

# **Advent Parish Day School**

## **Parent Handbook**

**2024-2025**

**815 Piedmont Drive**

**Tallahassee, FL 32312**

**850-386-5100**

**[www.advent-school.org](http://www.advent-school.org)**



## **History**

Advent Parish Day School was established in 1971 as a ministry of The Episcopal Church of the Advent and as a joint vision of Harriot Cochran and Father Bob Snell. The school was originally designed to serve 30 children. The vision grew as more children came. Father Bob felt that a waiting list was a sign of unserved children. So, children were not turned away; instead, more staff were added. Advent offers a rich early childhood education program for children 18 months through 5 years of age. Our special area program, featuring cooking, music and movement, art, science, and chapel, allows our students to learn through experience. We are proud of our school and the unique learning environment provided by our faculty.

## **Statement of Philosophy**

Advent Parish Day School, as an integral part of the Church of the Advent, will teach by word and example the love of God, the love of others, and delight in God's world. We will be faithful to the highest standards of the educational community. Our programs are designed to promote growth and development of the total child socially, emotionally, intellectually, physically and spiritually. All subject matter is taught from a Christian viewpoint in an atmosphere of Christian love and with an acceptance for all. Individuality is encouraged in all areas. Our goals are directed towards providing the skills, attitudes and knowledge needed to help each child reach their full potential.

## **Christian Influence**

Advent is a mission of the Episcopal Church. The teachers express God's love through their daily actions and words. Prayers and blessings are said before snack and during other appropriate times of the school day. The wonder and glory of God is infused in the daily curriculum.

## **Governing Body**

Advent Parish Day School serves under the general direction of the School Board, a volunteer board of both church and school members. The Church Vestry has ultimate authority for the operation of Advent Parish Day School and is responsible for oversight of the School Board.

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

Advent Parish Day School follows a non-discrimination policy for admissions and employment policies. It is the policy of Advent Parish Day School not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or national and ethnic origin in its educational programs.

## **Parent Involvement**

Advent Parent's Association (APA) is an integral part of the day school. The APA plans many fundraising and social events for the school. Parents are encouraged to volunteer and participate in these events. There are many opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and in other school wide projects as well.

## **Advent Parish Day School General Policies**

**Times of Operation:** Advent Parish Day School generally follows the Leon County Public School calendar, including teaching planning days, holidays, and emergency closings. Our hours of operation are 8:00 am until 5:30 pm for full day students, and 9 am to 12 pm for half day students.

**Immunization, Health Records and Birth Certificates:** HRS form 3040 (Student Health Examination) and HRS form DH 680 (Florida Certification of Immunization) must be on file in the school office before the child may attend school. Advent Day school does not accept religious exemptions from immunization. Birth certificates are required for our accreditation.

**Orientation:** Advent holds orientation for the children and their parents the day prior to the first day of classes. Families will receive information about our annual orientation during the month of July. Class lists are posted on orientation day. We group our classes first by age and then by classroom makeup and as such individual requests for teachers cannot be accommodated.

**Arrival:** Half day students should be dropped off at the classroom no earlier than 8:55 am. Please wait for the teacher to let your child into the classroom. Our teachers are prepping their classrooms to get ready for your child until school start. Full day students may utilize the early morning program at 8 am. Parents utilizing early morning should sign their children in daily on the attendance sheets provided.

**Great Beginnings:** Brief, cheerful good-byes are best for children. We find that "hug and hurry" is the best approach to drop off. Parents are welcome to call the office to check on a child if needed. Separation anxiety is a natural part of child development and we are here for children (and parents) during the process!

**Departure:** Daily pickup occurs at the classroom for half day students. Half day students must be picked up at 12 pm. After 5 minutes, a late fee will apply. If you arrive after 12:15, please pick your child up from the office. Full day pick up is either at the classroom or the playground, depending on pick up time. The full day program ends at 5:30 pm. Please be respectful of our

staff who also have children and obligations and remember to pick up in a timely manner. Please see the Late Pick-Up Policy (attached) for information regarding late pick up fees.

**Authorization for pick-up:** A pick-up authorization form will be given to parents at orientation. A copy of this form will be on file in the office and classroom. Please be advised that new pick up persons will be required to show photo identification. If a change in normal pick up is anticipated, please email the school office so the teacher may be notified. Written notification is required for transportation changes.

