

St. Mary Preschool Handbook



STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of St. Mary's Preschool is:

- to provide a high quality education for each child regardless of race, religion, or socioeconomic background.
- to work to develop both the mind and body of our students.
- to provide comfortable, well-tended facilities staffed by priests, lay teachers, support staff, and caring involved parents and patron volunteers of our preschool and school community.
- to work as partners to provide a safe, comfortable, loving environment where students may grow spiritually and academically.
- to encourage students to love and respect themselves and others, to be honest and fair, to have a rich and fruitful relationship with God, and to become lifelong learners.

REGISTRATION

Pre-registration is held in the spring of the year. Students must be 3 or older before September 15 of the new school year in order to register for preschool. A non-refundable registration/supply fee of \$100.00 is payable at the time of registration to help defray diocesan assessment fees and any additional fees as well as purchase art and other supplies needed by your child for the school year.

Preschool registration includes the following:

- Registration form, including registration fee
- Copy of student's birth certificate
- Copy of student's Social Security card
- Copy of immunization record
- Emergency form completed with current phone numbers

Any student enrolling in St. Mary's Preschool must be toilet trained and able to use the toilet independently.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

By law, the minimum requirements for preschool attendance are:

- 4 doses DPT
- 3 doses polio vaccine
- 3 – 4 doses Hib with last dose on/after 1st birthday or 1 dose on/after 15 months of age
- 3 doses Hepatitis B (or valid # of doses prescribed by the Health Dept.
- 1 dose MMR given on/after child's first birthday
- 1 dose Varicella (chickenpox) or history of the disease
- Pneumococcal 3-4 doses
- Hepatitis A 2 doses after 1st birthday

ARRIVALS/DISMISSALS

Preschool hours are from 8:00 AM to 3:15 PM, Monday through Friday. Students should be at school by 8:00 AM to minimize disruptions and to allow them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities provided. In addition to our regular hours, St. Mary offers extended care:

- Before Care – begins at 7:00 am. Prior registration is requested. Children must be signed in each morning. Anyone signing in the student should sign his/her name or initials next to the time the student was signed in.
- After Care – begins at 3:30 PM and ends at 5:30 PM. A fixed cost of \$4.00 per day is charged for students staying past 3:30. Prior registration is requested. Children must be signed out each afternoon. Late pickups are difficult to deal with and will be subjected to an additional fee of \$5 for the second incident. Additional incidents will result in the student no longer being eligible for aftercare.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

St. Mary Preschool follows the same school calendar year as St. Mary School. It has been approved by the Catholic Schools of Arkansas.

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

All items that a student brings to school should be plainly marked with the child's name. Label articles include such items as sweaters, coats, hats, etc. The school is not responsible for lost items.

Students are not to bring toys to school except when show and tell is scheduled. A stuffed animal for naptime is allowed, but this animal should be small enough to fit in the student cubby.

Dangerous items such as guns of any nature, firearms, slingshots, pocket knives, etc. are not permitted at school.

HEALTH SERVICES AND POLICIES

Students experiencing diarrhea, vomiting, or a temperature over 100 degrees should remain at home. In the event these symptoms occur at school, parents will be notified to pick up their child.

When there is an outbreak of head lice in the community, parents and students must act responsibly. If you find lice or nits on your child please report each case to the preschool teachers. Children with head lice may not return to school until they have been successfully treated and are completely free of nits. Students who have been sent home with lice or nits may be examined before being allowed to return to school.

Child Care Licensing, DCFS special investigators, and law enforcement officials may interview children without notice to parents for investigative purposes and/or for determining compliance with licensing requirements.

No medication may be given to a student by any school personnel without a written directive signed by the parent/guardian. The written directive will include the time(s) that the medication is to be administered to the student and the dosage. Any medication brought to school will be stored in a designated place under the control and supervision of appropriate school officials.

No sunscreen will be applied to a child without written permission of the parent. When sunscreen will be deemed appropriate, a note will be sent home to request permission to apply the product.

For the protection of the students and school personnel, we schedule monthly fire and tornado drills. During these drills, the students are taught to follow all directions and all regulations. We have tornado drills with the children taking shelter both in the building and the church basement, which is our designated storm shelter. The school is equipped with a weather radio to monitor weather conditions.

