



**St. CATHARINE PRESCHOOL**

Love of **God**. Love of **Learning**. Love of **Neighbor**.

# **St. Catharine Preschool Parent Handbook**

**440 S. Gould  
Columbus, Ohio 43209  
614-235-4940**

<https://stcatharineschool.com/>  
cdeberson@cducation.org

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 interactions with their 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 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 appreciating 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 [Catholic Schools Early Learning Course of Study](#) and the [Ohio Early Learning and Development Content Standards](#) using the framework of *The Creative Curriculum* and the [Religion 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.
- Assessments 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. Our hours are 7:30 am to 5:45 pm. We follow the St. Catharine School break and holiday schedule. We are a traditional half-day program 8:15 to 11:15 am, with the option of enrolling in extended care to make an extended day 11:15-3:15 or longer day 11:15-5:45 (see options below).

**Caterpillar Class:** We are 2 ½ - 3 year olds. Our class has 11 children and 2 teachers. Among our many activities and experiences, we will work on toilet training, as some of us are just new to this skill. Children must be 2 ½ by September 30th.

**Dragonfly Class:** We are 3-4 year olds. Our class has 17 children and 2 teachers. All children need to be toilet trained. Children will be preparing to enter one of our Pre-K classes the following fall.

**Star and Busy Bee Classes:** We are 4-5 year olds. Our class has 17 children and 2 teachers. Children will be preparing to enter kindergarten 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** bunched until 12:15 pm; **Extended Day** until 3:15 pm; and **Longer Day** until 5:45 pm. Families choosing any 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 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 Schedule:

(early arrival 7:30-8:15)

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

### Extended Care Schedule:

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

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

## School Routine Information

### 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. A supply of snacks will be kept on hand at the preschool.

### ***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) to share with each classmate. We ask that you not bring food items due to allergies. Children with summer birthdays can celebrate on their half birthdays if you choose.

### ***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.

### ***Sleeping and nap (for children staying for extended or longer days)***

Children in the Caterpillar and Butterfly classes will be provided with a designated quiet time every day after lunch. Each child will have an individual cot assigned to them. Children can bring a small pillow, blanket and stuffed animal to help them be more comfortable. All items will be sent home weekly to be washed.

Children in the Busy Bee and Dragonfly classes do not have a traditional nap time. Quiet time is provided and items for resting are available if a child is tired. If the needs of the group require a more set nap time parents will be notified and the schedule will be adjusted to accommodate.

### ***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 bringing 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 videotaped for educational and evaluative purposes. These photographs are primarily used for documentation, assessments and to share in

weekly emails. On occasion, the photos or videos will be used on the St. Catharine website and Facebook page, and 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.

### ***Field Trips, Routine Walks, Water Play***

Field trips allow for extensions of classroom learning. St. Catharine Preschool does not have its own transportation so school buses or the Bexley Beat are used when field trips are taken. At times we will have an all school field trip where families take their individual children and we meet at the location. 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.
- 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.
- If families are transporting to the field trip they are not permitted to take other children with them unless they have proper written approval and have met all volunteer requirements.

There will be occasions where the class will take routine walks in the neighborhood. Families will sign a release in the enrollment paperwork and will be notified when walks take place. These walks are within 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.

At times the preschool may provide water play at the preschool which would include sprinklers. No pools will be used with water play. When water play activities are scheduled families will be given advance notice and are required to sign a permission slip. Families will be asked to send in a bathing suit and towel.

## **Calendar**

St. Catharine's Preschool follows the elementary school schedule (some variations may occur). The school closes for all major holidays, a winter break, a spring break, an Easter break and all teacher work days. See the current calendar on our [website](#). This includes closures or early dismissals for inclement weather or other emergencies. See safety policy for more information.

## **Attendance**

Attendance is recorded by a staff member upon arrival/dismissal of the child. Families must notify us via phone or email no later than 9:00 am, if a child will be absent or late in arriving. A staff member may check in if they have not heard from a family about an absence. During all absences (illness or vacation), expected closures or unforeseen closures tuition is still collected.

