St. CATHARINE
CHURCH

St. Catharine Preschool Parent Handbook

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www.stcatharineschool.com

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Due to the Department of Education Licensing Standards regarding preschool programs, the policies governing St. Catharine Preschool are separate from St. Catharine School and should be followed as such. The governing board of St. Catharine Preschool is the St. Catharine Advisory Board.

Philosophy

Saint Catharine will strive to foster the wholeness of the individual child. Our goal is to have a safe loving atmosphere where a child can explore and discover through interaction with his/her environment. Opportunities will be provided to use and share existing skills as well as learn new skills. These experiences help the child establish a positive self-esteem. We believe in the worth of each family, therefore, we seek collaboration and support from the family as we nurture the development of each child.

How does our program enhance the development of the whole child?

- Nourishes spiritual development
- Supports children in becoming active and confident learners.
- Focuses on children's play.
- Responsive to children's developmental needs and interests.
- Engages the child with interactive materials.
- Flexible in adapting to children's learning needs and interests.
- Recognizes families as the child's first teacher.

Religious Education

The aim of the St. Catharine's religious program is to help develop Christian values. Religion is not a separate entity and is a part of all aspects of life. Therefore, religion is integrated with other subjects that teach appreciation of and respect for all racial and ethnic groups, the values of peace and justice, social awareness and moral responsibility. Religion must help the child relate to all people of our world, accepting their differences and appreciate their values as children of God. Families of all religious backgrounds are welcome to our program.

It is important to remember that a preschool child's understanding of the Catholic faith requires a great deal of abstract thinking and understanding of complicated concepts and situations. Therefore, as teachers, we will try to bring the Catholic faith to their level of understanding by using concrete examples and/or activities that they can relate to their daily lives. Daily prayer, trips to the church, and the teachings of Christ are a few examples of the integration of religion.

Curriculum Goals

As teachers, we observe, plan and structure the children's experiences in a Christian environment. This will further enhance and facilitate the growth and development of each child as we strive to

1. Help children grow socially, emotionally, physically, morally, and intellectually through a safe and developmentally appropriate child-centered program.
2. Provide a sense of self-worth by enhancing self-confidence and self-esteem in all learners.

3. Provide concrete experiences with learning activities that promote experimentation, creativity and problem solving.
4. Offer experiences that promote, support and encourage emergent literacy.
5. Encourage independence and self-direction in the children - helping them make positive decisions and choices.
6. Encourage children to successfully function in a group of peers through cooperation, sharing, friendship and values as well as nurture the development of children as individuals in a community with other learners.
7. Teach respect for each other's rights as well as the differences that make them unique individuals.
8. Establish an environment that nurtures and values the natural learning process, curiosity, and enthusiasm inherent in all young children.
9. Model a cooperative and supportive partnership between children, teachers, and families and establish a positive connection between home and school.

These curriculum goals will be met through:

- A curriculum that is aligned to the Ohio Early Learning and Development Content Standards using the framework of *The Creative Curriculum* and Religion Graded Course of Study.
- Planned activities and materials that are developmentally appropriate in the areas of language, math, science, social studies, religion, creative arts, motor, and social and emotional development.
- Assessment using Ohio's Early Learning Assessment Tool.
- A daily schedule plan that provides opportunities for children to explore indoor and outdoor, individual and large group, quiet and active play.
- Flexibility to change planned activities according to the needs of the children.

Our Classrooms

Our program runs from late August to late May. We follow the St. Catharine School break and holiday schedule. We are a traditional half-day program, with the option of enrolling in extended care to make a longer or full day (see options below).

Caterpillars: We are 2 ½ - 3 year olds. Our class has 11 children and 2 teachers. Children will attend M/W/F, T/TH or all 5 days from 8:15 to 11:15 am. Among our many activities and experiences, we will work on toilet training, as some of us are just new to this skill.

Butterflies: We are 3-4 year olds. Our class has 14 children and 2 teachers. Children will attend M/W/F, T/TH or all 5 days from 8:15 to 11:15 am. All children need to be toilet trained.

