

Valley Park School District

Preschool Program Handbook



**Quality Learning
Experiences in Preparation
for School Success**

*Ages 3-5
Preschool, Pre-K
Early Care, Extended Care*

One Main Street
Valley Park, Missouri 63088
(636) 923-3526
www.vp.k12.mo.us

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME

Welcome to the Valley Park School District Preschool Program. We're glad you and your child will be a part of our educational family this year. The entire staff is committed to providing each child a quality education in a safe, well-supervised and nurturing environment.

Beginning preschool is an important step in your child's life. You will no doubt have many questions you would like to ask, especially if this is the first time you have had a child at preschool. This handbook has been prepared to guide you and your child in matters pertaining to our preschool. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask us any questions you may have about our program.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Valley Park School District is dedicated to providing a supportive, personalized environment in which students will grow strong intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially today in preparation for tomorrow.

PHILOSOPHY

Valley Park School District Preschool Program offers a caring and friendly environment that provides developmentally appropriate activities that stimulate physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development. The program helps children develop a positive self-image and learn basic skills necessary for successful school performance, particularly through socialization with other children, creative play, and active learning opportunities.

The curriculum activities are based on principles of child development, developmentally appropriate guidelines from the National Association of the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the individual needs of each child.

We believe that play is the powerful way children learn, and that our curriculum offers a good balance of social and cognitive learning to prepare children for the future elementary school experience.

The classroom is set up with a "hands-on" approach through well-defined learning areas. There is a mixture of both self-directed and teacher-directed activities. Experiences vary from individualized to small and large group situations.

GOALS

The activities are designed to engage children to explore, experiment, imitate, ask questions and be questioned to further thinking and problem solving skills. The program helps children develop a positive self-image and learn basic skills necessary to successful school performance, particularly through socialization with other children,

creative play opportunities, and experiences with the basic materials of creative self-expression.

NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

Valley Park School District Preschool Program does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, and national or ethnic origin in administration or admission policies.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Valley Park School District is a component district of the Special School District of St. Louis County. If your child has qualified for early childhood special education services, he/she can receive these services at Valley Park Early Childhood from Special School District Staff assigned to our building. Related services such as speech therapy, language therapy, occupational therapy and physical therapy are also available to meet the needs of individual children.

For further information, you may contact the Special School District Liaison, Mrs. Janice Monroe at 636-923-3632. If you prefer, you may contact Special School District directly at 314-989-8100.

STAFF

Valley Park Early Childhood teachers are teachers certified in the state of Missouri. All staff are required to complete a physical examination, TB screening, and child abuse and neglect screening for employment with Valley Park School District. Staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid.

OBJECTIVES FOR EACH CHILD

- Feel special, accepted, and safe with other adults and children
- Enjoy school and have fun
- Follow simple directions and accept limits
- Express feelings, emotions, and needs in a socially accepted manner
- Consider the feelings and needs of others by sharing, taking turns, accepting differences in others, and helping others
- Make choices; assume responsibility
- Use equipment safely
- Observe healthy practices
- Develop curiosity and perception of the world by using senses, role-playing, and exposure to a variety of literature and play experiences
- Experience music, poetry, and movement in a variety of ways
- Develop language with adult modeling, group discussions, conversations, finger plays, songs, literature, questioning, describing, comparing and matching
- Become more aware of counting and numbers, shapes, lines, color, size, letters, and their relationships
- Develop fine motor coordination through painting, drawing, cutting, gluing, sorting, pouring, and putting together puzzles
- Promote gross motor coordination by running, jumping, and climbing

ENROLLMENT

HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION

The morning classes are from 8:15 – 11:15 a.m. The afternoon classes are from 12:15 – 3:00 p.m. Additional early and extended care is provided from the hours 7-8:00am/3:00- 5:30 p.m. for an additional fee.

CALENDAR

The preschool follows the Valley Park School District calendar unless stated otherwise.