## **Staff/Child Ratios**

The staff to child ratio at St. Catharine Preschool is as follows:

|      |               |
|------|---------------|
| 2:11 | Ages 2 ½ to 3 |
| 2:14 | Ages 3 to 4   |

2:17           Ages 4 to 5

The Ohio Department of Education Minimum Standards is:

2:16           Ages 2 ½ to 3

2:24           Ages 3 and 4 (mixed ages)

2:28           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 Licensing Binder at the front desk.

## **Staff**

St. Catharine's preschool staff is made up of lead and assistant teachers. All staff have practical experience working with young children. Lead preschool teachers are educated in the areas of Child Development and Early Childhood Education. All teachers are trained in CPR, First Aid, Communicable Disease, Child Abuse Recognition, and are provided 3 professional development days throughout the school year to stay current with educational teachings.

### ***Background Checks***

Each staff member, including substitutes and volunteers, 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".

### ***Suspected Abuse and Neglect***

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

## **Enrollment**

A child is considered eligible our program if they are at least 2 ½ years of age on or before September 30.. Our 2 ½ class does not need to be toilet trained. All children in our older classes 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. Dates for registration are based on a priority system.

### ***Registration***

Registrations are accepted online in FACTS during registration dates on a first come first served basis. Registration fees and deposits will be due at the time of registration. Dates and fees will be posted on our website under preschool registration. After completion of registration you will be notified of acceptance or placement on our waitlist. All fees and deposits are non-refundable.

### ***Enrollment***

Upon acceptance families will complete an online enrollment in FACTS. Included in this enrollment are all necessary forms, required documents and financial responsibility. All enrollment pieces are to be completed by the date specified in the notice of acceptance. Failure to do so could forfeit the space.

\*St. Catharine School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. St. Catharine School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

\*St. Catharine will assess children with disabilities on an individual basis to determine if the program is right for their needs. If the child is enrolled, the program will ensure compliance with administering medication or administering care procedures in accordance with the American Disabilities Act.

### ***Forms and Documentation***

The following forms/documents will be due at enrollment

- Preschool Enrollment Form, including authorized pick up list
  - o Note that a child will be unenrolled if a family does not agree to emergency transportation
- Child Medical/Physical Care Form (if applicable) for allergies or health conditions and required medications
- Administration of Medication (if applicable) for medication required to be given at school that is **not** on Medical/Physical Care Plan.
- Birth Certificate- upload into enrollment portal
- Baptismal Record (if applicable) - upload into enrollment portal
- Custodial Records (if applicable)- upload into enrollment portal and explain arrangements on enrollment form

The following forms are due within 30 days of the first day of school

- Medical Statement- must be completed by a physician and include immunization records. Forms are good for 13 months from the date of examination. Care will be provided for children who have not been vaccinated or have exemptions, but a medical statement is still required. The Child will be excluded in the event of an outbreak of vaccine preventable disease. (see health policies for more information)
- Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ)- This developmental screening will be given to families at the parent orientation. The screening should be done with the child and returned to the teachers within 30 days of enrollment.

### ***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. 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 the desired school. All child and staff records are strictly confidential.

## **Tuition and Fees**

### ***Tuition***

All tuition is collected through FACTS Management. Tuition prices are determined in the spring for the following fall. All tuition and fees are listed on our website.

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 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> 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 for payments.

### ***Supply Fee***

A non-refundable supply fee will be collected with tuition to help defray some costs of the consumable materials. The fees are set by the number of days your child will be attending. Rates can be found on the website.

### ***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.

### **Withdraw and Tuition Refund Policy**

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

Families who withdraw during the school year must give a written 30 day notice. Tuition payments made in one large sum will be prorated to the 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 fees and deposits are non-refundable no matter when withdrawal occurs.

## **Arrival and Dismissal Policies**

### ***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 8:00 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 an authorized parent or adult should accompany the child during arrival as well as dismissal.

Some children may arrive at preschool from another program. We ask that families notify us if there are any changes to the transportation schedule. If a child is scheduled to arrive from another program and does not, we will contact the family and if needed contact the other program.