GENERAL POLICIES

- All guests at the Preschool who will be in contact with the children are required to sign in on the visitors list each visit. In order to provide the safest environment for our students, we will be locking the front door during the day. Please use the doorbell to gain entry.
- Your child will be released only to parents and persons for whom we have written authorization on the registration form. If an unauthorized and/or unfamiliar person is picking up your child, you must notify us, and they will be asked to show a driver's license.
- Certified custody orders must be provided to the school during registration. Any changes in custody orders must be provided to us immediately. Our policy is to release children only to parents or their designated representatives (listed on the registration form). We will not deny a parent's pick-up rights unless there is a court order on file prohibiting the parent taking the child.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring that the school has current emergency contact information at all times. Parents will be contacted immediately in the event of an emergency. Please keep the office informed about changes in your business, home address, and phone numbers so you can be easily reached. If you or other listed people cannot be located, we will call the physician specified on the health record form. If necessary, we will call 911 for emergency assistance.
- State regulations mandate a rest period for preschoolers. We encourage children to rest quietly during that period. We will provide only a mat cover and mat for each child's use at naptime. Parents are responsible for providing their child with his/her own small pillow and blanket, and for laundering the same each week. Extra bedding is not available.
- Children may not bring candy or toys to preschool. Sharing personal toys is difficult for young children. Also, we cannot be responsible if a toy is broken. We provide enough toys for all children.
- To help us reinforce our rule of not climbing the fence, please do not lift your child over the fence.
- Each student must have a signed permission form before attending any planned field trip. Teachers will supervise all field trips and will not be available at the preschool on those days. The school will not provide transportation for trips.
- Students will not be allowed to bite or strike others. It is our policy to caution students and their parents about this behavior. Students will be sent home after the second incident. Parents will be called to pick up their child for the remainder of the day. Continuing incidents may be grounds for dismissal.
- St. Mary's reserves the right to dismiss a child if the welfare of the students, staff, facility, or program is in jeopardy as a result of child or parent behavior.
- A record of preschool inspections is maintained by the school and is available for inspection upon request.

PARTIES

Only three parties will be held during the school year: Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. Birthday parties or special snack treats may be arranged with the teachers.

DRESS CODE

To ensure that our preschool is an enjoyable experience for children, we require the following:

- Children must wear clothing which will allow them to use the toilet independently, such as clothes that they can push down, pull up, fasten and unfasten themselves.
- Girls must wear shorts under dresses/skirts for modesty.
- Children should wear soft-soled shoes that will allow them to play safely and comfortably while remaining simple to remove and put on. For your child's safety on the playground, closed toe shoes (such as tennis shoes) are encouraged. **Flip-flops and open-toed shoes are not allowed.**
- All students must have a complete change of clothing (socks, underwear, pants, shorts, and top), which is appropriate for each season. If you bring in two sets, one for summer and one for winter at the beginning of the year, it will ensure that we have clothing for your child should an accident occur. Each item should be labeled with your child's name. If no clothing is available, you will be contacted to bring in a change of clothes for your child.

We spend time outdoors each day, weather permitting (wind-chill above 32 degrees and heat index below 100 degrees). Children must have appropriate outdoor wear such as hats, scarves, snow pants, boots, gloves, coats, and mittens for winter.

TUITION PAYMENTS

Preschool tuition is due on **Monday** of each week. You may pay for more than one week at a time. You are not charged for days that school is not in session due to weather or scheduled meetings. If your child attends school for the full day, lunch fees are included. All snack fees are included in tuition, also. If you need to pay tuition on another day, please contact the preschool director to make arrangements.

For organized collection and preparation of receipts, all payments are to be given to a teacher. In order to ensure proper posting to your account, we request payment by check. This will give you a traceable record of payments and will simplify our bookkeeping. If you must pay in cash, please request a receipt from one of the preschool workers. Payments may also be placed in an envelope and given to a preschool worker. Record your child's name and amount on the envelope and request a receipt from the teacher.

Tuition charges are not adjusted for absences. We must continue to pay our teachers and hold your space even in the event your child is absent. Consideration will be made for unavoidable family hardship or extended absence due to illness. Please contact the preschool director if such a problem exists.

If you are tardy with your weekly tuition, you will be contacted. Admission to the preschool will be denied on the following Monday unless the tuition due for that week, and all tuition owed, is paid upon arrival at the school.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Hot lunches are served daily. Lunch charges are included in your tuition bill if your child is a full day student. Adults are always welcome to eat lunch with students for \$3.00. Prior notification is requested for the morning lunch count.

Preschool students are the first to proceed to the cafeteria/church hall to eat lunch at 11:00, followed by students K-6.

DISCIPLINE

St. Mary Preschool has always endeavored to maintain good discipline. Good order is fundamental to an atmosphere of learning in our faith based facility. Our teachers set firm, consistent, positive, and clear limits inside and outside of the classrooms. Rewards and consequences are an integral part of the plan. To ensure a safe environment for the children of St. Mary Preschool, we use the following methods of discipline:

- Verbal Warning
- Time Out (for the same number of minutes as the child's age)
- Loss of Privilege
- Parent Contact

If a student continues to be a source of disruption, a danger himself/herself, or a danger to others in the preschool, a conference will be called to determine appropriate actions to be taken.

COMPLAINTS

Any person feeling aggrieved concerning any matter connected with the school should contact the individual concerned before discussing the matter with other patrons. If a person has a complaint about a teacher, that individual should first go to the teacher to seek a solution to the problem. If the problem is not resolved, the person should contact the preschool director for an appointment.

PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION

The purpose of the Parent Teacher Organization is to coordinate the various projects of parents and teachers, and to assist the school in the educational well being of our students. Preschool parents will be notified of upcoming meetings/planning sessions. One big fund-raiser is held each year. The preschool does derive financial benefits equal to a percentage of all profits based on the number of parents participating in the event. All parents/guardians are urged to participate and help. A sense of camaraderie and being a member of the school/preschool family is a benefit of participation.

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