Preschool Parent Orientation	August 8	3:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Children and parents may visit classroom	August 9	2:00 – 2:45 p.m.
First Day of School	August 12	
Last Day of School	June 1	(Tenatively)

Non-Attendance Days-

Labor Day	September 2
Conference Break Day	October 18
Fall Recess	October 21
Thanksgiving Recess	November 27-29
No Afternoon Class / Early Dismissal 1:00	December 20
Winter Recess	December 23 – January 6
Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	January 20
Conference Break Day	February 14
Presidents' Day	February 17
Spring Break	March 16-20
Spring Recess	April 10-13
Memorial Day	May 25

ADMISSION

Priority admission is given to current students and their siblings, followed by the children who live in Valley Park School District on a first-come first-served basis. Thereafter, open registration from the surrounding community is welcomed until the classrooms are full. At that time, a waiting list will be established, and vacancies will be filled in order from that list.

All children must be 3 years old by November 15th to enroll in the preschool program and 4 years old by July 31st to enroll in the pre-k program. Children are expected to take care of their own toilet needs independently prior to the start of school. Children are expected to wear underwear to school-no diapers or pull-ups. A child that is not toilet-trained may be withdrawn.

REGISTRATION PROCESS

Registration Fee: Pay only one fee for each child

Half Day - \$50.00 (in district) \$60.00 (out of district)

Full Day - \$100.00

At the time of enrollment the following is needed:

- ✓ Completed application for enrollment – obtain from office, website
- ✓ Official Birth Certificate
- ✓ Proof of Residency – if living in Valley Park School District boundaries
- ✓ Record of Immunization – must be in compliance with Missouri State Law, Section 210.003 RSM (school nurse will review records)
- ✓ Physical Examination signed by a physician
- ✓ Appropriate non-refundable registration fee

For further information contact the early childhood director: 636-923-3526

ORIENTATION PROCESS

Parents are invited to come to a special orientation meeting prior to the start of school to review the handbook, policies and procedures. Parents are encouraged to ask questions at this time. Parents are then given the opportunity to meet the individual teachers and ask any additional questions. Parents have access to the classrooms after the meeting.

Students are invited to visit the classroom and the teacher at a special time prior to the start of school with their parent. Students are shown their “cubbie,” introduced to their classmates and have time to explore the room. At this time, the child’s parent/guardian may share information regarding his/her child with the teacher.

Parents should also talk to their child about what to expect, the daily routine as they understand it, and the fact that they will leave him/her in school to enjoy the friendship of other children. It is important for parents to assure their child that they will come on time at the end of the day to pick him/her up.

TUITION

The cost for the preschool program is divided into 9 monthly payments plus a pro-rated fee for the month of August. There is no reduction or refunds due to illness, absence, vacation, or emergency weather days.

Due Dates:

The first tuition payment includes August and September and is due on August 16th. Thereafter, tuition is due the 1ST of each month. A \$25.00 late fee is charged if the tuition is not paid by the 10th. If payment is not made by the 15th of the month, Valley Park School District holds the right to not allow attendance until tuition is fully paid. If payment has not been made by the end of the month, the child will be withdrawn from the program until payment is made.

How to Pay:

Mail your payment: Valley Park Preschool, Attention: Amy Hopper, One Main St., Valley Park, MO 63088.

You may also hand a check or cash to your child's teacher in an envelope. Be sure to **include your child's name on the memo section of your check.** Please do not leave your tuition payment at the elementary office. Our district webpage has an **online payment system (RevTrak)** using your debit/credit card. There is a convenience fee associated with each transaction. You may also pay with an automatic draft from your personal bank account. Please be sure the draft is made payable to the Valley Park School District, Attn: Amy Hopper.

Withdrawing your child:

Sometimes it becomes necessary to withdraw your child before the actual end of the school year. We understand circumstances may lead to this situation. Please contact the preschool director and allow a two week notice before your child's final date of attendance. Additional tuition fees can only be refunded if notice is given.

