



Handbook 2023-2024

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND **EXPECTATIONS**

At the Baptism of their child, Catholic parents/guardians made a solemn commitment to God to bring their child up in the knowledge and practice of faith. Historically, to assist parents in fulfilling their commitment, parishes have often established schools to supplement the work of parents/guardians and pastors.

A Catholic diocesan regional school finds its justification in the great mission of the Church to spread knowledge and faith in God and His Son, Jesus Christ. Such a school is based on an educational philosophy in which faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony. Through the school community, students, staff, and parents/guardians evangelize, educate, and contribute to the formation of a healthy and morally sound lifestyle among community members.

St. Mary School was founded by and is supported by the Bishop of Sacramento in order to provide the children of local Catholic parishes without a parish school with an education rooted in Catholic religious faith and practice.

Practicing, supportive, and active members are those who give support to their children by regularly attending services at their local parish church, by living their lives according to Catholic teaching, by contributing to the general work of their parish through regular weekly contributions, and by taking an active part in the works of their parish.

MISSION STATEMENT

As a ministry of St. Mary Parish, guided by the life of Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother, we provide a safe loving environment that fosters wonder, surprise, and exploration. We express our Catholic Faith throughout the day by teaching and role modeling virtues.

PRESCHOOL

The preschool staff is carefully selected for their educational training in Early Childhood Development and their ability to meet the individual needs of your child with sensitivity, responsibility, and professionalism. The staff is accountable to the preschool Director. The Director is accountable to the Principal of St. Mary School

We offer a variety of developmentally appropriate choices throughout the day involving sensory materials, manipulative, music, books, dramatic play, religion, as well as indoor and outdoor gross and fine motor skill activities. We believe that children learn to interact with each other and the world through play. Through play they explore their environment, experience cause and effect relationships, form thought, and explore their world by making decisions. As inquisitive learners, children will naturally learn important academic lessons while engaging in cooperative play.

Philosophy

Our goal is to provide a safe and stimulating environment that fosters wonder, surprise and speculation. We encourage children to explore and interact in their environment. We provide the foundation for successful achievement in learning by developing an excitement and enthusiasm for learning through self-confidence. Socialization skills, such as listening and being listened to,

interacting with other children, treating others with respect, sharing, taking turns and expressing their feelings verbally are very important and will be developed. Expressing our Catholic Faith through role modeling and daily activities will give an introduction to a faith-based environment.

Admission Policy

The preschool admits children of any sex, race, color, national ethnic origin, or religious beliefs, which are between the ages of three and four and must be potty trained. Enrollment will be based upon the date the enrollment package is received with the registration fee. The availability of space in the classroom and the ability of the preschool to match the needs of the parents will also be considered. Families are invited to tour our campus and meet the Director and Principal. When the family and the school is a good fit, students will be invited to enroll. All enrollment forms and health certificates must be completed and reviewed prior to your child's first day. No child will be admitted without proof of immunizations on file in our office.

Hours of Operation

The Preschool opens at 7:00 a.m. and closes at 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Preschool is open year round except the following holidays (when applicable): New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, President's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Break, Christmas Break and Easter Break. The Preschool also closes at 12:30 on the first Friday of the month for deep cleaning the classroom. There are times when the Preschool will close for in-service training or other professional growth opportunities. These dates will be announced early enough for families to make other arrangements.

Description of Basic Services

We will provide a safe and stimulating environment that fosters wonder, surprise and speculation. We encourage children to explore and interact in their environment. We provide the foundation for successful achievement in learning by developing an excitement and enthusiasm for learning. Please see "Hours of Operation" for a complete list of closure dates and hours.

Religious Development

The preschool will encourage the spiritual growth of the children through Bible stories, religious songs, celebrating Religious holidays, prayers, modeling virtues and a general respect for one's neighbor.

Field Trips and Special Events

The preschool does not participate in off-site field trips. The preschool will schedule library visits, music class and on-site activities. Monthly events will be posted on the preschool's newsletter. Some events may include: Visit from Santa, Halloween Celebration, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Feast, Grandparent's Day, Valentine Exchange, Mother's Day and Father's Day Celebrations and special guest visits.

Seasonal and religious holidays will be celebrated at the preschool. Parents may send treats to the preschool for holidays and birthdays. Preschool is a peanut free zone, please make sure treats brought for the class from home are nut free. Also, let your child's teacher know in advance that you will be sending a treat. Any type of written correspondence must be given to a preschool staff member or emailed to the Director.

