school day. This extra 30 minutes for lead teachers is to help compensate for your planning time at home. (We know you spend much more time than that preparing for your classes.) We will follow Rutherford County School's schedule. Each pay period, you will be paid for hours worked. If the Sparrow's Nest is closed due to inclement weather, staff will be paid for up to three (3) missed days and/or make up days per year. Payday will generally be the 15th of the month during the school calendar (August-May). The director and teachers will report to work in August to get classrooms in order and for any needed training. Payment for those hours will be included in the September paycheck. A time sheet will be submitted for those hours. Teachers will be paid hourly wages for the days they work. Salaries are set by the director and parent's day out board. Due to this being a part-time program, please schedule all vacations and time off for days our school is not in session.

Performance Review

During the year, all lead teachers will have an informal observation and a performance review with the Director. This is a great time for us to see what you do so well in your classrooms and to give you words of encouragement. This is also a time for us to help you brainstorm and think of things that you can improve on in your job. Assistants will also have a performance review with the Director at the end of the year. Each spring your position may be renewed based on observations, reviews, and the school's needs.

If you choose to end your employment during the school year at the Sparrow's Nest, please give the director a written resignation letter two weeks prior to your departure. The Director has the right to terminate any Sparrow's Nest employee if the employee refuses to follow the guidelines of the school. At the time of separation all Sparrow's Nest property should be returned to the Sparrow's Nest director.

Teachers **must** submit classroom calendars and lesson plans to the director a month in advance but are encouraged to do so even earlier. A supply list needs to be submitted each month with your lesson plans. The director is here to help, so please ask for assistance when needed.

Doors to the classrooms must remain open at all times. This can be the whole door, or the top half of the dutch door. Children must be in clear view at all points in the room to the teacher and any passerby. **Never** leave your classroom unattended. A teacher or assistant must be present at all times.

Attendance and Punctuality

The attendance of all teachers and assistants is very important, because we cannot minister to these sweet children without you. **Please be at school at 8:30am to give you time to prepare for the school day.** Your room, crafts, lesson plans, copies, etc. should be ready before the students arrive. We will meet and pray as a staff each school day at 8:45am. After prayer, we want all teachers and assistants ready to greet the students and their parents when the doors open at 9:00am. (Teachers with children enrolled at the Sparrow's Nest should keep their children with them in their classroom until

after prayer. At that time, you may take them to their assigned classes and check them in with their teacher.) School is over at 2pm, and teachers should have their students packed and ready to go by 1:55pm. You are free leave providing all of your students have been picked up and your room is ready for the next school day.

If you know that you will be absent due to illness or your child's illness, please call the director as soon as possible. **If you or your child are sick in the evening prior to a school day, please call us that night after making every effort to secure a substitute.** If the lead teacher is out, the assistant teacher will "move up" to the lead teacher position, and a substitute will take over the assistant's job. Assistants will also be responsible to call the director, your lead teacher, and a substitute if you plan to be absent. If you have a planned date that you will be absent (i.e. Field Trips, vacations), please make arrangements with one of the substitutes on the sub list and submit a **"Teacher Time Off Request"** to the Director.

Teachers will not be paid for days they are not present (sick leave, vacation, bereavement...) After an extended illness, a doctor's release must be signed, dated, and submitted before returning to work. A copy of the release will be placed in your personnel file. If returning to work while still under a doctor's care, additional documentation may be necessary. A physical must be obtained every three years. Please submit the results, signed and dated by the doctor, CNP, or PA. A copy will be placed in your personnel file.

Your lesson plans should be available in your room for anyone who will need to step into your shoes for the day. Unless it is an emergency, please make doctor's appointments and other personal appointments for after school hours or non-school days.

One day per month, we will have a planned staff meeting at an agreed upon time. These meetings are mandatory. We will have teacher training time, and we will share important information regarding upcoming events. This is a time that we can all come together to fellowship and to share ideas. These meetings will be informative and fun and will last no longer than two (2) hours! Please refer to you staff calendars for due dates of lesson plans and supply lists.

Safety and Security Standards

It is important to make safety a top priority at our school. At 9:15am each day, the preschool doors will be locked. Please immediately report any suspicious looking people or unsafe situations that you notice on school property to director. It is the entire staff's responsibility to keep our students safe while at school.

Students must be supervised at all times by the teacher or assistant. An adult should always be on the playground or in the Activity Center during recess to ensure that students are playing safely on equipment and toys.

Parents/Guardians will bring their child to the classroom each day and pick up in the classroom each afternoon. Students will only be released to the parents or adults named on their paperwork. If someone other than who is specified comes to pick up a student, he or she must be referred to the director for verification/identification before the child may be released.

All employees will be CPR trained and pediatric first-aid certified. All injuries, even minor ones, must be documented using an Incident/Accident Report. A copy must be sent home to the parents at the

end of the day. Please make a copy to be kept in the student's file in the office. If it is a severe injury, the director needs to be notified. All teachers need to know the allergy policies for our school.

In the event of a fire, all teachers must follow the fire drill procedure. Students should be lined up and taken quickly and quietly to the nearest exit. Please follow the evacuation route assigned to your class. Make sure you bring your attendance sheet for the day to account for all students. All bathrooms should be checked to make sure no students are left inside the building. Classroom doors should be shut and lights turned out as you exit the classroom. This will help the director know that the room has been checked and secured as she checks the building. The director will give the all clear signal when it is safe to reenter the building. The director or assistant director will call 911 and pull the fire alarm box in the event of a real fire.

