



# **Saint Ann Catholic School**

# **Early Childhood Parent Handbook**

**Revised 10/2018**

## **Program Philosophy and Goals**

During the early childhood years, children are learning to trust others outside their families, gaining independence and self-control, and taking initiative and asserting themselves in socially acceptable ways. Children are also learning to think and they learn by doing and playing. Children make sense of the world around them through active involvement with their environment. They observe what happens when they interact with materials and other people. As they engage in a variety of activities they add pieces of information to what they already know and come to new understandings about the world.

Our Early Childhood program is developmentally appropriate. This means that the activities the children engage in are appropriate for their age and their developmental level. It also means that teachers work with each child to ensure that their individual educational and developmental needs are being met.

The goal of the Early Childhood program is to provide a rich environment that encourages children to observe, to be active, to make choices, and to experiment. Physically, children will enhance both their large and small muscle control and use all their senses in learning. Children will develop socially and emotionally as they experience a sense of self-esteem, develop a positive attitude toward life, and demonstrate cooperative, pro-social behavior. We believe it is best practice for siblings to be in separate preschool classrooms, as it promotes independence along with many other positive life skills. Finally, children will develop cognitively as they acquire learning and problem solving skills, expand logical thinking skills, expand verbal communication skills, develop beginning reading and writing skills, acquire concepts and information leading to a fuller understanding of the world, and demonstrate skills in make-believe play.

## **Children's Daily Activities**

The daily activities of your child will include a balance of quiet and active play; large group activities, small groups activities, and opportunities to play alone or with others; indoor and outdoor play; and time for children to select their own activities as well as time for teacher-directed activities. The classroom environment will provide a variety of activities that children can choose from such as dramatic play, block play, creative expression, manipulatives and cognitive games, literacy activities, and sand and water play. Time is scheduled for children to sleep or rest during the day. Children will also have opportunities to engage in self-help skills such as toileting, dressing, and washing hands along with tasks in the classroom such as table setting and cleaning up.

Throughout the week students will attend various special classes. Our specials schedule is as follows:

	<u>PK1 – Ladikos</u>	<u>PK2 – Swanson</u>	<u>Kindergarten</u>
Monday	Music	Music	Spanish
Tuesday	Gym	Gym	Spanish
Wednesday	Gym	Gym	Gym
Thursday	Gym/Spanish	Gym/Spanish	Gym/Music
Friday	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish

Some important times to remember:

- 7:20 Breakfast is served (Children must arrive at school by 7:30 to be served breakfast)
- 7:45 Day begins
- 11:20 Lunch
- 2:55 Dismissal (PK)
- 3:00 Dismissal (K)

## **Toilet Trained**

Every child must be toilet trained PRIOR to the first day of school. Our early childhood program is not DCFS certified, so teachers/faculty are unable to assist students in the bathroom. Each child must be toilet trained & be able to use the bathroom independently (cleaning himself/herself, changing clothes when necessary). If a child does have a toileting accident, the parent will be notified ASAP and given the option to pick-up his/her child or let them remain at school.

## **Rest Time**

Both Preschool and Kindergarten will have a daily rest time in the afternoon. Rest time will vary depending on the class and day's activities. Preschool students should bring a small blanket or towel to cover their cot. Please put your child's name on the blanket. Kindergarten students should bring a blanket to cover their rest mat. Preschool and Kindergarten students may not bring pillows. Blankets and towels will be sent home on Fridays to be washed over the weekend. It is your responsibility to return or substitute a blanket for your child to use.

## **Orienting Children and Parents to the Program**

Your child's experience in preschool, among new people and unfamiliar surroundings may be a little frightening at first. The first day is an hour-long orientation for you and your child. Please plan to stay the whole hour. Following our first day of school, please make sure you say goodbye to your child so he/she will know that you are leaving. It may take some time, but your child will adjust to the new relationships with teachers and peers. If your child is having a great deal of difficulty adjusting to school, your child's teacher will want to meet with you to plan the best way to handle the situation.

It is important to allow your child to share their school experiences with you. Please ask your child about their day at school and the activities they participated in that day. This will allow them to share their feelings with you as well as realize that the time they are spending in school is important to you.

## **Arrival**

Students should report to the cafeteria (Nazareth Hall) and wait there until teachers come to pick them up at 7:45 a.m. Students should arrive at school by 7:20 a.m. if they intend to eat breakfast here. The Preschool and Kindergarten aides will be there to assist them. We encourage you not to bring your child to school before this time. It is important for children at this age to get adequate rest. Arriving too early for school makes it difficult for children to stay awake through the entire day.

## **Dismissal**

Please notify the school in advance if you plan to pick up your child early. We will only release your child to people you have authorized in writing to pick your child up. Any child not picked up by 3:10 p.m. will be taken to the after-school program.