**Illness:** Any child with symptoms of an illness will be taken to the office. A caregiver will be contacted, and the child will remain away isolated until picked up. Parents should pick up their child within 30 minutes of notification. Any child having a fever (100.3 degrees) must remain home until they are fever free for 48 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication. Children experiencing vomiting and diarrhea must remain home for 24 hours following the last episode. A child with repeated diarrhea at school will be sent home. Children with suspected pink eye, lice, or other communicable disease will be excluded from school until treated.

**Medications:**

The school does not administer medication to children with the exception of doctor prescribed life-threatening allergy medications (Epi-Pens). We do not dispense over the counter medications. These must be dispensed at home prior to arrival.

**Injury at School:**

In the event of a minor injury at school, parents will be notified upon parent pick-up. Advent keeps accident reports on file in the office for all accidents and incidents occurring during the school day. In the event of an injury needing attention, the school will contact the parent via phone.. In the event of an emergency, 911 will be called first, and then the parent will be contacted. In the event a parent cannot be reached, Advent will notify the emergency contact listed on the registration form.

**Inclement Weather/Natural Disaster/Evacuations:**

In the event of a fire or natural disaster, students and staff will be evacuated from the building. Staff will maintain supervision of their group with attendance sheets in hand and proceed to notify parents by cell phone as to the whereabouts of their child or children. Advent practices multiple drills per year including fire, inclement weather, and lock down.

In the event of severe weather or a tornado warning, students will be relocated to the activities room in the main church building for shelter. Advent follows Leon County Schools on all closures including but not limited to weather closures.

**Conferences:**

Parents/Teacher conferences are held in January and May. You may request a conference with your child's teacher at any time. Teachers provide newsletters or email updates and are available via email for questions and concerns.

**Discipline:** Positive reinforcement is always preferred. A quiet time area available in each

classroom. When needed, children may be taken to the school office. Advent never engages in physical punishment. Our staff is dedicated to keeping parents informed of any issues so we can partner together for resolution. Please see our Discipline Policy (attached) for more information. Parents are required to sign the discipline policy on an annual basis.

**Outdoor Classroom:** Advent recognizes the significant motor development differences in children. To help meet these differences three outdoor classrooms are available for use. One play area is designed primarily to meet the needs of the youngest children while the other area is better suited for the needs of four- and five-year olds. A third space is the courtyard classroom which is available daily with large motor skill activities.

## **Billing Procedures**

**Annual Fees:** The registration fee is due at the time of registration and is non-refundable. The supply fee is due on or before April 15<sup>th</sup> and is non-refundable. This fee goes towards purchasing supplies for the upcoming year and allows us to accurately staff our school in accordance with the registration. Students will not be placed into a classroom until fees are paid in full.

**Tuition:** Tuition is an annual fee, divided into ten equal monthly payments. These payments are the same independent of the amount of the days in the month. Tuition is due on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. Payments may be made via check, cash, or automatic withdrawal. A ten percent discount is given for each additional child.

**Withdrawal:** In the event you wish to withdraw your child from the school, we require 30 days written notice. Tuition is due during this 30 day time period.

**Late Payment:** Payment is required monthly and is considered late after the 10th of each month. A \$25 late fee will be assessed for payments made after this date. A \$25 check fee will be assessed to returned checks.

**Late Pickup:** Our staff have personal schedules and obligations which they must keep, so please help us by being prompt and respectful. Each family will be granted an exception on payment for their first late pick up per year. The second late pick up per academic year will be assessed a late pick up fee of \$10 AND \$1 each additional minute after the 5-minute mark. After three late penalties, a consultation with the director will be required.

## **Programs**

### **Half Day Program:**

Advent has half day programs for children ages 18-months through 5 years of age. Classes are available 3 or 5 mornings a week from 9:00 am until 12:00 PM.

### **Lunch Bunch:**

A drop-in program is available on a daily basis for half-day students. The program runs daily until 2:30. Children bring a lunch and eat in their classroom, followed by developmental play.

There is an additional charge of \$20.00 per day for this program. Please visit the front office to set up a lunch bunch account.