Transportation

The preschool does not provide any type of transportation.

Food Service and Nutrition

Two healthy snacks are provided daily, morning snack is served at 9:30 and afternoon snack is served at 2:45. Children enrolled in the half day program will receive morning snack, children enrolled in the school day or full time program will receive both a morning and afternoon snack. Parents will be provided with a monthly menu.

The preschool does not provide lunch. Children need to bring a lunch from home or purchase lunch monthly through the St. Mary School hot lunch program. The washing of hands will be done on a regular basis including arriving at school, after using the restroom and before all meals.

Optional Services

Preschool students have the option to purchase hot lunch daily through our hot lunch program. Rates for hot lunch are included in the menus that go home monthly. Please read the menu carefully for days lunch are offered.

Modification Conditions

Parents will be notified at least 30 days in advance of rate changes. In addition to the noted holidays, it may be necessary to be closed for staff in-service days which are subject to change. The staff will provide at least two weeks' notice of these days as they may

occur. Notice will be provided via written notification sent home, email, posted notices, etc.

Quiet/Nap Time

Every afternoon from 12:30-2:00 the preschool has a quiet rest time. The preschool provides a resting cot for each child. Children need to bring a bag with a crib sheet, small blanket, and stuffed animal from home to be used at rest time. All blankets and stuffed animals will be stored in a cupboard daily and sent home on Fridays for laundering.

Illness

We inspect for signs of illness at the time of arrival. Your child may not attend preschool if they have a fever over 99.6, excessive nasal discharge, unidentified rash, and discharge from the eye (pink eye), vomiting, or diarrhea. He or she may not return until they have been symptom free for at least 24 hours or are on an antibiotic for 24 hours. If a child becomes ill during the day, a parent or guardian will be notified immediately, and asked to pick up the child at once. The child will be placed in isolation until the parent or guardian arrives. For the protection of all children, your child must be kept at home if he or she shows any of the symptoms listed on the Wellness Policy. The following contagious diseases or conditions are not allowed at the preschool: Strep throat, pinworms, viral infections, measles, mumps, chicken pox, conjunctivitis (pink eye), fevers or head lice. The above diseases may need a note from the doctor before returning to school.

Medication

The preschool staff will administer emergency medication (ie: epi pen or inhaler) and prescription medications only. All medications

must be in the original container with the child's name and dosing information. Parents/representatives will have to complete a "permission to administer medication form". The preschool staff will not administer analgesics (fever reducers such as Motrin or Tylenol), cold or flu medication. Any other medications will be administered at the discretion of the Director.

Medical or Dental Emergency

The preschool will have on the premises at all times a staff member fully qualified in Pediatric First Aid and CPR. If your child is injured at school we will administer first aid as needed. If the injury is more severe than a small scrape, bump or cut we will notify the parent or other emergency contact. If deemed necessary, we will call 911 for immediate assistance.

Sign In/Out Policy

Preschool students must be signed in and out daily in the preschool log by their parent or authorized representative. A time and a full legal signature are required.

Emergency Information

At least one of the persons listed on the Identification and Emergency Information form must be able to be immediately contacted and able to pick up the child within one hour of notification in case of emergency or illness. In the event of an accident or medical emergency, attempt will be made to reach the child's physician and the physician's advice will be taken. If this or immediate medical attention is required it will be provided at the parents' expense. Permission to discuss the child's condition and or medical history under these circumstances or for required medical attention is granted as part of the agreement signed upon registration.

Immunizations

Parents/Guardians must provide proof of up-to-date immunizations before their child begins preschool. The Physician's Report (Lic. 701) must be completed and returned to the preschool within thirty days of the child's starting date.

Late Policy for Parents Picking Up Children After 6:00 PM

Time is based on the preschool's clock. You are considered late after 6:00 pm. If pick up is after 6:00 pm, parents will be charged \$1.00 per minute starting at 6:00 pm. Parents will pay the fee through the FACTS account. After three instances of late pickup after 6:00 pm, parents will meet with the Director and develop a plan for pickup.

Discipline Policy

Positive reinforcement of good behavior is our goal; there are times where redirection of a child to another area or activity will be called for. Under no circumstances will there ever be any form of corporal punishment used or a violation of the child's personal rights.