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Valley Park Preschool uses Creative Curriculum, a curriculum approved by Missouri State Department of Education. The curriculum emphasizes the development of a child's thinking, reasoning, decision making, and problem-solving abilities through play. Play provides the opportunity for children to practice cognitive, social and physical skills. A child's first attempt to read and write frequently occurs during play. Creative Curriculum also believes the role of the teacher is vital in connecting content, teaching, and learning for preschool children.

The preschool program consists of organized activities and individual free choice activities. The teacher plans and prepares the organized activities and during individual free choice time the child may engage in activities of his/her own selection.

Organized activities include direct instruction, circle time, songs, fingerplays, story telling, calendar, counting, games, and field trips. **Individual free choice activities** include free play, art activities, puzzles, blocks, home living area, listening center, science area, water table, writing center, and the room library.

TEACHER-CHILD RATIO

The adult/child ratio is in compliance with the Missouri Department of Health guidelines. For 3-5 year olds, the ratio is 1 teacher for 10 children. An assistant will work with a teacher in a classroom with 11 to 20 children.

BUILDING SECURITY

In order to insure the safety of our students, all doors, with the exception of morning arrival time between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m., are locked during the school day. Parents with children in Early or Extended Care may enter the Early Childhood Center using the security system after registering and receiving a PIN code to gain access to the classrooms. All other parents will be buzzed in through the elementary office.

CUSTODY SITUATIONS

In the event that a court-ordered legal custody situation develops, whereby a parent is not allowed to pick up the child without legal consent, the parent/guardian must provide the original documents to verify legal custody. This information will be reviewed and a copy will be placed in the child's file.

RULES

School-wide rules apply to all students at all times:

- ◆ Keep hands, feet and all objects to yourself at all times
- ◆ Show respect to others
- ◆ Listen to the teacher or adult in charge and follow the directions given

REPORTING ABSENCES

If your child is unable to attend preschool, please call the school attendance line at **636-923-3500**. **Press 1** for attendance line then **press 1 again** for the elementary attendance line. A child who is ill upon arrival will not be admitted and will be taken to the health room located in the elementary building until the parent or guardian can pick up the child.

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

The Explore and Wonder Programs are multi-age classrooms designed to promote self-confidence and self-esteem. Teachers encourage socialization with peers through art projects, singing, stories, sensory, and fine motor activities. The program includes a beginning focus on letters, numbers, counting, lots of conversation, good literature, and time to play. Parents provide the snack as needed throughout the year. Water is provided.

- ◆ Ages 3 – 5 Age 3 by November 15th
- ◆ Morning Class - Choose 2,3, or 5 days (8:15 -11:15 a.m.) or Full Day (8:15-3:00)

The Imagine/Creative Classroom is an integrated multi-age preschool setting, fwhich offers the opportunity for typically developing students and students with special education services to learn and grow together.

- ◆ Morning or afternoon class - Choose 2 to 4 days (8:15 -11:15 a.m. or 12:15-3:00)

The Discover Program (Pre-Kindergarten) prepares children for kindergarten within a play-based environment. It encourages self-help, thinking, social, and language development through literature, rhyming, sound games, listening, and sequencing.

Number awareness is encouraged through counting, pattern matching, sorting, and classifying. The teacher sets up several activities in addition to free play. Parents provide snack as needed throughout the year. Water is provided.

- ◆ Age 4 by July 31st
- ◆ Monday to Friday
- ◆ Mornings (8:15-11:15 a.m.) 5 days a week

CHILDCARE DESCRIPTION

- ◆ **Early Care** offers additional care for children in the morning. Parents may choose 2 or more mornings per week.
- ◆ **Extended Care** is an option available for children enrolled in the full day preschool or Pre-K programs. Extended care runs from 3:15-5:30. Parents may choose 2 or more afternoons per week.
- ◆ **Late Care** offers additional care for children enrolled in the afternoon program. Parents may choose 2 or more afternoons per week 3:15-5:30 p.m.

PRESCHOOL DAILY ROUTINE

Teachers often have before-school meetings and responsibilities. Students **may not arrive** in the classroom earlier than the designated times due to the fact that supervision is not provided.