## **Preschool**

Preschool dismissal is at 2:55 p.m. At 3:10 p.m., students going to the after-school program will be escorted to there. All other preschool students must be picked up in the classroom and signed out. Please fill out the Authorized Pick-Up Form at the beginning of the year to inform us of who is allowed to pick up your child. Please note that people on the list may

be asked to provide identification or wait as we call a parent/guardian when picking up the child. Siblings must be in grades 4-8 to be authorized to pick up preschool students.

### **Kindergarten**

Kindergarten dismissal is at 3:00 p.m. Students will walk outside with their teacher. Students will wait with their teacher against the school wall. They will be dismissed from here.

**Students MUST tell their teacher who they are going with before they will be dismissed.** Please do not call your child to you for it is unsafe for them to run through the plaza to you.

### **Healthy Snacks and Meals**

We will have a daily snack time. A student will be assigned to bring in a class snack for a week at a time. There must be enough to feed the entire class. Snacks must be healthy. Chips and cookies will not be accepted as your snack contribution. Some snack ideas include:

Animal crackers	Ritz crackers	Cheez-Its
Wheat Thins	Jell-O	Fruit snacks
Teddy Grahams	Graham Crackers	Dried fruit
Granola bars	Pretzels	Snack mixes
Goldfish crackers	Popcorn(already popped)	Snack crackers
Cereal bars	Yogurt	Fruit

Due to nut allergies, **NO** nut products should be sent to school. We will post any allergies or medical conditions in the room so that all staff members are aware of student conditions. It is **not** necessary to send juice with snacks.

### **Birthdays**

Students enjoy celebrating their birthdays. Students are able to have a dress down day on their birthday. If their birthday falls on the weekend, they may have a dress down day on either the Friday before or Monday after. Summer birthdays will be recognized at the end of the school year. Families are not allowed to bring birthday treats to school (cake, cupcakes, special snacks, etc.) on students' birthdays. Please celebrate your child's special day with your family outside of school.

### **Discipline**

Discipline means guiding and directing children toward acceptable behavior. The most important goal of discipline is to help children gain self-control over their actions. Teachers discipline children to help them learn the consequences of their actions. Children need to assume responsibility for their actions and develop an awareness of the rights of others.

Simple understandable rules will be used with children. Children will be made aware of the relationship between their actions and the consequences that follow. Teachers who have an ongoing relationship with the child will be responsible for discipline and will use the following approaches: praising positive behavior, redirection to another activity, loss of privilege or activity, helping children resolve their conflicts, or anticipate and intervene before disruptive behavior occurs.

Children will never be subjected to corporal punishment or to verbal abuse. Meals or parts of meals will not be withheld as punishment, and children will never be punished for toilet accidents.

In addition, we have school-wide behavior program called PBIS: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Through this program, we will have an individual and school-wide positive reinforcement reward system.

## **Dress Code**

**Preschool students** are to wear the gym uniform (see below) to school each day. Children will be engaging in all kinds of play experiences including messy ones and need to be free to move and get a little dirty.

Preschool students need a complete change of clothing, kept at school, for use in an emergency. Please include underwear, shirt, pants, and socks. These items should be packed in a Ziploc bag. The bag and all the items of clothing must have your child's name on them so they will not be lost. If your child needs to use these clothes at school please wash them and return them or replace them with other clothes. If the school has to provide extra clothes, they must be washed and returned or you will be charged for those clothes.

**Kindergarten students** should follow the school dress code (see below). They are to wear gym uniforms on Wednesday and Thursday and the regular school uniform on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday.

Both preschool and kindergarten children will be going outdoors daily so they should come to school with appropriate outdoor clothing such as coats, mittens, boots, and hats in cold weather.

## **Uniforms**

Uniforms are worn every school day except when announced to the contrary. In the interest of health, safety, and school cleanliness, cowboy boots, work boots, snow boots, and shoes that mark the floor and/or causes tripping and falling are not to be worn in class. Students come to school each day in a complete and clean uniform. The principal retains the right to determine whether or not any uniform item is acceptable.

St. Ann students are expected to be well groomed in a traditional sense. Hair must be clean and neatly trimmed. The principal retains the right to make the final determination as to whether or not any given hair style is acceptable and fits within the definition of traditional and well groomed. All uniforms are worn in a modest fashion and students are expected to wash daily and wear clean clothing.