Dragonflies: We are 4-5 year olds. Our class has 16 children and 2 teachers. Children will attend M/W/F, T/TH or all 5 days from 8:15-11:15 am. All children need to be toilet trained.

Busy Bees: We are 4-5 year olds. Our class has 16 children and 2 teachers. Children will attend Monday – Friday 8:15-11:15 am. Children in this class should be preparing to enter kindergarten in the following fall. All children need to be toilet trained.

Extended Care Options: If families are needing a longer day, three options are available: Lunch bunch until 12:15 pm; Extended Day until 3:15 pm; and Longer Day until 5:45 pm. Families choosing extended care options can arrive as early as 7:30 am.

Drop-In Extended Care: If families of currently enrolled children need extended hours from time to time we offer all three options listed above. Space is limited though and may not always be available. Families must request use of drop-in extended care 24-hours in advance by emailing or speaking to the Director. These requests are based on a first-come, first-served basis. Fees will be collected on the day services are used.

Sample Daily Schedule:*

Morning Shedule:

8:15 am- 9:00 am	Gradual Start**/** Arrival; Open Choice
9:00-9:15	Large Group
9:15-10:15	Child Directed and Teacher Directed Activities *(Activities in the Developmental areas of Social and Emotional, Approaches Toward Learning, Language and Literacy, Cognition, Math, Science, Physical Motor and Catholic teachings)*
10:15- 10:30	Snack
10:30-11:00	Outside/Gross Motor
11:00-11:15	Small Group
11:15-	Departure for half day only students

Extended Care Schedule:

11:15-11:45	Lunch
12:00-12:15	Rug activities/Lunch bunch dismissal
12:15-12:45	Outdoor/Motor time
12:45-2:30	Bathroom break and Quiet time
2:30-3:10	Snack/ Free choice activities
3:10-3:15	Extended Care leave at 3:15
3:15-3:45	Group
3:45-4:15	Outdoor or large motor play
4:15- 5:15	Table and carpet activities
5:15-5:45	Departure and carpet activities

* This schedule is based on a typical day and may be adjusted according to the needs of the students.

Staff

St. Catharine's lead preschool teachers are qualified Early Childhood Educators with degrees in the areas of Child Development and Early Childhood Education. Teachers have practical experience working with young children and are committed to annual professional development.

Staff/Child Ratios
The staff to child ratio at St. Catharine Preschool is as follows:

2:12	Ages 2 ½ to 3
2:14	Ages 3 to 4
2:18	Ages 4 to 5

The Ohio Department of Education Minimum Standards is:

1:8	Ages 2 ½ to 3
1:12	Ages 3 and 4 (mixed ages)
1:14	Ages 4 and 5

St. Catharine Preschool is in compliance with the standards developed for early childhood programs by the Ohio Department of Education, Step Up to Quality and ODJFS licensing. Information about all standards are located in the office and available upon request.

Admission & Fees

A child is considered eligible our program if he/she is at least 2 ½ years of age on or before September 30th. Our 2 ½ class does not need to be toilet trained. All children 3 years or older need to be toilet trained before the start of school. The admission policies that direct the elementary school will also direct admission to the preschool.

Registration
There is a $75.00 non-refundable fee per family due at the time of registration. Each year, families will be expected to re-register. Returning preschool families will be charged a $50 re-registration fee.

Your child will not be enrolled until the registration fee has been collected.

Supply Fee
The non-refundable supply fee helps to defray some of the cost of the consumable materials. Payment is added into your total tuition. The fees are set by the number of days your child will be attending. Rates can be found on the website.

Tuition
All tuition is collected through FACTS Management. Tuition can be paid in two ways:

1. One full payment- payment is due in July and will be paid through your FACTS account.

2. Monthly payments- Tuition will be automatically deducted from your chosen account each month through FACTS. Families will make 11 payments, made on the 5th or 20th of the month, starting in July.