DROP-OFF AND PICK UP

****USE OF CELL PHONES IN THE DROP-OFF/PICK UP AREA IS PROHIBITED!****

Arrival

In the **morning**, between 8:15 and 8:30 a.m., parents may park their cars in one of the designated preschool drop-off places and walk their child into the classroom or pull the car up to the curb in front of the entryway and let the staff help your child out of the car. The staff or a safety patrol will then bring your child into the building.

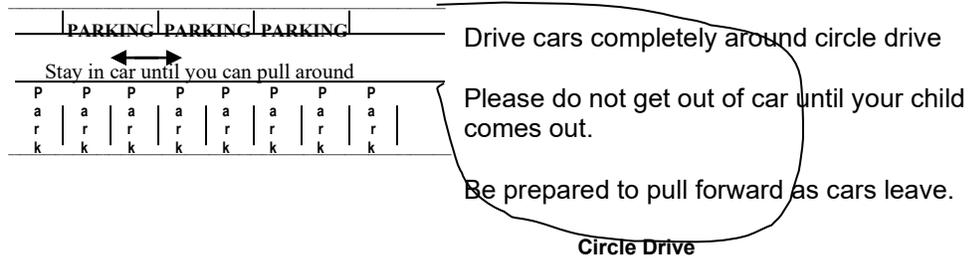
Parents arriving for the **PM afternoon class** must park their cars in one of the designated preschool drop-off places and walk their child into the classroom. Students may enter the classroom between 12:15 and 12:30 p.m.

Parents may never leave their car unattended while waiting in the circle drive. Unattended cars are subject to ticketing.

Dismissal

At dismissal the teacher will release the child into the care of the child's custodial parent or guardian or to the adult listed on the Emergency Contact Form. **For the first few days of the new school year, adults should bring identification. This**

is also necessary for any other adult occasionally picking up a child. When the teacher releases the child, the responsibility for the child lies with the person receiving the child. Please observe the following procedures when picking up your child if you do not park your car.



Once you have received your child, please move quickly to your car to help keep the flow of traffic moving. Also, be sure to **ALWAYS** keep your child close to you, as the cars continue to move forward in the line. **DO NOT** allow your child to run around on the sidewalk or grassy areas near the pick up circle/parking lot. The safety of your child is our number one concern.

If you are unavoidably delayed, please try to call. It not only helps the teachers, it also helps reassure your child. If you are delayed, please make arrangements for an authorized person to pick up your child. Written authorization identifying those persons whom you wish to pick up your child must be provided to the office. In an **emergency**, the parent may give verbal authorization over the phone.

Parents of children staying for Extended Care (after 3:15pm) will need to come into the classroom and sign the child out.

LATE FEES

If you haven't picked up your child within 10 minutes of dismissal time. a babysitting fee of \$5.00 is charged and an additional \$5.00 for every 10 minutes thereafter. Payment of the late fee is expected at time of pick-up. We realize emergencies do occur; therefore each student is allowed **one** late pick up of 10 minutes without being charged a late fee.

THE FIRST WEEK

The first few days of preschool may bring mixed emotions even to a seemingly independent child. There are many ways parents can help their child adjust to preschool. Some hints are outlined below.

1. When you leave say good-bye to your child. Slipping away may add to feelings of desertion.
2. Return to school at the promised time.
3. Always speak of going to school as a pleasant event and assure your child that you will see him/her again very soon.
4. Take time to discuss the new experiences your child will have so that he/she will look forward, with pleasure to coming to school.
5. Get to know your child's teacher. Your child will feel happy and secure if he/she knows that his/her teacher and parents are friends.

DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

Preschool Schedule: 8:15 – 11:15 a.m. / 12:15 – 3:00 p.m. The daily routine provides a variety of activities to provide children with a range of experiences and interactions. The following is a typical classroom schedule that the teachers follow, but each teacher may decide when to schedule the activities.