### ***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 adult. Families should park their car on the east side of Gould Rd. to form a pick-up line. Children staying for long day care will be picked up inside the building and must be picked up no later than 5:45 p.m. The adult picking up must make contact with the staff person to ensure they know the child is leaving.

### **Authorized Pick-up List**

Children will only be released to adults who are on the pick-up list. Should you have a change in pick up and need an adult who is not on the list to pick up, please notify the preschool office in writing including the authorized name of who is picking up that day. Any adult who has not previously been introduced to the staff dismissing the student will be required to provide a picture ID before leaving with the child.

\* Note that any person named on the pick-up list will be authorized to pick up at any time, even without notice from the parent/guardian.

### **Custody Agreements**

Parents are required to submit a certified copy of any court order or decree relative to custody and/or residence of a child. Parents have the obligation to inform the school immediately any time the custody of a child changes. School officials will need to make a copy of the court ordered document for the child's permanent record. Both the custodial and non-custodial parent are entitled access to their child's records and can arrange conferences with the teacher, unless the court has ruled otherwise. However, the noncustodial parent may not visit the child at school or remove the child from the premises without the expressed written and verbal permission of the custodial parent. Step-parents have no legal rights to records, reports, or conferences unless permission is received from the custodial parent.

In the absence of a court order directing the administration to perform a given act, or in the absence of direction from proper authorities, the administration declines involvement in matters regarding custodial rights.

## **Parent 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 with the classroom

- 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
- Volunteer with Home and School Association, School Advisory Board or other school events

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).

## **Parent Communication**

Communication is critical for building a good relationship between teachers and families. Staff want to create connections with children and the families in their classroom. Communication can happen at arrival or pick-up, via emails, phone or at events. We will do our best to have informal conversations however if it impedes with supervision of the children we may need to set up a time while class is not in session.

Daily and weekly communications between the preschool and families will primarily be done through email. Some communications will also come home in backpacks with the children. A daily schedule and lesson plan will be posted in the classroom for families to review.

### ***Family Directory***

During the enrollment process families are asked if they would like to be included in our school wide family directory called Directory Spot. Directory spot is an app which can be utilized to reach out to other families for playdates, pick up/drop off help, etc. Information about the directory will come out in the fall.

### ***Website and Social Media***

The St. Catharine School website, Facebook page and Instagram page are full of information about the school community. The Preschool website page will include events, calendar, and curriculum information. Pictures/videos of the preschool children may be posted on these platforms but will not include children's names, dates, or information that would identify them. We will respect families' wishes if they choose not to participate and can note that on the enrollment form.

## **Transitions**

A child's transition to school or a new classroom can come with many feelings. To help ease into these new environments we have created the following transition policies.

### **Beginning of the Year:**

Transitions into the preschool or a new classroom are done in the fall at the start of the school year. Teachers will send a welcome letter with pictures of themselves and the classroom to introduce themselves to the children. The preschool will host a Parent Orientation just before the start of the year. The Parent Orientation is done without children for more open dialogue between families and teachers. The families can then take home information or photos about the classroom. The families will create a drawing during the orientation for the child to have on their first day. Each child will attend a gradual entry day, where they will attend preschool with half the class for 2 hours. This allows for the teacher to have more one-on one time to introduce the classroom to the children.

We realize each child's transition to preschool is unique so arrangements can be made to allow for a more gradual entry or more one on one introduction to the classroom. We will work with the family and 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.

### ***Preschool to Kindergarten:***

For children moving on to kindergarten, teachers will provide opportunities to learn about the differences between preschool and elementary school. Opportunities may include visiting our elementary school to see the classrooms, having a practice lunch in the lunch room, visiting the elementary school library/gymnasium, or walking the hallway and hearing the school bell ring. Since not all preschool children go to St. Catharine for kindergarten we will suggest a visit to their kindergarten too.

For families, teachers will discuss transition to kindergarten at the spring conference. Transition goals will be created. Teachers will provide resources to support families in working on these goals.