If financial situations arise that a family would be delinquent in payment, they must arrange a conference with the director, principal or pastor to indicate the situation and determine an appropriate course of action.

Withdrawal and Tuition Refund Policy

Families who withdrawal prior to the school year (after July 1) will forfeit the summer tuition payments of July and August.

Families who withdrawal during the school year must give a written 30 day notice. Tuition payments made in one large sum will be pro-rated to date of withdrawal including the months of July and August and a refund for the remainder will be issued. Families participating in the monthly payment plan will be excused from the payments by the school upon completion of the 30 day notice.

All registration and supply fees are non-refundable.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival
The preschool door will open at 7:30 am for Extended Care families. Students not enrolled in the extended care program may arrive as early as 8:15 am and we ask that all children arrive no later than 8:45 am. Families need to escort their child to the classroom and make contact with a teacher before leaving for the morning. At arrival we will ask that all children and families wash their hands at the classroom sink. Please **do not** drop off children at the front door or expect a sibling/another child to escort your child into the classroom. Only parent or authorized family member/adult should accompany the child during arrival as well as dismissal.

Dismissal
Children being dismissed at 11:15 am, 12:15 pm or 3:15 pm will be picked up in the car line by an authorized family member/adult. Families should park their car on the west side of Gould Rd. to form a pick-up line. Children will only be released to parents or authorized adults. Should you have a change in pick up, please notify the preschool office in writing including the authorized name of who is picking up that day. If the person that you have designated to pick up your child has not previously been introduced to the staff, please remind them that they will be required to provide a picture ID before leaving with the child.

Late Fee
Reasonable attempts must be made in order to pick up your child on a timely basis. More than three late pick-ups will necessitate the beginning of a late fee charge. After the third late pick-up, a fee of $1.00 for every minute will be charged to the parent. This fee is payable to the school within one week.

Guidance and Discipline Policy

At St. Catharine's Preschool, we believe the goal of all discipline is to guide children towards self-discipline. Self- discipline enables children to function independently and in a manner that respects each other and classroom community. We want to help children learn caring and responsible behaviors by using positive guidance techniques such as problem solving, redirection, setting limits, and natural consequences.

The following positive guidance techniques will be used:

Teachers will:

- encourage children to do their own problem solving through reflective listening.
- use positive suggestions and reinforcement.
- emphasize desirable aspects of behavior.
- give children opportunities to make choices when appropriate.
- communicate expectations and limits.
- set developmentally appropriate limits and expectations.
- explain reasons behind expectations.
- be consistent.
- STOP any activity that may endanger the child or other children.

Discipline will be fair, immediate and consistent. The teacher will let the child know that it is the action that is unacceptable, not the child. The child will be guided to use problem solving skills. Redirection to another activity may be necessary. A child may be separated from the groups when he/she is unable to control his/her behavior or if that behavior infringes on the rights of others. Time outs are rarely, if ever, used.

There are rare instances that children have difficulty participating in a positive way or feeling successful in our environment. Continued emotional upset, unhappiness, anger or unusual patterns of behavior may indicate this difficulty. Families are an integral part of the process for evaluating unusual incidents and teachers will strive to keep the lines of communication open with families.

When a child's consistent inappropriate behavior interferes with teachers and other children's rights or becomes a safety concern, the following steps may be taken:

1. Observation of the child from preschool teacher and director
2. Parent-teacher conferences to discuss concerns and strategies
3. Implementation of a plan designed by the school and family
4. If additional support is required, a referral to school district or services for evaluation
5. If these steps fail to bring a positive change, the child's participation in the program may be terminated.

As per Ohio Department of Education, all families and staff will receive the following discipline policy:

- There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box or a similar cubicle.
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family or other verbal abuse.
- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
- Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
- Separation, when used as discipline shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted and well-ventilated space.