- ◆ **Arrival and Greeting:** The staff assists children in making the transition from home to school.
- ◆ **Circle Time:** Children participate in finger plays, music and calendar activities. The teacher reads quality literature to promote the development of language and listening skills. There are also discussions to introduce pre-reading skills.
- ◆ **Exploration:** Children participate in planned activities and have free time to explore the many interest areas in the room: home living, blocks, manipulatives, music, science, listening, library, computers, art, and writing area.
- ◆ **Clean Up:** Children work together to put away the materials they used, encouraging communication and cooperation.
- ◆ **Focus Time:** Children participate in fun activities that emphasize shapes, colors, numbers, alphabet, rhyming, similarity and differences, etc.
- ◆ **Wash Hands / Snack Time:** Children learn hygiene, self-help skills, good manners, and social interaction with peers.
- ◆ **Outdoor Play:** Children's large and small muscles are exercised and strengthened.
- ◆ **11:15/3:15 - Dismissal:** Children develop independence in self-help skills.

The Discover Class is dismissed at 11:10 to promote the flow of traffic.

EXTENDED CARE

Early Care Schedule: 7:00 – 8:15 a.m.

- ◆ **Settling in:** Children may bring breakfast foods and engage in quiet play.

Full Day Schedule: continuation of the day 11:15 – 3:15 p.m. / 11:15 – 5:30p.m.

- ◆ **Exploration:** Children participate in planned activities and have free time to explore the many interest areas in the room: home living, blocks, manipulatives, music, science, listening, library, computers, art, and writing area.

- ◆ **Clean Up:** Children work together to put away the materials they used, encouraging communication and cooperation.
- ◆ **Lunch:** Children may bring a lunch from home or purchase a school lunch. Students eat lunch in the classrooms. Avoid foods with high sugar or salt content. Fruit and natural foods are encouraged. The preschool is a nut-free environment, so please adhere to this when packing your child's lunch. If you send in soy/sunflower butter, please note that in your child's lunchbox. You may send a lunch entrée that needs to be heated, but no longer than 1 min. max. Parents may send a drink or purchase a milk at school for \$.50. Milk cards are sold for \$5 (10 drinks).
- ◆ **Indoor and/or Outdoor Free Choice Time:** Children have additional time for social interaction, active play, and creative expression.
- ◆ **Group Activity:** Children take part in games that strengthen pre-reading skills and number concepts.
- ◆ **Rest time:** A chance for a nap and to relax. State requirements specify that "Preschool children who do not sleep shall rest on cots or beds at least 30-45 minutes..." Children who do not fall asleep during this time are then permitted to read quietly on or near their cots.
- ◆ **Wash Hands / Snack Time:** Children learn hygiene, self-help skills, good manners, and social interaction with peers.
- ◆ **3:00-3:15 Dismissal:** Children develop independence in self-help skills.

Extended/Late Care: 3:15 – 5:30 p.m.

- ◆ **Music and movement**
- ◆ **Indoor and/or Outdoor Free Choice Time:** Children have additional time for social interaction, active play, and creative expression.
- ◆ **5:30 – Dismissal:** Children develop independence in self-help skills. It is important that the designated person picking the child up signs the child out before leaving.

HEALTH POLICIES

HEALTH ROOM

The School Health Room is located in the elementary building and is staffed from 7:45 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. each school day. The nurse may be reached at 636-923-3634 and voice mail is available for leaving messages. The school nurse supervises the administering of all medications and/or medical treatments.

Please be sure all phone numbers on the emergency section of the registration form are up to date in the elementary office.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Each child is required to have a physical examination signed by a licensed physician before a child may attend classes.

If your child has a **known medical condition** (allergies, asthma, diabetes, seizures, hearing or vision concerns, developmental delays, etc.) it is **IMPERATIVE** that you speak with the nurse to complete the required paperwork and have a plan on file in case of an emergency.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Complete immunizations are required by Missouri State law for preschool attendance. **Missouri law does not allow for a grace period on immunizations.**

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE

If your child is absent due to illness with a contagious disease, please let us know as soon as possible. We are required to notify all families in the classroom of possible exposure to the disease. Some examples of common contagious diseases include chicken pox, pinkeye, impetigo, ringworm, or head lice.

