



Our Lady Star of the Sea School

PRE-K HANDBOOK 2023-2024

MISSION STATEMENT OF OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA SCHOOL

Jesus Christ is the center of our school community and the Person by whom we measure our life in its daily,

physical, mental, and spiritual activities. It is, therefore, the mission of Our Lady Star of the Sea, in conjunction with the parents and guardians of our children, to build a community which will reflect Gospel values, not only in the smaller school and parish setting, but also in the wider world society. Because we are also an academic institution, we strive for scholastic excellence by providing an organized and integrated curriculum, which responds to the unique ability of each person. It is hoped that by providing a program that encourages spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual, and physical growth, the students will be able to meet the challenges that face them as they strive to become members of a democratic society.

ENTRANCE INTO PRE-K

Children entering PK3 must be three years of age on or before September 1, and children entering PK4 must be four years of age on or before September 1, in compliance with the Catholic Schools Office and the Calvert County Public Schools policy.

The school must be apprised of any Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 Plan, or special needs that the child may have before acceptance can be formalized. We include children with special needs, and special health care needs, and are willing to work with families to meet their needs. Parents must provide current, accurate information regarding their child's needs to assist the school in determining whether accommodations are possible. All IEPs, 504 Plans, and special health care needs will be kept confidential and will only be discussed with pertinent staff members. The admission, instruction, and retention of students with special needs shall be determined on an individual basis by the chief administrator, pastor, and principal in consultation with the ADW Catholic Schools Office. Archdiocesan Catholic schools follow Archdiocesan guidelines and procedures regarding special needs enrollment, referrals, placement, and curriculum adaptations.

State health requirements must also be met before a child can begin attendance at OLSS.

ARCHDIOCESAN ADMISSIONS & NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:

The Archdiocese's Admissions & Non-Discrimination Policy can be found on the website of the Catholic Schools Office of The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington at <https://adwcatholicsschools.org/non-discriminationpolicy/>

INCLUSION POLICY

We welcome students with special education and health care needs. We have staff with medical training who can provide care for students with health issues such as allergies, asthmas, and diabetes. We have a nurse's office in the main school building to assist children who may become ill or injured during the school day. We will work with parents/guardians to ensure that their child's health care needs can be met at the school.

We will provide opportunities if/when possible for professionals such as speech therapists, physical, occupational, and behavioral therapists to observe and work with students.

NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING STUDENTS

We welcome non-English speaking students. Classroom methods used to assist these students include:

- Picture and written cue cards to assist in understanding activities
- Small group settings to help with understanding specific concepts
- Translations through technology to help when understanding of instructions or information is unclear
- Peer buddy assistants
- Ongoing communication with family members

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT

The following forms must be completed before the child begins school:

- 1) Copy of birth Certificate
- 2) Copy of Baptismal Certificate (if Catholic)

- 3) MSDE Health Inventory
- 4) MSDE Immunization Record
- 5) MSDE Lead Test Form
- 6) MSDE Emergency Form

Please notify the School Office and Pre-K Teacher if any of the information included in these forms changes or needs updating.

RE-REGISTRATION:

In order to get a firm commitment from parents of students already attending OLSS, each family must pay a \$150 nonrefundable registration fee each Spring for the Fall term. Re-Registration is processed through TADS online. After the posted deadline for re-registration has passed, students who have not re-registered will be considered lapsed and their application will be included among the entire pool of applicants for the following year.

The principal may determine that re-registration of a particular student is not in the best interest of the child, or of the school. Such determination will be communicated to the family in writing. Some reasons for refusal of re- registration include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Failure to pay tuition, student fees, or other school-related expense;
- 2) Behavior by a student, parent or guardian that reflects consistent lack of respect for the school, school authorities, policies, procedures, or the faith community teaching and mission of the Roman Catholic Church.
- 3) Failure of a student, parent or guardian to act in ways that promote the best interests of the church and school;
- 4) Refusal of a parent or guardian to collaborate with the school on recommendations made in the best interest of the student, such as diagnostic testing, referral to counseling services, behavioral assessments, and/or other educational recommendations necessary to the student's academic success; or
- 5) Unwillingness of a parent or guardian to grant the school access to confidential information/access necessary for the education of the child. Examples include: information available from existing evaluations or permission to speak to the child's pediatrician, therapist or counselor.

CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS:

Parents/guardians who are (or become) divorced, separated, unmarried, or who have another special circumstances regarding the custody of their children must provide the school with a court order or decree of custody for the student's file. This information and documentation must be provided and updated upon applying for admission, re-registration, and whenever a custody arrangement changes. The Transformation Permission section of the student's TADS account must also be updated as needed to reflect all current custody arrangements.

In addition, any specific instructions regarding the release of the child to a parent must be written, signed, and kept in the student's file. Any special requests for school staff to release a child to someone other than the persons indicated in the specific instructions must be written and signed by the custodial parents/guardians of record.