- The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

Medication & Health Policies

Health Screening & Immunization Policy
All immunizations and health records must be current as stated in the Ohio Department of Education Guidelines. The parent shall provide, ***prior to the first day,*** a report from a licensed physician affirming that the child has received a physical and immunization record to date. This report needs to be completed ***annually.*** We ask that your physician also conduct a vision and hearing screening before your child starts school. These can be done at your yearly exam. There is also a space on the form for you to date when your child has been to the dentist. In the event you cannot get these screenings completed, please contact the preschool and we will find resources to complete these screenings.

If a child has exceptions to immunizations the middle portion of the form must be completed. A child will be accepted into preschool without all immunizations. However, when there is an outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease, children who have not had the disease and who have not been vaccinated will be excluded from preschool until the outbreak is controlled.

Communicable Disease Management & Illness Policy
Preschool staff that are trained in the area of communicable disease will observe children as they enter the group and throughout the day. Any child or staff member exhibiting any of the following will be considered to be carrying a communicable disease and may not be in Preschool:

- Diarrhea (two or more episodes within a 24 hour period); unusual dark urine or white stool
- Vomiting
- Temperature of 100 degrees or higher
- Severe coughing (Face turns red or blue)
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Cloudy, yellow or green discharge from the nose
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) until 24 hours of medication has been given, if prescribed by the Physician
- Skin rash, unusual spots or untreated, infected skin patches
- Stiff neck
- Lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation
- Sore throat/difficulty swallowing
- Strep throat until 24 hours of medication has been given
- Unusual rashes, sores or spots
- Yellowish skin or eyes

Children should **not attend** preschool if they are showing any signs of the illness listed above. In addition, your child may return back to school when he/she is free from fever, vomiting, or diarrhea or other signs of illness for a **period of 24 hours**. In cases where an antibiotic has been prescribed for an infectious disease (i.e. strep throat, impetigo, conjunctivitis) the child should not return to school until he/she has received at least 24 hours worth of antibiotic and is feeling well. Certain illnesses require a specific recovery time frame and your child may need to be out for additional time.

If a child becomes ill while at preschool or shows any of the above listed signs, they will be immediately isolated from other children while decisions regarding discharge are determined. We will do our best to make them as comfortable as possible while they are observed for further symptoms and/or until the parent/guardian arrives.

Children who are not feeling well but are not exhibiting any of the above listed symptoms are considered to be "mildly ill." They will be observed by the staff for further signs of illness. If the child cannot participate in the daily Preschool activities, a parent/guardian will be called.

Please notify the preschool office if your child is absent and if they have a communicable disease or if you have knowledge that your child has been exposed to a communicable disease. Parents will be notified of exposure to communicable diseases in writing.

Medication and/or Vitamin Policy

The Preschool does not wish to dispense medication and/or vitamins at school unless it is absolutely necessary. Examples include inhaler for asthma, Epi-Pen for allergic reactions, and insulin. If medication needs to be administered during preschool class sessions, we must have:

- Proper written authorization form from the doctor or dentist
- Original prescription container listing the child's name and instructions
- Complete medication form including permission to give medication, dosage and time of need, duration of need and possible side effects.

A written log including dosage, date, and time will be recorded in the event medication is administered from a trained staff member. Medications will be stored in the first aid back packs in a locked area.

Please see the Preschool website for the Medication forms. See the Director with any questions.

Students with Life-Threatening Allergies or Conditions

St. Catharine's Preschool strives to provide a safe environment for students with life-threatening conditions or allergies. The Preschool director and teachers will review all allergy information provided by the student's parents and/or physician. We will also consult the school nurse. Each school year, parents and/or physicians will be required to complete and sign a "Health Care Action Plan" specific to the child's life-threatening allergy or condition. This plan will support the staff if there was a known or possible exposure to the allergen. Medications will be kept in the classroom or with the teacher as specific needs dictate.

The Preschool does not provide snacks/lunch but if food is served they will not serve any foods that are known to produce life-threatening reactions to students in their class (i.e., peanuts, tree nuts, eggs). Teachers will also refrain from using those ingredients in classroom projects. The classroom will also post the health care action plan for all children with life-threatening allergies or conditions.