The hallway wall is the room we will use in case of severe weather or tornado warnings. All teachers will take their students in an orderly fashion to the hallway and sit along a wall. Make sure you bring your attendance sheet for the day to account for all students. It is a good idea to bring a book or game with you, as these warnings often last for a lengthy time. It is important to keep students as calm as possible during storms. Please do not go back to your classrooms until the director gives the all clear signal. The office will monitor severe storms and keep you updated on the situation.

Lock down procedures will be put in place if an intruder is in the building. Classroom doors should be locked and have lights turned out. Students should be moved away from windows and doors, so they cannot be seen.

Classroom Behavior Management

The Sparrow's Nest staff will work **as a team** with the parents on all discipline issues. Each class will have a behavior management system that will help encourage each child to have good behavior at school. Positive reinforcement, encouraging words, and stickers will be used in the classroom to affirm students' good choices. Redirection and time-outs will be used to modify poor choices made by students. Aggressive behavior such as biting, hitting and throwing will be addressed on an individual basis with the student and his or her parent(s). All aggressive behavior requires that an incident report be filed with the school office as well as:

- The first offense a phone call will be made by the Lead teacher to the parent.
- The second offense will result in a phone call and a parent/teacher conference.
- The third offense will result in a phone call and a parent/teacher/Director conference.

In extreme cases, the parent may be asked to pick up their child. If the behavior continues, the Director may dismiss the child from the program to best serve the needs of the entire class. The Sparrow's Nest will make every effort to help the family resolve the issue. Children often cooperate with the guidelines using only a gentle reminder. A written discipline policy is included in the parent handbook and will be communicated to parents at the beginning of the school year. **Communication with parents is of the utmost importance when learning how to deal with each individual child.** Spanking or yelling is not permitted at the Sparrow's Nest.

School Closings

The Sparrow's Nest will follow RCS for snow days and closings. If RCS schools are closed, the preschool will be closed. If RCS has a one-hour delay, the preschool will open at 10am. If RCS has a two-hour delay, the preschool will open at 11am. If RCS schools are on an abbreviated day, we will not meet that day. Please watch

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the local news for school closings due to severe weather. The parents will be notified by the teacher if school closes early.

Telephone/Internet Usage

School phones are to be used for Sparrow's Nest business. The occasional use of the preschool phones for personal issues is sometimes necessary, but we want to keep the lines clear for current and prospective parents to get through to the school office. **Please limit your cell phone usage to emergencies only.** In the classroom, make sure your cell phone is on vibrate. Personal texts and internet usage are a distraction to your job, so please save those for after school. While with your class, your attention should be focused on your students.

FACEBOOK groups with parent permission ONLY. No posting on personal Facebook, Twitter or Instagram is prohibited and is an invasion of student privacy. Parents will be asked for special permission to place their child's picture on the Sparrow's Nest website and/or our Facebook page. We trust you to make appropriate choices!

Communication with Parents

Teachers are expected to communicate often with parents. Parents love to hear that their child had an awesome day!

All communications will be through class Dojo.

Be proactive with communication. Please don't wait if there is a problem with a student in the classroom. Call or send an email that day. Parents are looking at you as the professional. You are a team! Please don't discuss problems during the day in front of other parents. Ask parents for advice on what works best with their child. Parents know their children better than we do, so please use them as your primary resource to gain helpful information about each child.

Student information is confidential. Personal information should be not left out in the open. Please only discuss problems with students with the director or the child's parents. Discussing students with other faculty not directly related to the incident is not professional. When emailing your class, please be sure to BCC family emails.

Clean Classrooms

It is important to keep your hands and students' hands clean throughout the school day. Please make sure your hands are washed thoroughly after helping students in the bathroom and after diapering small children. Cleanliness cannot be stressed enough. Sickness is expected with young children, but we want to work to create as clean and as germ free an environment as possible for our students. If children are sick, please bring the director ASAP so parents can be called to come and pick up their child. Tables and counters should be disinfected, floors swept, carpets vacuumed, toys in bins, trash emptied, etc... before you leave for the day. We will be sharing the space with the church, so your classroom must be "church-ready". Please store all cleaning supplies in a secure area, out of the reach of children.

Reimbursement of Expenses

As it is necessary to purchase items for Sparrow's Nest we will follow these steps:

- We will do a cost comparison for the item in question
- The board will approve the purchase of large items (over \$200)
- The Director will purchase items under \$200 either using the church credit card or personal credit card or asking the church Office Manager to make the purchase online.
- If items are purchased online by the church Office Manager:
 - The Sparrow's Nest Director will submit an email making the purchase request or The Sparrow's Nest Chair will submit the email requesting the purchase request with Board's approval
 - Sparrow's Nest Chair will approve the purchase via email and include the specific account to which the item will be charged either prior to or when the credit card invoice is received by the Financial Secretary.
 - Please note: this may not happen within the 30-day requirement, but will be handled as soon as the invoice is received by the church, if it hasn't been done in advance.
- When items are purchased, other than online, the receipts and proper paperwork will be completed and turned in at least monthly (**within 30 days of purchase**).
- Reimbursement forms may be obtained from the church Office Manager or from a mailbox slot outside the office. All forms needed for the reimbursement will be filled out completely with any receipts attached. The Sparrow's Nest Director will maintain copies of all receipts and requests for reimbursement.
- The Sparrow's Nest Chairperson will approve the reimbursement and forward a copy of the approved reimbursement request to the financial secretary for payment.
- If other staff need items purchased, they will contact the Director and request the items be purchased and the reason for the request.

We Love Our Teachers

Education is a journey, not a race. We will do everything we can to help you be the best teacher you can be for your students! It will be our privilege to love and serve the families that God brings to our school. **You** are the key to accomplishing the mission of our preschool. *"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain." 1 Corinthians 15:58*

I, _____ have read and understand
first name last name

The Sparrow's Nest Staff Handbook

Signature _____ Date _____