



Parent/Student VPK Handbook  
*Supplement to the SCS Parent/Student Handbook*  
2019-2020

## Introduction to the School

Sarasota Christian School was established in 1958 by a group of Mennonite parents who were concerned about having their children educated in a truly Christian atmosphere. The school aims to serve this need for all who are interested in a distinctively Christian education regardless of denomination, race, color or national origin.

The school has shown steady growth from its small beginning in 1958 of 15 students on the first day. Sarasota Christian School is located on an inviting 25-acre campus and offers a quality educational program on the elementary, middle and high school levels. Its students, coming from a wide diversity of backgrounds, represent various denominations and congregations. We provide a peaceful environment for our students to grow and thrive. We are a community of learners and are called to a lifetime of service through Christ.

### Mission

*The mission of Sarasota Christian School is to equip students with a love for Christ, a passion to learn, the courage to lead, and a commitment to serve.*

Sarasota Christian School VPK (Voluntary Prekindergarten) is the perfect place for your child to begin their education journey. SCS faculty and staff are eager to navigate this journey with you from the beginning to the completion of grade twelve. Our teachers provide warm, caring environments for students to learn and experience Christian faith. Christian faith practices are infused into the curriculum and everyday community life. Our learning environment consists of developmentally and age appropriate practices with a broad range of activities and experiences for children.

Cultural backgrounds of all families are embraced and celebrated at Sarasota Christian School. While instruction is given in English, home languages are respected and adults are available for Spanish interpretation as needed.

### Communications

The Sarasota Christian School website is a key to knowing what is happening at our school. The website can be accessed in various languages. In addition, Blazer News and other news flashes are sent to your email address. Your child's teacher will send home regular communications as well.

### Hours

Class A:	8:00 – 11:15	VPK Instruction (doors open at 7:50 am)
	11:15 – 3:00	Extended Care (dismissal begins at 2:55 pm)
Class B:	8:00 – 11:15	VPK Instruction (doors open at 7:50 am/d dismissal begins at 11:10 am)
Class C:	11:45 – 3:00	VPK Instruction (doors open at 11:40 am/d dismissal begins at 2:55 pm )

### Registration

Registration happens through the Early Learning Coalition and Sarasota Christian School. The SCS admissions director assists the parents in admission and in choosing the desired class for the child. If, for some reason, a class change is desired, the Admissions Director, the VPK Director, and the parent discuss the reasons and feasibility and make the appropriate change. This is on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with the Early Learning Coalition regulations.

## **Bathroom**

Each classroom has a bathroom inside that children may use as needed. Children entering VPK must be potty trained and know how to use the bathroom independently.

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Arrival Procedures:**

- Parents must sign attendance book each day and record time of arrival.
- All signatures must have first and last names and be printed legibly.
- Parents must accompany the child to the classroom door between 7:50 and 8:00; 11:40-11:45 for afternoon class. In order to facilitate smooth transitions, parents are expected to offer a brief good-bye to the child at the door.
- Parents are to call or email the school if the students will be absent.
- At the end of each month, parents sign the Student Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate.

### **Dismissal Procedures**

- Parents must sign attendance book and record time of sign out.
- Parents of children who attend the morning only class need to pick up their child by 11:20 am. After 11:20 am there will be a \$5.00 late fee for every 5 minutes thereafter. If this becomes a reoccurring event, the director will have a conference with the parents.
- After care is only available for all day and afternoon classes. No after care for morning only class.
- At 3:10 afternoon students will be taken to after care where parents can pick them up when they arrive.

## **Closure of School**

When weather conditions necessitate a change in our schedule SCS follows Sarasota County Schools closures plans. School schedule changes will also be left on the message system of the main phone line (941-371-6481), posted at [www.sarasotachristian.org](http://www.sarasotachristian.org), and communicated via social media and/or by text system.

In the event of an actual emergency requiring school closure when students are on campus, the emergency notification system will be activated to notify families of the emergency.

## **Daily Schedule – Subject to Change**

Class A, B, and C (VPK schedule)

Arrival; independent learning center activities, teacher-directed activities  
Morning Circle; calendar, language arts, math, Bible, social/emotional lessons  
Outside guided play activities  
Bathroom, hand washing, snack time  
Free Choice Centers; dramatic play, art, blocks, discovery, reading area, puzzles  
Closing Circle/Dismissal

Class A only (after VPK hours)  
Lunch, Story, Quiet Time  
Centers, Outdoor free play  
Snack, Dismissal

### **Curriculum, Assessment and Testing**

SCS uses Creative Curriculum standards to guide instruction. The teachers intentionally plan and implement lessons and activities to meet standards in the following areas: Social-emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and the Arts. SCS incorporates Encounter Bible in their daily lessons. The required Florida VPK Assessments, and Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ and ASQ-SE) are used during the school year to measure each child's progress.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

Parent teacher conferences happen twice a year; once in the fall and once in the spring. This is a time for parents and teachers to get a better understanding of each student's strengths, interests, and challenges. Other conferences may be arranged as a need arises. Spanish interpreters are available as needed.