CLASSROOM SAFETY PROCEDURES/PROTOCOLS

Teachers and staff working with Pre-K students will have various training, including CPR, First Aid, Medical Administration, and Emergency Preparedness.

Fire drills are conducted monthly. Other Emergency Drills will be conducted throughout the year.

Emergency phone numbers are posted by each telephone in the Pre-K building.

Cleaning products are put away and are out of children's reach.

Safety checks on materials and equipment in the Pre-K building will be conducted on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

- 1) Parents/guardians are required to walk their child to the PK building and sign him/her in each morning. Drop off time for both half-day and full day is between **7:45 – 8:00am**.
- 2) You must give written permission for another person to pick your child up from OLSS. That specific person must have a photo id to present to the Pre-K staff at the time of dismissal. The child will not be allowed to leave with that person without proper identification.
- 3) Dismissal/pick-up time for children attending the half-day program is **11:15am**. Dismissal/pick-up time for children attending the full day program is **2:40-2:45pm**. Children must be picked up promptly.
- 4) If you are picking your child up at the 11:15am time, you will not be able to park inside the school parking lot on Thursday or Fridays, as PE classes will be using that area at that time, unless it is raining. Please park in the spaces by the church area or along the waterfront.
- 5) When picking up your child at 11:15am on Mondays - Wednesdays, please have your car out of the parking lot by 11:30am. Students in grades K-5 dismiss use the parking lot and playground for recess at this time. The parking lot is roped off, and cars cannot be in motion there during that time.
- 6) For your safety, do not park in the very front of the parking area in the morning or at 3:00pm dismissal. This area is designated for parents dropping off and picking up their children.
- 7) No parent or child, including siblings, are allowed on OLSS playground equipment after their dismissal time, whether it is 11:15am or 2:45pm.

EARLY DISMISSAL POLICY

On 12:30pm early dismissal days, dismissal time for children attending the full-day program is 12:15pm.

DELAYED OPENING POLICY

In the event of a two-hour delayed school opening due to inclement weather, there will be no half-day Pre-K. Full-day Pre-K students may arrive between 9:45-10:00am.

SNACK AND LUNCH POLICY

Please send a healthy snack, such as fruit, vegetables, and cheese sticks, for your child to have during the morning snack break. Full day Pre-K students may bring lunch, or purchase lunch each day. Lunch tickets are sold through the online school store.

REST TIME

Children attending full day Pre-K will be required to rest each day. Your child doesn't have to sleep, but he or she must lie down and rest quietly on a mat provided by the school.

DRESS CODE

PK Students Summer Uniform: OLSS PE t-shirt and *OLSS PE shorts

PK Students Winter Uniform: OLSS PE sweatshirt with OLSS PE t-shirt with *OLSS sweatpants

* If the smallest size OLSS shorts and sweatpants are too big for PK and K students, they may wear solid navy shorts or sweatpants.

Footwear: White or navy socks with sneakers (any color)

Additional Regulations for Girls:

- Only a simple chain necklace with a cross or religious medal may be worn
- Watches may be worn (no smart watches)
- Girls may wear only ONE STUD earring per ear
- Dangling earrings MAY NOT be worn
- Makeup, nail polish, artificial nails, and hair dye (including highlighting, streaking, & hair extensions) are **NOT** permitted.

Additional Regulations for Boys:

- Boys' hair must be trimmed above the eyebrows and cut to a length above the collar. No mohawk haircuts, manbuns, or shaved designs are permitted.
- A simple (not thick) chain necklace with a cross or religious medal may be worn.
- Watches may be worn (no smart watches).
- Earrings and bleached hair or unnatural hair dye (including highlights & streaking) are not permitted

MEDICATION INFORMATION

Medications:

The Archdiocese of Washington, in compliance with the State of Maryland, mandates that schools must have proper documentation from a physician to administer ANY prescription or OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION. In the event that ANY medication must be administered during the school day, the parents must complete a "Student Medication Authorization" form from the School Office.

If a child must take medicine during the school day, parents must submit a completed "Maryland State Dept. of Education Office of Child Care Medication Administration Authorization Form" signed by a physician and the parent.

Students may not carry medication to or from the school. Any medication found with a student will be confiscated and kept in the school office until a parents claims it.

Allergies

Please notify the Pre-K Teacher of any allergies your child has, including allergies to foods, insects, and medications. These will be posted in the Pre-K building so the staff are aware of them.

Immunizations

Children must stay current on all required immunizations. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that OLSS receives a note from the physician of updated shots. Any child not current will have 15 working days to become current or bring in proof of a scheduled appointment at which time the child will become current in his or her immunizations.

Lead Screening

All children age six and under must have a lead screening before entering Pre-K. Since this screening is mandatory in the State of Maryland, most doctors do this screening in a routine visit or when a child is having an immunization. Every child must have this form, signed by a physician, whether you are in listed zip codes or not.