**Full Day Program:**

Our full day program runs from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM daily. Children follow the same morning program as half day students, followed by lunch, rest time and afternoon classroom activities. There is no drop-in option for the full day program.

**Special Areas**

Advent offers five specialized instructional areas to enhance our curriculum.

**Art:**

Our art program emphasizes both art history and creative expression. So many of our developmental muscles are used while participating in art. We are using cooperation during projects for social development, practicing lots of fine motor skills for physical development, and developing our language skills by expressing our ideas and feelings while creating art. Lessons are introduced through historical artists, adding an element of art appreciation to our program.

**Cooking:**

All classes experience cooking one time per week. Students are introduced to different foods and cooking language. Cooking involves many of our core educational skills, such as sequencing, math, and fine motor skills.

**Music/Movement:**

Children take part in this special area twice a week. A variety of musical experiences are offered to each group. Instruments, parachutes, balance beams add to the variety of experiences in music and movement. Advent holds two programs per year, our Christmas Program in December and the Art and Movement show in May.

**Science Lab:**

The lab is filled with materials for interesting and thought-provoking activities for students. We learn about hypothesizing and predicting and are encouraged to explore the world around us!

**Chapel:**

Advent was founded as a ministry of the Episcopal Church. Students attend chapel once per week, learning praise music and bible stories. Teaching the gift of God's love to our students is an integral part of our curriculum.

**Advent Parish Day School Admission Policy**

Advent Parish Day School enrolls children who are 18 months by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year. For the 2024-25 school year, children must have a birth date prior to March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

Students who do not meet this cut off will not be eligible for enrollment until the following school year.

Advent Parish Day School follows a “wait-list” for enrollment. Interested parties should contact the school office with the following information: Child’s name, date of birth, email, phone number, and program of interest. Spots are offered to school families and siblings in late January. After this date, school administration will fill other available spots from the waitlist, in order of date added, until the spots in each program are full. A \$250 registration fee is required to hold the classroom assignment for the student. Advent places children in classrooms first based on the child’s age and then based on classroom make-up. Individual requests for teachers cannot be granted.

Advent Parish Day School requires all children provide Health Form 3046, Immunization Form 680 and a copy of the birth certificate, to begin the school year. Advent does not accept religious exemption from vaccination, in accordance with the Episcopal Diocese of Florida and the Episcopal Schools Board of Regents. All children attending school must either provide proof of immunization under a physician’s care, or a medical exemption form from their child’s physician.

Advent Parish Day School follows a non-discrimination policy for admissions and employment policies. It is the policy of Advent Parish Day School not to discriminate based on race, color, religion, age, sex, disability, sexual orientation, or national and ethnic origin in its educational programs.

### **Discipline Policy**

We base our discipline policy on the belief that discipline is a part of both teaching and learning.

While each classroom has its own set of rules, policies and procedures, there are three consistent limits while on campus: children may not hurt themselves, children may not hurt others, and children may not destroy property.

When a behavior arrives that needs attention, staff may use a variety of classroom management techniques including:

- Redirection: The child is redirected to a more appropriate situation or choice
- Modeling: The teacher models appropriate behavior or language for the child to solve the conflict
- Separation: The child is removed from the environment for a short amount of time

Discipline is handled in a kind and loving way. Children are never subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest, or toileting. Spanking or any form of physical discipline is prohibited by all staff.

Advent strives to work with parents regarding their child’s behavior at school. In the event that a student’s behavior needs further attention, the parent, teacher, and administrator will work

together on a behavior plan. If a child's behavior consistently endangers the safety of the children around him/her, then the Director has the right, after meeting with the parents and documenting behavior problems and interventions, to terminate services for that particular child. This is only used as a last resort. Our goal is for all our students to learn, grow and thrive while at Advent.

### **Physical Behavior Policy**

Negative physical behavior is defined as biting, pushing, hitting, etc.

Advent Day School recognizes that negative physical behavior is, unfortunately, not unexpected for preschool age children. Some children communicate through this behavior. We are always upset when children are hurt at our school, and we recognize how upsetting it is for parents. In a preschool setting unfortunately, negative physical behaviors will occur. Our goal is to develop a plan of action with strategies, techniques, and timelines to work on the problem.

#### **Confidentiality**

Teachers will maintain complete confidentiality of all children involved when notifying parents that their child has hurt or been hurt by another child.