During Lunch Bunch children with life-threatening allergies will be seated at an allergy free table. Staff will wash tables and chairs to ensure no allergens are left on the tables after lunch.

The Preschool staff will communicate and work with families ensuring staff are trained in recognizing allergy or condition symptoms and appropriate actions.

Medical and Dental Emergency Plan
If your child has any kind of an allergic reaction, is asthmatic or is subject to seizures, please inform the Preschool director or head teacher prior to the first day of school.

If a child is hurt while attending Preschool and requires first aid or any emergency treatment, an incident report will be completed and signed by the director. One copy will be given to the parents and another copy will be kept on file in the office.

If a child becomes severely ill or injured while at school, the staff will immediately call 9-1-1 for the emergency squad to respond. The physician or dentist listed on the child's emergency card will be notified for any child taken to the hospital by the emergency squad. The parent or legal guardian will be immediately notified of the emergency situation. In the event that parents can not be reached, staff will call the listed emergency contacts families have listed on the student's emergency card.
It is very important that every student maintain an up-to date address and telephone number record at the school. Please notify the Preschool office if you or your emergency contacts have a change of address or telephone number during the school year.

Parent Communication & Involvement

Parent interest and involvement is important to a child's growth and development in school. Our program becomes richer as our families become more involved. We highly encourage families to participate and have an open-door policy with unlimited access. You are more than welcome to:

- Share special talents and traditions
- Volunteer in the classroom and on field trips
- Communicate ideas, questions, and concerns
- Attend Preschool Family Events, such as Thanksgiving Lunch, Ice Cream Social, and Family Potluck

Any parent wanting to volunteer needs to complete a background check and take Protecting God's Children (information can be found on the school website).

Communication is critical for building a good relationship between teachers and families. It can be easiest to talk to the preschool staff during drop off and pick up time, however, this time may be difficult for teachers to fully supervise children. We will do our best to have informal conversations or you can also call (614-235-4940) or e-mail while class is not in session. Families are able to contact Mr. Mark Watts (school principal) or our Advisory Board Representative with questions, concerns, and feedback.

Communications between the preschool and families will primarily be done through email. Some communications will also come home in backpacks with the children. Families can also check out the Announcement Board for additional information. We also are available in person at drop off or pick up or by phone.

Parent/Teacher Conferences (Assessment)
The preschool requires families to complete an Ages and Stages Questionnaire on your child the first few weeks of school (not to exceed 60 days). The ASQ (3) is a developmental screening tool

designed to identify those children who are in need of further evaluation. We believe parents are the child's first educator and specifically picked this tool because we feel families know their child best. The information we gain from this tool as well as our own observations in the classroom guide us in supporting each child's development. Teacher will also use Ohio's Early Learning Assessment Tool several times in the school year. This tool has more detailed objectives and guides us in developing goals for your child. Parent –Teacher conferences will be held twice a year in the Fall and Spring. A conference may be scheduled at any other time throughout the school year by the request of a parent or teacher.

Parent Roster
A list of names and telephone numbers of parents or guardian of children attending our preschool is available upon request. Each class list includes all parents who have given us permission to release their names and phone numbers. Preschool families are included in the St. Catharine School Caller.

Website
St. Catharine School maintains a website with a Preschool page and a Facebook page. The Preschool page will include events, calendar, and curriculum information. We will also be posting pictures of the children. Pictures will not include children's names, dates, or information that would identify them. There is a wavier for families to give permission to use your child's picture. We will respect families' wishes if they choose not to participate.

Safety Policy

A staff member in charge of a child or group of children shall be responsible for their safety. In order to keep children safe, the following practices are followed:

- No child is ever left alone or unsupervised.
- A child will not be allowed to leave the room until a parent or designated person has arrived to pick him/her up.
- In case of an emergency, a staff member will contact a parent or designated contact person.
- In the event of an extreme emergency, as staff member will call 911 or poison control.
- The classroom has a posted plan of evacuation and tornado procedures. Fire drills are held monthly all year. Tornado drills are held monthly during the spring. A record of each drill is posted on the director's office door. During severe weather, when tornado warnings are issued, the children will be accompanied by the teachers to the designated safe area. No one will leave until the warning has expired.
- A first aid kit is available in the classroom.
- The use of aerosol cans shall be prohibited when children are in attendance.
- All medicines, cleaning materials and first aid supplies are kept out of the children's reach. When an accident or injury occurs, or any event necessitating emergency transportation of a

child, an incident report will be completed. The parent will be asked to sign the incident report and a copy will be given a copy to them. The original will be placed in the child's file.