TOYS

Our Pre-K program has a variety of age-appropriate toys. We do not permit children to bring personal toys into the center as they are often a cause of distraction and can become broken.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE/DISCIPLINE STATEMENT

Our Lady Star of the Sea Pre-K believes that guidance leads to positive learning experiences that set behavior limits and guides children to maturity. Guidance fosters achievement and steers the child to self-discipline so that he/she does what is expected. Guidance sets clear and precise limitations.

Discipline is a means to teaching children what is acceptable behavior and helps them develop the inner controls needed to function as positive, productive individuals. Our discipline policy gives positive guidance, allows for redirection, and sets behavior limits. The following is OLSS positive guidance:

- 1) **Redirection:** If a child is experiencing difficulty within an activity, either with another child or with the level of involvement in the activity, the teacher or assistant will calmly direct the child to another area or activity in which the child may be more successful.
- 2) **Time Away:** This provides time for the child to be away from an activity for a brief time to “cool off” and collect him/herself. Time away lasts only as long as the child remains agitated and needs to remain away. Once the child is collected he or she will rejoin the group and demonstrate that they can appropriately engage in the activity. If the situation warrants it, the child may be taken to the school office to discuss his/her behavior with the principal.
- 3) **Exclusion for Off-site Activities:** If a child's behavior offers a serious threat to the safety of the child's self or to others, the child may be excluded from activities which occur outside of OLSS school. Children may be required to cross or be near a busy street, parking lots or mingle in crowds at public places while on field trips. Children must be in control of their behavior and listen to the instructions of the adults with them to be safe.
- 4) **Dismissal:** A child whose behavior is unruly and which cannot be redirected will be dismissed from Pre-K for the day. A referral to an appropriate child or family agency will be made to assist the family if a child demonstrates the following behaviors: physical aggression towards others resulting in injuries to the child, staff, or others; consistent use of foul or abusive language; throwing of chairs and other items; not responding to direction from supervising adults; leaving the group without permission from supervising adults; leaving the group without being supervised and refusing to return to the group or classroom; or leaving the building unsupervised.
- 5) **Termination:** A child who must frequently be dismissed from the program will be terminated from the program if no sustained change in the unruly behavior occurs and the program is unable to ensure the safety of the child and others.

We reserve the right to terminate a child's enrollment at the school at any time if we deem it necessary, without going through the above steps. This judgment will be discussed and determined by the Pre-K Teacher and Principal.

Positive Behavioral Practices

In the classroom, students will be given opportunities to develop decision-making skills to create a sense of responsibility and positive self-esteem. They will be given opportunities to make choices for themselves throughout the day, to help them be more proactive in making positive. Opportunities to make positive choices will be given. Some of these choices would include which area to play in during Learning Centers, what materials they would like to use in craft activities, snacks to eat from home or from school, and where they would like to sit. Guidance will be given based on the doctrine of the Roman Catholic church, so that they will find success in their decisions.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice a year. Parents may ask for a conference at any time during the

year. For bi-yearly conferences, parents will be notified by the School notification system with information on the date and times available.

ACCIDENT/ INCIDENT REPORTS

All accidents and incidents are documented and parents will be asked to sign an acknowledgment. Parents will be called at the time of an injury if it appears serious in nature or requires medical attention. If a parent cannot be reached, the child may be transported to the hospital via ambulance. Ambulances do not transport children with non-life-threatening injuries without the parent present.

Incident reports record behavior-related events and are intended to inform the parent of the situation and follow-up discipline/guidance procedures. These reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school.

PASSIVE TECHNOLOGY

There will be a limit of no more than thirty minutes per week of "Passive Technology". "Passive Technology" is defined as non-interactive television, videos, and streaming media.

PETS

Pre-K will occasionally have pets in the classroom. We may occasionally have an opportunity to have a pet visit the classroom for the day. If your child has a fear or allergy that is related to pets/animals, please let the teacher know so that she can prepare accordingly.

OUR LADY STAR OF THE SEA HANDBOOK

A school-wide Parent/Student Handbook which addresses information pertaining to the whole school is necessary for you to read. This information is provided to you at the school office or online.

RIGHT TO AMEND

Our Lady Star of the Sea School reserves the right to amend this Handbook. Notice of amendments will be sent to parents via Weekly Newsletter or through e-mail communication.

PRE-K & OLSS HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND GUIDE TO REGULATED CHILD CARE

I have read and received a copy of the Pre-K and OLSS handbook and agree to abide by the information obtained within them. I acknowledge that I can go to the following website to view the brochure entitled "Guide to Regulated Child Care" to find out more information about my rights as a parent:

www.earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/2/parentbrochuremsde.december2007.pdf

Student's name

Parent's signature

Date