ACCIDENT

Minor incidents such as scratches, bee stings, scrapes, and bruises are reported through the use of an incident report form. If a major injury occurs, the staff will immediately call for professional help (school nurse and/or 911). Parents or designated emergency contacts will be notified immediately.

ILLNESS

Please do not send your child to school when he/she is ill. In addition, please do not send your child to school with any of the following conditions:

1. Temperature of 100 degrees or higher
2. Vomiting or severe diarrhea
3. A rash of unknown origin
4. Discharge of the eyes or ears
5. Extreme fatigue

If your child should become ill at school, the parent or guardian is contacted and expected to pick the child up as soon as possible. While waiting, every effort is made to keep the child as comfortable as possible in the nurse's office.

Your child will be admitted to class only when he/she has not required fever/pain medications for a minimum of 24 hours. Please do not administer fever medication to your child before bringing him/her to class.

MEDICATION

Doctor-prescribed medications may be given to your child by the school nurse during school hours if needed. Please contact the school nurse to obtain an official medication form. This form must be completed by the doctor and returned to the nurse for your child to be given medication while at school. The fax number for the nurse's office is 636-923-3656.

Parents must drop off medications at the nurse's office. Medications need to be sent in original packaging or prescription bottles. **DO NOT send medications to school with your child!**

All allergies to medication and/or other substances must be stated on the emergency and medical forms.

CONFIDENTIALITY

In respect of each family's privacy and special needs, staff members are not permitted to give a family any information about another child or family in the program. Information about children in the classroom will not be discussed among staff or other parents in front of children.

GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

BIRTHDAYS

Children may celebrate their birthdays with their classmates by bringing in a special birthday snack. Parents should speak to the teacher prior to the birthday if they are going to provide a special snack. The teacher will let the parent know if there are any children with dietary restrictions that they will need to accommodate when providing a snack.

Cookies or cupcakes are appropriate for the occasion. Due to health regulations, the snack must be commercially prepared and sealed. The snack must be made in a facility that does not process peanut/nut products. Please be sure to read the label completely and entirely before sending the product to school.

Parents may **not send invitations** to birthday parties for distribution at school **unless every child in the class** is to receive one.

CHILD GUIDANCE

An important part of the preschool experience is for children to learn how to get along with other children as well as to follow the direction of an adult other than the parent. **Limits**, set fairly and consistently followed, allow children to reach their learning potential and to develop into socially responsible adults. Maintaining a safe, orderly, positive environment where learning is possible is fundamental.

Discipline is handled in a positive manner to help children develop a positive self-esteem, self-control, and respect for others. Our goal is to help each child find solutions to problems through words and or/positive actions. Positive reinforcement, praise, and modeling are the main methods used to encourage children to make good choices.

In cases where a child needs to regain self-control or is in danger of hurting him/her self or others, the child may be momentarily separated from the group for a short time not to exceed one minute for each year of a child's age. No child is left without adult supervision at any time during the school day.

Actions for Intervention

There are times when a child may behave inappropriately. **Inappropriate behaviors** are certain behaviors which are clearly unacceptable and may include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Verbal threats to other students and staff
- ◆ Inappropriate language
- ◆ Destruction of toys, books, etc.
- ◆ Physical or emotional harm to other children or adults
- ◆ Not respecting or responding to the authority of an adult
- ◆ Intentionally touching another person's body in a way which constitutes sexual contact

When inappropriate behavior occurs:

1. **A teacher will talk with a parent** in person, by phone, or by note so that home and school can work together.
2. **An incident report** is completed to document any persistent behavior that directly impacts another child, staff member, or the group as a whole. This report will be shared with the parent.
3. A **conference** with the parent will be scheduled to discuss a persistent concern.
4. If the behaviors/concerns persist, the teacher, parent, and administration will meet to develop a **team action plan**. Additional conferences will be scheduled to adjust the action plan, as necessary.

CLASS PARTIES

There are three class parties: Fall, Winter, and Friendship. The parties are organized by the room parent(s) with parents volunteering to help as they are able. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend.