- Plans regarding crisis intervention and intruders into the school have been established. These plans are kept in each classroom for the use by the teachers. The plans are reviewed by the teachers and church staff in the building.

- All visitors must sign in and wear a pass when they are in the building. All volunteers must sign in and wear a pass when they are in the building.

- In any major crisis, the Diocesan Communication Office is the media liaison.

- All doors of the Preschool building are locked at all times. A security system allows the preschool and church office to view, communicate, and open the doors of the building to any person that wishes to enter the building.

- If an evacuation to another location on the premises is necessary, the children and teachers will walk to the undercroft of the Church. Parents can pick-up their child at a Dismissal Table. Students will be dismissed by family. Parents will be asked to sign out their child. No child may leave unless a parent or authorized adult signs the child out.

- If an evacuation to another location "off-premise" is necessary, the children and teachers will walk to Cassingham Elementary (250 W. Cassingham). Children will remain with their teachers until parents have been notified about the evacuation. Parents will be asked to sign out their child. No child may leave unless a parent or authorized adult signs the child out.

Severe Threat Level for National Security

The sixteen public school districts of Franklin County, and the Diocese of Columbus, have joined together to establish a common protocol to follow in the event of a Threat Level of Red, the highest level of alert as declared by the United States Department of Homeland Security.

If the Franklin County Red Alert School Team, comprised of the superintendents, determines that the threat is a potential danger to Franklin County, the following procedure will be followed:

If Red Alert is issued <u>before or after school hours</u>:

Then, normal school operations will cease, based upon the Red Alert School Team's recommendations and will remain closed until advised by the Red Alert School Team to re-open. All school activities and events scheduled will be cancelled until notified by the Red Alert School Team.

If the Red Alert is issued <u>during school hours:</u>

Then, school buildings will be secured and remain open until regular dismissal time, unless otherwise advised by the Red Alert School Team. Children will be sent home by normal transportation means or released to parents pursuant to district policy. All after-school activities and events will be cancelled, unless otherwise advised by the Red Alert School Team.

Field Trips and Routine Walks

The following must be in place for all field trips:

- A signed permission slip is required. We are not able to accept the signature of any other adult such as a grandparent or babysitter.
- Each child's Emergency Authorization will be available on all field trips.
- All children must be in a car seat or booster seat.
- Any parent who wishes to drive on a field trip must complete a form available in the preschool office. In addition, that parent must be fingerprinted and have completed the "Protecting God's Children" session. Please see the main school for more information.
- The child/teacher ratio, set by the state, applies to all field trips.
- All life-threatening medication (epi-pen, inhaler, etc) will be available during transportation and the field trip.
- First aid kits will be available on the trip that meets the requirements set forth by the Department of Education.

There will be occasions where the class will take routine walk in the neighborhood. Families will sign a release and be notified if possible when walks will take place. These walks are with in a two block radius and are aligned with the curriculum. Staff will take a first aid kit, emergency authorization forms, and any life-threatening medications on the walks.

Inspections
St. Catharine Preschool is subject to fire and building inspections. Inspections are also made by the Ohio Department of Education to access compliance with state regulations regarding all aspects of program operations. Copies of the reports and inspections are available in the preschool office.

Suspected Abuse and Neglect
Any staff member suspecting an incident of abuse or neglect is required by law to notify the local children's protective service agency.

Background Checks
Each staff member, including substitutes and aids, who have care, custody, and control of the students are required to have a criminal background check, fingerprinting, and attend the Diocesan program, "Protecting God's Children".

