

St. Joseph School

PreK-4 Handbook



Mission Statement

The mission of St. Joseph School is to provide the highest quality of spiritual and academic education in order to meet life's challenges by developing integrity, respectfulness and resourcefulness in a faith filled environment

PHILOSOPHY

As Catholic early childhood educators, we minister the whole child – MIND, HEART, AND HANDS. In trusting Christian environments we enable the child to grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, physically, and intellectually. Awakening the child's innate desire to learn, we foster creativity and excitement about learning by facilitating a stimulating atmosphere. Understanding their uniqueness in personality and differences in learning styles creates opportunities to discover, explore, question, and succeed, thus providing the proper atmosphere which enables the child freedom of choice. **ABOVE ALL**, our setting nurtures the child's spiritual relationship with God and self and develops a caring attitude for others.

GOALS

FACILITATE opportunities in spiritual, physical, social, cognitive and language development.

INITIATE an atmosphere where children appreciate a quiet time preparing them to begin a friendship with God.

GENERATE the value of life in the early learner.

NURTURE a warm caring environment that develops self-esteem and a positive attitude toward learning.

CONTENT OF PROGRAM – DEVELOPMENTAL

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Experience God through:

Religious Activities

Literature

Prayer

Music

Art

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Learn to play with others through:

Cooperative Interactions (Large & Small Group Activities)

Sharing Experiences

Organized Games

Dramatic Play

Free Play

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Love to learn through:

Introduction to Numbers and Letters

Pre-reading Activities

Manipulative Math Experiences

Story Time and Listening Activities

Cooking Activities
Science Discovery
Problem Solving
Computer Programs & Exploration

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Develop language through:
Reading, Listening and Speaking
Finger Plays and Poems
Show and Tell
Role Playing
Songs

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Develop body through:
Table, Sand and Water Activities
Large Motor Activities
Small Motor Activities
Creative Movement & Dancing
Block and Art Activities
Physical Education Class

REGISTRATION AND TUITION

Registration is held in January beginning with currently enrolled students who will be returning in the Fall. Registration will then be open to the public. Applications and medical forms are available at the school office. The following guidelines will be followed:

1. A child must be three years old by **October 15** for PreK-3 enrollment and four years old by **October 15** for PreK-4.
2. A \$50.00 registration fee along with \$100.00 deposit will be charged per family. If a student is accepted, the fee is non-refundable. If a student is not accepted, the fee will be returned by mail with a letter of non-acceptance.
3. Students will be accepted in the following order:
 - a. Those who are participating members of the parish and have siblings already attending St. Joseph School.
 - b. Open to all students.

All students will be required to have a physical examination by their pediatrician before entrance. Children cannot begin class unless a current medical form reflecting mandated immunizations is on file. Questions regarding these mandates can be answered by our Health Aide. For the health and safety of his/her classmates, this policy will be **STRICTLY** enforced.

Tuition will be handled by selecting one of three payment options:

1. Single payment due July 1 – CASH OR CHECK ONLY payable to St. Joseph School
2. Monthly payment plan through SMART Program – \$50, processing fee – monthly SMART payments based on 10 payments beginning in July

PRE-SCHOOL SCHOOL TIME SCHEDULE

Monday - Friday AM students 7:50am - 12:30pm
Monday Tuesday, Thursday, Friday All-Day students 7:50am - 2:20pm
Wednesday All Day students 7:50am - 1:55pm

ARRIVAL, DISMISSAL AND PARKING

ARRIVAL: We are asking parents to walk their child to the back of the school and drop them off around 7:50am. We will have a small area designated just for preschool students. At this time one of the preschool teachers will be there and we ask that you to say a quick good-bye. Once the teacher is there, it is not necessary for you to stay. We will proceed into the building following all the other grades, promptly at 7:55am. If for any reason you are unable to be there for 7:55am, please enter through the front

of the building because the rear doors are locked as soon as the last student enters the school.

We stress the importance of dropping off children on time so they do not miss out on Prayer, Morning Work and Circle Time Opportunities. There will be no early admittance into the classroom unless your child is in Before Care.

DISMISSAL: Since school doors remain locked for safety reasons, we will not open doors until dismissal time, so it is unnecessary to arrive any earlier. PreK-4 AM parents are asked to pick up children promptly at 12:30PM at the school's FRONT door. Please wait on lower landing and teacher will dismiss from upper landing. PreK-4 ALL DAY students will be dismissed at 2:20 PM each day at the back middle door by the dumpster, excluding Wednesdays (when they are dismissed at 1:55pm).

IMPORTANT: No child will be allowed to leave the school with anyone except for parents and people listed on your car pool forms. Please call the office if there is an emergency and someone else, other than those people listed on the dismissal form, is picking up your child on that particular day. We will ask for their ID upon arrival.

PARKING AT ARRIVAL AND PICK UP TIME

ARRIVAL: Please use the parking lot across the street from the school yard or the street near the Church. **No parking is allowed in school yard** for safety purposes. Buses do drop off in school yard, so please do not allow your child to run across the school yard to our waiting area.

DISMISSAL: Please use the parking lot across the street from the school yard or street near the Church. If the school yard gates are open you may enter only through that half of the school yard. Cones should be up dividing the area where the children wait and the cars park. Pre-K parents are asked to dismiss out of parking lot promptly if they are not waiting for older siblings to make room for Elementary parents. Parking is tight. Please **DO NOT** enter or depart via back driveway by rectory as this is where children are.