CLOTHING

A complete change of clothes, including underwear, socks, pants, and a shirt **must be left at school**. Please enclose them in a labeled gallon size zip lock bag. This bag will remain at school on a permanent basis.

- ◆ Please dress your child in comfortable, easily washable clothing.
- ◆ Shorts under dresses for girls are recommended.
- ◆ Elastic waistbands are best. Children must be able to remove clothing themselves to use the bathroom. If your child wears a belt, make sure the child can unbuckle it.
- ◆ Teach your child how to zip, button, or fasten their jacket or coat. Most children are able to learn this important self-help skill around 4 years of age.

We ask that **children wear low-top tennis shoes** because preschool activities such as climbing and running require sure footing. Children wearing boots, open-toed sandals, “flip-flops” or dress shoes may not play on the outdoor play equipment.

COMMUNICATION

A class newsletter is sent to each family via email or through school. The newsletter provides parents with additional information in regards to special activities, the learning goals such as shapes, numbers, letters, etc., that are being worked on in class, and future events. **Weekly themes and activities** which address different areas of growth are found in the weekly schedule. Parent-child activities, Scholastic Book order forms, and other district announcements may also be attached. **The elementary school principal**, as well as the PTO, publishes a newsletter several times a year.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an integral part of the **Pre-K Program**. They enhance the learning by offering opportunities not available in the classroom. Some field trips may require a nominal fee. When a child is enrolled, parents give permission for the child to attend field trips. Parents are notified at least two weeks in advance before each individual field trip, and parents are welcome to come along. Some past field trips have included trips to the Science Center, St. Louis Zoo, Botanical Gardens, or Powder Valley Nature Center.

Enrichment may include speakers, community helpers, and other activities and experiences brought into the classroom.

INCLEMENT WEATHER / SCHOOL CLOSING

When severe weather necessitates the closing of school, the Superintendent will make the decision by 5:30 a.m. A mass communication message will be sent to all school families via phone call, text and email. School closings are broadcast on most

major radio and television stations. **If school is closed, all other school-related activities are canceled for that day.**

If school closes during the school day, families are contacted and expected to pick up their child as soon as possible.

K.I.S.S. (Kids Invite Someone Special)

Students may invite someone special as grandparents, a neighbor, aunts, uncles, or parents to spend time with them. This special day at school is in November, typically the week of Thanksgiving.

LICENSING REGULATIONS

Valley Park Preschool is operated and located in a public school and is exempt from licensure.

LOST AND FOUND

Every effort is made to contact owners of any **belongings left behind** by the children. Parents are welcome to go through the Lost and Found if a child has misplaced something. **Unclaimed items** that remain in the Lost and Found are donated to charity periodically.

OUTDOOR POLICY

Outdoor play is an important part of our daily schedule; therefore, we are unable to honor a request by a parent/guardian to keep the child inside. **If a child is to be kept inside because of health reasons, a physician's statement is required.**

The preschool follows **recommended guidelines** on extreme weather days:

10 – 20 degrees (no wind)	10 Minutes outside
20 – 32 degrees	15 minutes outside
32 – 90 degrees	Normal time outside
Heat index above 90 degrees	Stay indoors

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring during the preschool year. This is a time to share information about your child's progress and for you, as a parent, to ask any questions about your child's progress.

We welcome any helpful information you have to share about your child, such as health needs or problems, interests, feelings about school, etc. Parents should not hesitate to contact the teachers at preschool to arrange a personal conference if they are concerned about their child's academic or social progress. **Open communication** between the preschool staff and parents is essential for a good overall learning environment.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK ORDERS

Opportunities to order books from Scholastic Book Club are sent home periodically. The books are a great way to increase your home library for a minimal cost

and encourage your child to read. These orders are strictly voluntary and for your convenience. Please do not feel you have to order unless you so choose.

SCHOOL PICTURES

Class pictures/school pictures are taken in August and **Individual spring pictures** are taken in March by a professional photographer. These pictures may be purchased at a reasonable price but parents are not obligated to do so. Watch for additional information regarding the dates of these events.