Any parent wishing to volunteer in the preschool must also have evidence of fingerprinting and attendance of "Protecting God's Children" (certificate on file in the preschool office). Information and registration for this program may be found on line at www.virtus.org. Fingerprinting can be completed by calling St. Catharine School office (**614-235-1396**) to set up an appointment.

Weather or Other Emergencies

School closings or early dismissal due to weather or other emergencies will be reported on the local radio and television stations, it will show school is canceled for the Catholic Diocese. An email will be sent to all families notifying them of the cancelation, as well as posted on all school social media. Canceling schools due to inclement weather is never an easy decision to make, St. Catharine Preschool will follow the guidance of the Principal and Superintendent for these types of decisions. Families should create plans for their children if it becomes necessary to close school for weather or other emergencies.

Any time St. Catharine's Catholic School closes for inclement weather, the preschool will also be closed. Please listen to your radio or television if inclement weather is evident. The announcement will read "All Columbus Catholic Schools…..".

General Information

Clothing & Personal Belongings
We are active and often messy during our day! We want your child to be comfortable and safe. You may want to consider dressing your child in easily-laundered clothing. Children should also wear rubber-soled shoes to keep them safe outside and on climbing equipment. Flip flops or sandals without heel straps are not permitted.

All children should have a backpack with an extra change of clothing for accidents and messy play. You may also leave a bag of clothes at school. Please label all children's clothing. We cannot be responsible for lost articles. Check with your child's teacher if they are missing something.

Toys from Home
The connection from home to school is important and often children want to bring toys from home. Children may bring things to share and discuss. They can play with these toys for a portion of the day and will be asked to store them in their cubby for the other portion. We will adapt the toy policy with each group of children and may change the policy if the toys become a distraction or cause problems. **NO guns, weapons, or swords are permitted at preschool.**

We understand that children have security items such as blankets or animals that comfort them. We are open to children brining in items to help with the transition from home to school as long as it does not interfere with the activities and the classroom community. We will work together in supporting your child's needs.

Videotaping and Photography
The preschool children are photographed and occasionally video taped for educational and evaluative purposes. These photographs are mostly used for documentation and portfolios, the St. Catharine website and Facebook page, and occasionally for teacher training at educational conferences on the local and state levels. Parents must sign the consent form before any photographs are used in the public domain.

Snacks & Lunch
Families will provide snack(s)/lunch for their child. Half day children will need a snack. Children staying for lunch will need to pack a lunch and children staying all day will need 2 snacks and a lunch. To follow the USDA guidelines we ask that snacks consist of nutritional food from 2 food groups. Lunches need to consist of nutritional food from 3 food groups. Staff will encourage children to eat until they feel full. Staff will not monitor what foods are being eaten first, such as eating vegetables before cookies. If you do not want your child to have a food before other foods it is best to just not send it. We will communicate or help children communicate if they dislike certain foods or are needing more food.

Birthdays
Most children are delighted to share their birthday! We want to help make it a special day. We will sing to your child during our snack time or group to make their day special at school. If you are wanting to do something special for their birthday we ask that you bring a book/game to share with

the class or a small trinket (pencil or stickers). We ask that you avoid treats due to allergies. Children with summer birthdays can celebrate on their half birthdays if you choose.

Records

Your child's records are available to you at your written request. The records of St. Catharine preschool children who plan to attend St. Catharine's kindergarten will be passed on to the Kindergarten teacher. When children are being served by other agencies, we can share child information with early childhood professionals only with a parent's request. Parents that send their child to a school different from St. Catharine can request their records to be sent to desired school. All child and staff records are strictly confidential.