#### **When Negative Physical Behavior Does Occur:**

Our teachers express strong disapproval of negative physical behaviors. Advent's teachers work to keep children safe and to help a child that exhibits this behavior to learn different, more appropriate behavior. Techniques such as frightening or shaming children that hurt others are not used.

#### **For the child that was hurt:**

1. Immediate attention is given to the child that is hurt and if necessary, first aid is administered. Director is informed of the incident.
2. Parents are notified by phone call or privately in person.
3. An incident form is completed and signed by the teacher and director, documenting the incident.

#### **For the child that exhibited the negative physical behavior:**

1. The teacher will firmly tell the child something like, "We do not bite", "We do not push our friends", or "Hitting hurts" and ask them to check with the child that was hurt. Director is informed of the incident.
2. Parents are notified by phone call or privately in person.
3. An incident form is completed and signed by the teacher and director, documenting the incident.



### **Moving Forward:**

The child will be closely monitored to help prevent any other incidents. Teachers will work together to determine what is causing the child to exhibit negative physical behavior (communication, frustration, etc.). Improved behavior will be acknowledged and positively reinforced.

### **When negative physical behavior continues:**

1. If a child bites, pushes, hits, etc. 2 times in a one-week period (5 school days) a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and steps to be taken to modify the behavior.
2. After the conference is held, and the child again bites, pushes, hits, etc. (within the same week) the parents will be called and will have to pick up their child from school immediately. The child will not be allowed to come to school the next day.

If a child that has been through steps 1 or 2, goes a week (5 school days) without an incident, we will have a reset. If the child exhibits negative physical behavior again, we will then go back to step 1.

In the event that the negative physical behavior does not improve with the interventions taken above, additional interventions may be implemented.

### **Advent Day School Sick Policy**

Advent Day School has updated our sick policy for the 2024-2025 school year. We appreciate your help in keeping our school family safe and healthy.

- Children with a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, will be sent home and will not be able to return to school until they have been ***fever free for 48 hours***, without the use of fever reducing medications (Tylenol, Motrin). Advent may require a doctor's note clearing a child to return to school.
- Children with stomach viruses (diarrhea/vomiting) will be sent home from school. Children must stay home for 24 hours from the last incident, ***meaning they may not return to school the next day.***
- If your child is sick and needs to be picked up from school, we will call both parents. In the event that a parent cannot be reached, we will call the emergency contact listed.
- Sick students will come to the office to be quarantined from other children. Children must be picked up ***within 30 minutes*** of receiving a phone call that their child needs to go

home. Please make a contingency plan for who will pick up your child should you not be available.

- Minor injuries will be treated at school and an accident report filed in the office. If the injury needs medical attention we will contact the parents to pick up the child. If there is an emergency that requires immediate emergency medical attention, we will contact 911, followed by notifying the parents.

Thank you for your cooperation in keeping our students and staff healthy!

### **Advent Day School Late Pick Up Policy**

Advent Day School pick up times are as follows:

- 12:00 PM for half day students
- 2:30 PM for Lunch Bunch students
- 5:30 PM for Full Day Students

Our late pick-up policy is as follows:

Pick up times are firm. All students must be picked up during the time frame listed above.

If you are more than 5 minutes late for your scheduled pick-up time, you will need to pick your child up from the office.

As we understand that emergencies happen, the first late pick up will not incur a penalty. However, subsequent late pick-ups will incur the following penalties:

- After 5 minutes (12:05, 2:35, 5:35), a flat fee charge of \$10 will be added to your account. These charges will need to be paid first before tuition. After 15 minutes (5 minutes grace period, and the \$10 flat fee) a charge of \$1/minute for every minute late will be added to your account.
- After the 3<sup>rd</sup> late pick up, a conference will be scheduled with the Director.
- After 5 late pickups in an academic year, further steps may be taken, which may include suspension.

Our staff have obligations outside of school that they need to attend as well, and we ask that you be respectful of their time. Also, late pickups after everyone have left, are distressing to children. If you cannot pick up on time for some reason, please call someone on your emergency contacts list and arrange an alternate pick up. Please do your best to pick up on time, and if a rare occurrence happens, please communicate this to the office as soon as possible.