### **Uniform**

Sarasota Christian School requires students to wear a uniform; however, VPK students are exempt from that requirement. **Students should wear secure closed-toe shoes; no sandals, flip-flops, boots or backless shoes (This includes Crocs).** Girls must wear shorts under skirts and dresses. The children go out every day, hot or cold, please dress your child appropriately. If you *choose* to wear the SCS uniform, you may purchase the SCS logo polo shirt from the office. All children need a Ziploc bag with a complete change of clothes. **Please mark the Ziploc bag and all items with your child's name.**

### **Supplies Needed**

Students need a back pack, with their change of clothes, and a water bottle with their name on it. All day students need a small mat or towel and a cubby (12x12) for rest time.

### **Snack/Lunch**

Please send in a snack for the morning and afternoon class. If your child attends the all-day program, then two snacks are needed and a healthy lunch brought from home or purchased from the school's lunch program. Please NO CANDY. **Snacks must be healthy.** Suggested snack items may include; any type of crackers (goldfish, teddy grahams etc.), granola bars, cheese, yogurt, fresh fruit/vegetables.

### **Discipline**

Teachers maintain a safe and caring environment. Students are valued as unique creations of God. We respect the individual development of each child and value opportunities to direct their emotional, social, spiritual, physical, and academic growth. We place more emphasis on what children "may do" than what they "may not do." If behavior situations arise (**aggressive behavior directed towards other children or staff- kicking, biting, hitting, profanity, destruction of property, etc.**) there are steps to take to resolve any behavior issues. It is our goal to guide families through discipline strategies and difficult times. We are partners in this goal.

Be assured that every discipline issue will be handled in a prayerful, loving, and productive way. Our goal is to place the child's development and that of his or her family as top priority.

### **Toys & Personal Items**

We ask that all toys and personal "treasures" be left at home unless the child's class has specifically asked for an item to be brought in. All day children may bring in **one small soft toy for rest time.**

### **Open Door Policy**

Parents are welcome in our classrooms. Parents may be invited to read to the children or share from your life's experiences. We are especially interested in learning about various cultures and languages.

### **Resources for Families**

There are many resources for families with young children. You will find resources in the brochure rack in the front hallway of our school. Here is a shortlist of web sites that you may find helpful:

- [www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org](http://www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org)
- [www.growingmindsread.org](http://www.growingmindsread.org)
- If your child needs a helping hand, call FDLRS Child Find. Sarasota County 941-927-9000.

### **Health**

Current records of physical exams and immunizations are required by the State of Florida. These forms must be on file in the director's office and the school clinic.

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of any health conditions of their student, which may require medication, treatment, or monitoring at school. It is the responsibility of the parent to keep up-to-date contact information with the school in case of emergency.

Students may not remain or come to school if he/she has had a fever of 100 degrees or higher, vomited, or had diarrhea within the last 24 hours, undiagnosed rash, head lice, or a contagious disease. Teachers have the discretion to determine if a child should remain in school if your child has a cough, non-clear nasal drainage or flu-like symptoms.

School personnel cannot dispense over-the-counter medication of any kind (cough drops, Tylenol, eye drops, etc.) without a Medication Treatment Authorization Form (MTAF). If a student needs to receive medication during the school day, state regulations require:

- A MTAF must be signed by a physician and parent
- A MTAF is needed for each prescription/medication. This includes over-the-counter medication.
- Medication must be in the prescription or unopened over-the-counter container labeled with the child's name, medication name, dosage, and times to be administered.
- The parent must deliver the signed MSAF and medications directly to the clinic. Do not send medications to school with your child.

- The MTAF is valid for the current school year only.
- The parent needs to pick up the medication at the end of the school year or if the medicine is discontinued. Medication that is not picked up at the end of the school year will be discarded.

**Pets**

For the safety of students, no pets are to be brought onto campus. If pets are part of the curriculum for the day, prior approval from the director is necessary.

**Safety Drills**

Safety drills are conducted on a regular basis, as required by law. SCS has adopted the countywide system of safety codes. We practice fire drills, weather drills and enhanced lockdown drills. Each classroom has its emergency procedure directions and evacuation maps posted.

**Visitors**

For the safety of everyone, all visitors coming on campus must first stop by the front office to obtain a visitor's tag. Visitors are also required to sign out at the front office prior to leaving campus. Individuals are considered a visitor if they are not a SCS employee or current student. *(i.e. parents except during drop-off or pick-up times, volunteers, tutors, substitutes, pastors, employee spouses, and alumni)*

**Transition to Kindergarten**

In order to facilitate a smooth transition to kindergarten, visits to the kindergarten classroom occur during the last quarter of the pre-kindergarten experience.

For additional information, please see the Sarasota Christian School Handbook online.

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Please return this portion to your child's teacher.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

- I have read the Sarasota Christian School Parent/Student VPK Handbook.
- I have read the Sarasota Christian School Parent/Student Handbook
- Both handbooks are online at [www.sarasotachristian.org](http://www.sarasotachristian.org).
- I have read the Parental Rights and Responsibilities found at [www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org](http://www.earlylearningcoalitionsarasota.org)

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_

- I agree to any state-required screening (ASQ and ASQ-SE) and testing (VPK Assessment) administered to my child by the teacher.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_