## **Guidance and Discipline Policy**

At St. Catharine's Preschool, we believe the goal of all disciplines is to guide children towards self-discipline. Self-discipline enables children to function independently and in a manner that respects each other and the 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. Since we will view discipline as guidance, not punishment, cruel, harsh or demeaning actions are not acceptable practices. Discipline will be fair, immediate and consistent. Any unsafe or unacceptable behavior/action will be met with a calm redirection or guided problem solving skill.

The following are some examples of positive guidance techniques which may 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
- redirect to another activity/group of peers
- explain reasons behind expectations
- allow for time in a quiet space in the classroom
- be consistent
- calmly stop a child from any activity that may endanger the child or other children, removing the child temporarily from the classroom to keep everyone safe may happen

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.

Many behaviors can be age appropriate or part of natural development but should we find that a child's behavior becomes excessive or unusual we will follow the Further Assessment or Behavior Assessment Policy, which is outlined in the Assessment section of the handbook.

## **Child Assessment**

The Early Learning Assessment (ELA), along with the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), will be utilized to assess all children enrolled at St. Catharine Preschool. Child assessment is an important part of building a successful classroom experience for the individual child and the class as a whole. Assessments guide teachers in curriculum planning, to expand and extend a children's interests, to evaluate where children are developmentally, and to create plans to increase development. Results of assessments are shared with families.

### **Screening**

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire Screening (ASQ) tool is used at St. Catharine. All children must have a screening completed within the first 60 days of enrollment. This screening is completed by families. Classroom teachers may use the ASQ if a delay in development is observed. The results of this screening are shared with families at the fall conference.

### **Assessment**

St. Catharine Preschool uses the Early Learning Assessment system (ELA) as our assessment tool. Using class room observations, input from planned activities and samples from work done in the classroom teachers will complete the ELA. The ELA is an ongoing assessment but will be scored at a minimum of 2 times per year. Results will be used guide conversations about goals during Parent-Teacher conferences.

### **Family Input/Conferences**

Family input is crucial and is a significant part of our assessment process. Upon enrollment families will complete goals for the child. These goals will be incorporated in the classroom planning. During conferences in the fall and spring families will receive results of the ASQ and ELA, along with teacher input about how the child's experiences and development are progressing. Together families and

teachers will create goals for the child. Additional conferences may be scheduled throughout the year to touch base on goals if needed.

### **Further Assessment or Behavior Assessment Policy**

Assessments are used to guide planning and development, at times those observations and assessments show a delay in a developmental area or show signs the child may be having difficulty participating successfully in our program. When these observations are made the process below will be followed.

1. The classroom teacher(s) will observe the child's behavior, record their observation, and document the concerns. The teacher(s) will create some classroom strategies to address the concerns. If necessary the teacher will seek further input from the director and/or the family.
2. If delays or behaviors continue after implementation of strategies, the teacher will arrange for the director to complete observations of the child. The teacher and/or director may complete additional screening tools to gain further information about the child. The new information gathered will be shared with the family and a Child Goal Plan will be created along with a timeline for next steps for the individual child.
3. If more formal action is needed as the delay or behavior continues or intensifies, a formal Child Action Plan will be developed. This plan will outline the actions the staff and family will take to assist the child in progressing through the delay or behavior.
  - a. The Action Plan may include changes to the classroom environment or activities.
  - b. The Action Plan may include increased observations, possibly by using videos, additional observational tools, or outside consultations.
  - c. The Action Plan may include referrals for families to seek additional resources for the child. All resources must be initiated by the family for preschool age children. Staff will support families through the process. Once an Action Plan is created the family has 90 days to seek a referral. A list of resources is also provided at the end of the handbook.

With creating these plans our hope is to work together to help all children be successful in our program. Should there be an instance where delays or behaviors continue/escalate even with continued intervention or if there is a lack of follow through on the part of the family to complete items in the Action Plan, termination of enrollment may be determined. If termination of care is determined families will be notified in writing at a parent meeting. All terminations of enrollment will be reported to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

## **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, per guidance of the Health Department.

### ***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
- COVID-19 until determined by current Health Department guidelines
- 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.