Transition

Into Preschool/Beginning of the Preschool Year: Transition into the preschool is done at the beginning of the year. We plan an Open House for the children and families to meet their teachers and explore the space. The preschool also hosts a Parent Orientation at the beginning of the year for families to ask questions and teachers to discuss the upcoming year. The Orientation is done without children for more open dialogue. The week before school starts there will be two opportunities for your child to visit with a family member. We want to accommodate all children's needs and realize each child's transition to preschool is unique. We will work with you and your child to develop additional individual strategies if necessary. This might include allowing them to come to preschool when others are not present, teachers conducting a home visit, having your child come earlier in the morning for a "quieter" entrance to the day, or matching them with a peer for support. The information you provide in the Family & Child Profile helps us to learn more about your child and a family's specific needs or want. When your child moves from the mixed age class to pre-k, parents are given the opportunity to meet with their child's new teacher. The Butterfly and Caterpillar Classroom teacher also give families the opportunity to meet with the Pre-K class teacher to discuss your child's transition to the next class. The goals and information you share with your child's teacher at the spring conference are reviewed by all teaching staff. Again, all information is kept confidential.

Preschool to Kindergarten:

We use the spring conference to discuss your child's transition into Kindergarten. We give children opportunities to visit the school and meet the teaching staff. Pre-K children attend library once a week and have opportunities to be familiar with the school. In addition, teaching staff can create an individual plan outside our normal activities if needed. This might include additional time visiting the new classroom, meeting with the school principal or Kindergarten staff to share feedback on your child, or linking you to a current Kindergarten family for additional information on what to expect. As mentioned above, when your child leaves St. Catharine Preschool to go to St. Catharine School, we forward their records. Preschool teaching staff will meet with the Kindergarten staff and principal to discuss any specific information they and you feel is important for the transition to Kindergarten. Parents that send their child to a school different from St. Catharine can request their records to be sent to desired school. Preschool staff is also available to meet with outside school teaching staff.

Referrals and Special Needs

If a teacher, administrator or parent is concerned with the development of their child, we will collaborate to make appropriate action steps. Families are asked to complete the ASQ-3 (developmental screening tool) within the first two weeks of their child starting school. We use the ASQ-3, ASQ- S/E (social and emotional) and observations in the classroom to determine if additional resources or referrals are necessary.

Typically we discuss development and goals at our first parent/teacher conference in October/November. Teaching Staff and families may schedule a conference before this date if one feels more immediate action is needed. If a parent is in need of additional support for their child, we will try to connect them to their local school district and/or appropriate services or agencies. We are open and support dual programming arrangements and will make every effort to continue a child in our program when appropriate. The office has a list of family community resources with agencies and programs that may benefit your family.

Questions and Concerns: Grievance Procedure

Parents are encouraged to contact the school with any questions or concerns that they have in regards to their child. The first phone call should be to the teacher. If you are not satisfied, then you are asked to contact the principal who will sit with the parent and the teacher to work out a possible solution to the question or concern. Parents are welcome to attend the St. Catharine School Advisory Board meetings. The director will put you in contact with our Parent Representative for more information.

**After reading please sign handbook acknowledgement portion on enrollment form.*

2021-2022 School Year

Please read and complete the following statements:

I, _____,
(Print Parent Name)

_____**Agree** _____ **Do not agree** to have my name, address, and telephone number on a class roster that may be distributed to the classroom families and the St. Catharine School Caller.

_____**Agree** _____ **Do not agree** to allow for my child to be photographed or videotaped for educational purposes. Typically this is for documentation panels and classroom newsletters.

_____**Agree** _____ **Do not agree** to allow for my child's photograph to be posted on the St. Catharine website. (Names, dates, or identifying information will not be included)

_____**Agree** _____ **Do not agree** to allow for my child's photograph to be posted on the St. Catharine Facebook Page. (Names or identifying information will not be included)

I understand that as part of the curriculum, my child may go on walks in the neighborhood, not to exceed two blocks from the school. I give permission for my child to go on a routine walk with the supervision of the St. Catharine's preschool teaching staff. (Please see handbook for additional information)

I have reviewed the Parent Handbook, the COVID Addendum and the policies related to my child's enrollment in St. Catharine's Preschool, and agree to comply with the terms of the handbook.

_____ _____
(Parent Signature) (Date)

_____
(Child or Children's Name)