Teachers will contact parents regarding disciplinary issues that are not able to be addressed during the program. Children will always be encouraged to talk about their problems and try to come up with solutions to manage or solve them. When a child's actions become too serious or uncontrolled, a child risks injuring themselves or others. At this time, a conference will be called with parents.

Parent Conferences and Communication

Informal observations are conducted on a regular basis, in class by the Preschool Director and School Principal. Parents are encouraged to talk to the staff about questions and concerns. Private conferences may be arranged by calling the preschool to schedule an appointment in advance. Teachers or the Director are in a position to see the total picture at school and can often clarify matters. Parents should schedule appointments with the teacher and should not expect an "on the spot" conference when teachers are in the middle of class. The teacher's attention must be on the children. A request for an appointment may be made by either sending a note to the teacher, or contacting the Director. The teacher or Director will schedule a conference with you as soon as possible. To ensure the privacy of our staff, personal telephone numbers or email addresses are not given out.

Teachers will contact parents regarding disciplinary issues that are not able to be addressed during the program. Children will always be encouraged to talk about their problems and try to come up with solutions to manage or solve them. If a child's actions become too serious, uncontrollable, or if a child risks injuring themselves or others, the parents/guardians will be called for an immediate conference.

Parents must provide at least a two week written notice to withdraw from the program.

Photographs

Photographs and/or recording of children participating in school activities may be taken from time to time and may appear in publicity/marketing materials. Permission for your child to be
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included in these photographs or recordings without compensation is hereby granted as part of this agreement unless the Director is notified otherwise.

Clothing/Jewelry

Please send your child in comfortable, easy to dress, washable clothes. When choosing school clothes, please bear in mind safety and your child's desire to be self-sufficient. We encourage all children to strive towards independence and competence. Clothes should be easy to manage such as, pants or shorts with elastic waistbands. Belts and overalls should be avoided. Shoes without tread and support may be dangerous on a playground. High top shoes are very difficult for young children to put on or take off by themselves. All sandals must be athletic in nature, as in Keeds or something similar. Jewelry is not permitted for safety reasons. Girls with pierced ears may wear posts only.

Please remember that children are taken outdoors to play daily (weather permitting) and should be properly dressed for weather conditions. Please do not ask staff to keep your child indoors. This creates a hardship for adequate supervision and the child may feel as though he or she is being punished. In the summer, swimsuits and towels may be brought on "water play days." Water play, sand play and occasional bathroom accidents necessitate that an extra change of clothes be kept at the preschool at all times. If soiled clothing is sent home, please return a replacement set of clothing for your child.

Items from home

It is requested that children NOT bring toys or games from home. Often these items are very personal and important, so the child feels they must be defended and protected. This is not consistent with the "sharing" atmosphere encouraged in our large family

environment. Books are not included in this and may be brought to preschool at any time.

ALL ITEMS FROM HOME MUST BE LABELED WITH THE CHILD'S NAME. THIS INCLUDES BACKPACKS, WATER BOTTLES, LUNCHBOXES, NAP ITEMS, AND EXTRA CLOTHES.

Developmental Screenings

The first five years of your child's life are very important. A young child's brain is developing faster during these early years than any other time in their lives. We work hard at St. Mary School to make sure your child is safe, happy and loved. We also want to make sure we provide activities and materials to help your child grow and learn. You know your child best. To make sure we meet your child's individual needs, we would like your help getting to know them better. We utilize assessments to help determine what we should be focusing on for your child's individual development. If at anytime you would like to discuss your child's development, you can ask for a meeting with the teachers and/or Director.

Daily Schedule for Preschool:

7:00-8:40	Arrival, wash hands, free choice activities
8:40-9:00	Clean-up, morning prayer, 2 group split
9:00-9:30	Small group activities, science, art, religion, and/or circle
9:30-10:00	Bathroom, Handwashing, Prayer, and snack
10:00-11:30	Small group activities, math, fine motors, and/or outside play
11:30-12:30	Clean-up, handwashing, prayer, lunch, bathroom, handwashing
12:30	Half-day children pick-up
12:30-2:00	Quiet/rest time
2:00-3:00	Wake up, bathroom, handwashing, snack
3:00	School day children pick-up
3:00-4:00	Outdoor play, large group activity
4:00-4:45	Clean up, handwashing, story time
4:45-6:00	Free choice activities
6:00	Preschool closed



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