### ***Handwashing procedures***

Handwashing is required by all staff, volunteers, children and families. Proper handwashing procedures are posted by each sink and should be followed every time.

Children and adults should wash their hands:

- Upon arrival for the day or when entering a new classroom
- After diapering or using/assisting with toilet
- After handling or assisting with bodily fluids (runny nose, mucus, etc)
- Before and after serving or eating snacks or lunch
- Before and after playing in sensory items- playdough, water, rice, sand, dirt etc
- After handling pets
- When hands are visibly dirty
- After handling garbage, cleaning, etc.
- Before departure for the day

**Diapering/Soiled underwear procedures**

All diapering and changing of soiled underwear will be done in designated areas (bathroom)

For Caterpillar students still in diapers the following diaper procedures will be followed

- Staff will check for signs that diapers need to be changed at least every two hours when children are awake and change them if wet or soiled.
- A barrier will be placed between the child and the changing surface
- The changing surface will be sanitized after every diaper change and cleaned when visibly soiled
- Children will not be left unattended on a changing table, staff will have a hand on the child at all times if on an elevated surface
- Trash containers holding soiled diapers must have a lid that opens and closes tightly by using a hands free device. A liner must be used and disposed of daily. Trash containers should be cleaned and sanitized at minimum daily.
- Hands of staff and child should be washed after each diaper change

For soiled underwear

- A barrier will be placed between the child and the changing surface
- All soiled items go directly into a bag and are closed tightly
- Child should be cleaned up with barrier in place
- All wipes used should be discarded in a closed, hands free trash container
- Do Not Flush wipes in toilet
- Hands of staff and child should be washed after changing

**Medication Policy**

The Preschool does not wish to dispense medication at school unless it is absolutely necessary.

Examples include inhalers 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 backpacks 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 Medical/Physical Conditions***

St. Catharine's Preschool strives to provide a safe environment for students with life-threatening allergies or medical/physical conditions. The Preschool director and teachers will review all allergy or medical/physical 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 Medical/Physical Care Plan outlining all medications and necessary procedures. This plan will support the staff in the proper precautions and procedures. 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 medical/physical 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.

### ***Serious Illness or Injury Plan***

If your child has any kind of an allergic reaction, is asthmatic or is subject to seizures, please inform the Preschool director prior to the first day of school. If the child has an episode or reaction during school hours procedures outlined in the Care plan will be followed. An incident report will be completed and a copy will be sent home.

If a child is hurt while attending Preschool and requires first aid or any emergency treatment, an incident report will be completed and a copy will be sent home. If an injury to the head occurs families will also be notified with a phone call, this includes a bump, scrape or bite. With all head injuries or hard falls the child should be monitored for concussions.

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. If a Care Plan is on file procedures will be followed. 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 cannot 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 maintains 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.

## **Safety Policy**

Safety is our number one responsibility when caring for children. In addition to many of the above policies we also follow the following supervision and safety guidelines.

- Children will be supervised at all times and will never be left alone.
- A child will stay in the room at all times unless with a teacher or until a parent or designated person has arrived to pick him/her up.
- All staff are fingerprinted at the start of employment and every 5 years after. All teachers are trained in CPR, First Aid, Communicable Disease and Child Abuse Recognition, along with yearly trainings in child development.
- All spaces used by children and staff have posted evacuation maps, emergency weather, lockdown, evacuation and hazard plans. These plans are reviewed yearly (more information in Emergency Procedure section of the handbook)
- Staff and children participate in fire, tornado, and other emergency drills throughout the school year.
- All doors of the Preschool building are locked at all times. A camera door bell system allows the preschool to view, communicate, and open the doors of the building. All visitors will sign in and wear a pass in the building.
- 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.

## **Emergency policies**

### ***Notification of school closure***

School closings or early dismissals due to weather or other emergencies will be reported on all school social media platforms and television stations; it will show school is canceled for the Catholic Diocese. An email and text also will be sent to all families notifying them of the cancellation. Canceling schools due to inclement weather or other emergencies 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.