SNACKS

Snacks are a valuable learning part of our day as children are encouraged to use appropriate table manners. Approximately once every 8 weeks **families are asked to provide prepackaged snacks, without nuts/peanut free**. Be sure to read the label entirely; NO snacks that are processed in a facility that risks contamination/exposure to nuts. The school provides water to drink. Occasionally parents are asked to bring a special item that enhances the special activity, as a vegetable for “Stone Soup” or fruit for “Fruit Salad”.

Some suggested snacks:

Fresh fruit	Apple Sauce Cups	Carrots and dip
Pretzels	Chex Mix	Cookies
Granola bars	Cheese Crackers	Popcorn
Graham crackers	Fruit roll-ups	Gold Fish
Animal Cookies	String Cheese	Pudding
Snack Crackers	Breakfast Cereals	Trail Mix (no nuts)

Allergies: It is important that children with food allergies have an action plan on file with the school nurse. This plan documents the actions the staff would need to take if the child has an allergic reaction.

TOYS

As a general rule, the children should not bring toys from home. However, at times children may bring items or toys to school for specific purposes related to classroom learning purposes. **The preschool is not responsible, for damaged, misplaced or lost toys at school.**

ADDITIONAL PARENT INFORMATION

PARENT RESOURCES

Materials and/or information on community resources, family counselors, or parenting information can be found with the school counselors. Individual counseling and/or referral services can be arranged as well.

PARENTS AS TEACHERS

Parents As Teachers (PAT) is a nationally recognized program offered to all families in Valley Park School District. It is a free voluntary parent and child early education program. Parents with children from birth to age five are eligible. The program

includes developmental screenings, home visits, group meetings, play groups, and a referral network. For more information call 636-923-3526.

P.T.O.

All parents or guardians of Valley Park students are considered members of the P.T.O. (Parent Teacher Organization) and encouraged to become involved. The P.T.O. sponsors many of the activities that the students participate in at school.

PROCEDURE FOR STAFF AND FAMILIES TO NEGOTIATE DIFFERENCES AND DIFFICULTIES

Parents who have a concern about the preschool program need to address the concern with the classroom teacher or with the early childhood director (Amy Hopper) who can directly address the concern or complaint. Differences between families are handled confidentially and without bringing the individual families together.

Complaint Procedures

Specific guidelines for resolution of student complaints and grievances are found in the Parent's Manual of Policies and Procedures.

RECORDS ACCESSIBLE TO FAMILIES FOR REVIEW

- ◆ Lesson Plans
- ◆ Licensing

THE VALLEY PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT PARENT'S MANUAL OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES OUTLINES PROCEDURES TO ACCESS:

- ◆ Child abuse/neglect policies
- ◆ Their child's developmental records

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

Students enrolled at Valley Park Preschool have many opportunities to become familiar and involved in activities in the elementary school. Students say the Pledge of Allegiance and the Valley Park Pledge with all students enrolled in the elementary school. Students attend assemblies, participate in special events such as the Book Fair and visit the kindergarten classrooms at the end of the year.

The elementary school principal and assistant principal visit the students in the classroom and the students visit the principals in their offices. Kindergarten registration and screenings are held in second half of the school year. At the end of the year, students may eat snack in the school cafeteria.

Before the start of kindergarten the students and families have the chance to meet the teachers and to ride the bus.

VISITORS

Visitors may include parents interested in enrolling in the program, building staff, professionals from other programs, or high school mentors.

VOLUNTEERING

Parent volunteers are always welcome at preschool to share interests, talents and skills, or to provide assistance on special projects. Advance notice to volunteer should be given to the teacher and parent volunteers must sign in at the elementary office to obtain a visitor's badge. Outside the classroom parents can help by saving Box Tops, found on General Mills products, to earn cash for the school.

Parents, grandparents, or other community members wishing to volunteer their time for the benefit of Valley Park Elementary School may contact the School Secretary (636-923-3632). A volunteer orientation may be held in the fall to familiarize volunteers with opportunities and procedures.