### **Girls (Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup>):**

- Burgundy and Gray Plaid Jumper with Pink or White Blouse
- Burgundy and Gray Plaid Skirt or Gray Dress Slacks with Pink or White Polo
- Properly Fitted Gray Uniform Dress Slacks - No Jean-like, Corduroy Material, Cargo or side pockets. No "skinny" or tight-fitting pants. No spandex or leggings
- Burgundy or Gray Vest or Sweater if Needed
- Solid Colored Socks or Tights (Gray/Burgundy/White/Black)

- Black, Solid-Color Dress Shoes with Rubber Soles
- Only Studed Earrings Allowed, No Excessive Jewelry or Heavy Chains and/or Medals
- No Make-up, Colored Nail Polish, or Excessive Perfume

**Boys (Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup>):**

- Properly Fitted Gray Uniform Dress Slacks - No Jean-like, Corduroy Material, Cargo or side pockets. No “skinny” or tight-fitting pants.
- Burgundy or White Polo Shirt or Oxford
- Dark, Solid-Colored Belt (only if necessary – if pants are too loose)
- Solid Colored Socks
- Burgundy or Gray Sweater or Vest if Needed
- White Undershirts only and Showing only at the Neckline
- No Long-Sleeve Tee-shirts with visible writing underneath the uniforms (plain white, burgundy or black are allowed)
- No Earrings or Heavy Chains and/or Medals
- Black, Solid-Colored Dress Shoes with Rubber Soles
- No cologne or body spray

Uniform Guidelines

Students must be in compliance with the uniform guidelines while on site during the school day.

Uniform shirts may have no decals, printing, advertising, etc.

Shirts must be tucked in.

Pants must be properly sized and worn at the waist—if not, belt must be worn

Uniform skirts and jumpers must be no shorter than two inches above the knee.

No highlights, distinct markings, or color in hair. No dyeing of another color—only natural hair color is allowed.

For boys, hair must be no longer than collar length and not over the ears.

No more than one bracelet, watch, and ring. Bracelet must be plain with no writing.

No mohawks, faux-hawks, mullets, tails, or hair tapered like a tail.

Out of Uniform Guidelines (Dress Down Days)

Clothes must be modest, clean, and in good condition.

Halter tops, spaghetti strap tops, any strapless tops, and bare midriff tops are not allowed. Shoulders must be covered.

Cutoffs and short shorts are not allowed.

Clothing may not mention, have likeness to, or have reference to alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, or any other unhealthy, unchristian activities.

Clothing can not display sexual or violent graphics.

No flip flops or sandals. Only closed-toe shoes.

**Gym Uniform:**

\*Preschool students wear the gym uniform at all times\*

- Royal blue T-shirt or sweatshirt (St. Ann logo) and royal blue shorts
- Royal blue sweats with the St. Ann logo
- Solid color socks (white, black, or gray)
- Sturdy, supportive solid color athletic shoes with black or white laces or Velcro.

- All Velcro straps must be secured properly (not hanging off the side). All shoelaces must be tied.

### **Family Involvement**

It is important to keep the lines of communication between home and school open. Each child will bring home a blue “Thursday Folder”. This will contain notes from the school office and your child’s teacher. The folders should be returned to school the following day. Please feel free to send any notes or forms back in this folder. If you are including money for any reason, please send it in an envelope marked with your child’s name and what the money is intended for.

Family members are encouraged to be involved in the Early Childhood program. Involvement may include helping out in the classroom, sending things from home, or doing things at home to contribute to the classroom. Your child’s teacher will be happy to give you ideas to help you be involved in your child’s school experience. We welcome any family participation and know that it will help your child value her education and encourage her to do her best.

We value your opinion and feedback about our program. You will receive a parent survey twice during the school year which will allow you to share any thoughts, suggestions, and ideas with us.

### **Assessment of Children’s Progress**

Preschool and Kindergarten students will be assessed following the school calendar with the new standards-based Archdiocesan Early Childhood Report Card. Preschool parents will have a parent teacher conference at the conclusion of the first trimester, and then receive the report card at the end of each subsequent trimester. Kindergarten parents will receive the report card three times per year. Our Preschool students are also assessed with the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment form. The assessment periods for Teaching Strategies GOLD as mandated by the Chicago: Ready to Learn Program are slightly different from the ones used by the rest of the school.

### **Child Find**

All of our Preschool and Kindergarten students will be evaluated using the ESI-R (Early Screening Inventory-Revised), an early childhood screening tool. This will be extremely helpful with our ability to teach your child. The screening performed by our staff members will evaluate the social, academic, communication, and motor skills of your child. If your child is referred for further evaluations or monitoring, you are required to do so in the time stated by the school.

### **Preschool Partnerships**

Our preschool classrooms participate in CPS’ Community Partnership Programs. This partnership provides our classrooms with various resources and professional development sessions for our teachers. We are associated with the Chicago: Ready to Learn Program (formerly Preschool for All) and will require some documentation and paperwork to be filled out throughout the year.