### ***Shelter in place or Lockdown***

In the event of an emergency that would necessitate a shelter in place or lockdown the staff and children will stay in the classroom. Staff will be directed to follow procedures, including locking all doors, closing all windows and moving children to a safe spot in the classroom. If deemed a true emergency 911 will be called. If necessary staff and children will be evacuated to a secure location.

### ***Evacuation***

In the event of a fire, flood, gas leak or any other emergency requiring evacuation, staff and children will leave the building immediately. After an official head count at our meeting location in front of the church, staff will follow guidance issued from local authorities on next steps. If we are unable to return to the building we will move to our designated location of the Church Rectory. If evacuation from the school campus is necessary staff and students will be moved to Cassingham Elementary.

### ***Communication and Reunification***

When all children and staff are safe in the secure location family members will be notified. At that time a plan for next steps will be communicated. Note that communication may feel delayed but that is only because we are in the process of making sure everyone is safe. Children will stay with staff at the secure location until it is determined by authorities that it is safe to return to the preschool or dismiss to family members. Family members should not attempt to enter the secure spot until they are directed to do so. A dismissal spot will be determined and every child will be checked out individually to allow for staff to ensure all children are accounted for.

## **General Information**

### ***Inspections***

St. Catharine Preschool is subject to licensing, fire and building inspections. All entities are granted access to inspect compliance with state regulations regarding all aspects of program operations. Copies of the reports and inspections are available in the preschool office.

### ***Questions and Concerns: Grievance Procedure***

Parents are encouraged to contact the school with any questions or concerns they have in regards to their child. The first phone call should be to the direct party to see if things can be resolved. If you are not satisfied, then you are asked to contact the preschool director or school principal who will sit with the parent and the direct party 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 the handbook acknowledgement portion on enrollment form or in FACTS.*

# St. Catharine Preschool Family Resource Page

## School District Information

**Columbus City Schools** <https://www.ccsch.us/>

270 East State Street, Columbus Ohio 43215

614-365-5000

**Bexley City Schools** <https://www.bexleyschools.org/>

348 S. Cassingham Road, Bexley Ohio 43209

614-231-7611

## Resources

**Columbus Speech and Hearing** [www.columbusspeech.org](http://www.columbusspeech.org)

510 E. North Broadway, Columbus Ohio 43214

**Nationwide Children's Hospital** [www.nationwidechildrens.org](http://www.nationwidechildrens.org)

Behavior Clinic- 614-222-1999

Speech Therapy- 614-722-2200

Child Development Center- 614-355-7500

**Playful Therapies, LLC**

3140 E. Broad St. Suite 101, Columbus Ohio 43209

614-231-9495

**Spirit of Peace Clinical Counseling** [www.spiritofpeaceclinicalcounseling.com](http://www.spiritofpeaceclinicalcounseling.com)

614-442-7650

## Community Services for Families and Children

**Bexley Public Library** [www.bexleylibrary.org](http://www.bexleylibrary.org)

2411 Main Street, Bexley Ohio 43209

614-231-2793

**Bexley Parks and Recreation**- Offers programs for children and adults, including summer camps

[www.bexley.org/recreation-parks](http://www.bexley.org/recreation-parks)

**Action for Children**- Offers referrals for child care, parenting resources [www.actionforchildren.org](http://www.actionforchildren.org)

78 Jefferson Ave, Columbus Ohio 43224

**OSU Total Health and Wellness**

<https://nursing.osu.edu/offices-and-initiatives/primary-care-leadership/total-health-and-wellness-ohio-state-east-hospital>

**Heart of Ohio Family Health Centers** <https://heartofohiofamilyhealth.org/>

882 Hamilton Road, Columbus Ohio 43213

614-235-5555

**Columbus Public Health**- Offers low cost health services, immunizations and dental services

[www.columbus.gov/publichealth](http://www.columbus.gov/publichealth)