BEHAVIOR POLICY

Be KIND
Be RESPECTFUL
Be RESPONSIBLE

REDIRECTION

Redirection is a tool for me to help each child gain confidence in themselves and in their classroom community. Redirection and assistance with coping skills down to their level is a method I find reaches most children in the typical situations that arise in a preschool classroom. I do not have prolonged conversations. I do not give choices. What I redirect is what I expect. The child may or may not be happy about the redirection. Being

redirected is not about being “in trouble.” It is about learning expectations, routines and respect. If your child comes home and says my teacher told me I couldn’t play in blocks, please do not assume they are in trouble. Feel free to ask me at any time to clarify classroom happenings.

REST AREA

This is not a time-out chair. Rather it is an area of the classroom in which I may redirect a child to go to if I feel they need a break from peer play or from whatever is happening that is causing them to repeatedly stray from expectations. In this area, they may be able to play, build, draw or rest. This is not also not to be considered an “in trouble” area. Instead, it is a place for the overstimulating or frustrating situation(s) they were just a part of to become calming and relaxing so that they may regain their focus and return to the whole classroom environment.

CONFERENCES

Individual conferences will be held for all children in the PreK 4 program in November. These are goal setting conferences and are meant to show you how your child is doing in academic and social, emotional and developmental growth in the classroom environment. In February, a second parent conference is offered at that time to discuss progress, Kindergarten. The first progress reports are issued at that time.

A parent is free to request a conference at any time if they have special concerns. Parents are asked to make this request in writing. The individual teacher will answer your request as soon as possible. A

teacher may also request a conference with a parent to address any concerns. Progress reports are also issued in early June. Again, parents may request a conference at this time to review the progress report or address concerns. Conferencing **will not be allowed** when dropping off or picking up children. This is disruptive and takes away valuable class time.

DRESS CODE FOR SCHOOL

Dressing your preschooler can be a challenge, but the clothing they wear affects their learning in all they do each day. Pre-K 4 is very busy and I strive to encourage independence almost immediately. For that reason, I ask that children come to school in conservative, manageable PLAY CLOTHES and SNEAKERS every day. This will enable your child to be able to fully participate in the program with greater success. I recommend students refrain from dresses and dressy type clothes for girls and boys. I also ask that children wear clothing they can manage in the bathroom on their own. Dresses, belts and bulky clothes cause unnecessary bathroom accidents. Children independently use glue, scissors, paints and markers daily. They tend to come home on the messy side and you can be sure they are loving it. Additionally, body control is quite a bit more difficult for them to succeed in maintaining focus and participation during lessons when there are outer clothing fixings to play with that cause distraction. Finally, I ask that your child wear sneakers every day for safety and for gross motor activities. I do ask them to sit out of gross motor activities if they do not have sneakers or a sturdy loafer type shoe. I need the children's shoes to allow for the ability to practice walking heel/toe, alternating feet up and down stairs and to be able

to stand on tippy toes properly for balance. No sandals, crocs, boots, or dressy “Mary Janes” please.

WINTER BOOTS / RAIN BOOTS

As the weather gets colder, children may wear rain or winter boots to school, but will need to change into school appropriate sneakers or shoes in back pack. No boots of any kind are to be worn throughout the day.

HATS / GLOVES / MITTENS

Please send your child into school with an extra set of mittens/gloves and a hat. We do try to go outside on cooler days.

SNACKS/LUNCH

School snacks are provided by parents. Nutritious snacks are encouraged (fruit, cheese & crackers, cut up veggies, etc.) **One** or **two** snacks and a drink box or drink in a thermos are sufficient. Because of the possibility of allergies, please talk to your child about only eating their food. We will remind the children at school as well.

Please label all lunch boxes and water bottles with your child’s name!

Students in PreK all-day program will need to come with a lunch as well as morning snack. We recommend using a lunch box for snack and another lunch box for lunch. Hot Lunch and milk can be offered if you are interested. Watch for milk forms and monthly hot lunch forms to be sent out with school notices. **NO GUM OR CANDY IS ALLOWED!**

BACKPACKS

Please send your child to school with a regular sized backpack. We often have lots of lunch boxes, big crafts and rest blankets that take up lots of space!

SHARING

Our sharing days will begin the third week of September. I will send home a reminder.

Children can bring in something from home to share on any **1 day** of the week. I ask that the item they bring in to share corresponds to the Letter of the Week. Be prepared to help your preschooler practice their beginning sounds at home.

Sharing time occurs each day during morning circle meetings. Early in the school year I feel sharing time experiences encourage children to connect home with school and learning. Over time, skills in oral language, social interactions with teachers and peers and their self-confidence surface in such a beautiful way.

Sharing time items will remain in the cubby until sharing time and then return to their backpacks to be brought home.

I look forward to getting to know your child and seeing what your child wishes to share. This activity will be held on a weekly basis. Please record

your child's Sharing Day on your PreK monthly calendars. If your child is absent on his/her Sharing Day, they may bring it on the day they come back to school. Please send in only **one small** item that fits in your child's backpack.

Pre-K EXTRAS

- Please label items sent to school. Ie: backpack, water bottle, lunch boxes, extra clothes etc.
- A short rest time will occur each day for all-day PreK-4 students. All students are required to rest on their mats with a **small blanket**.
- Birthday Party invitations will not be passed out in school unless each child receives one. If not, pass out invitations before or after school. In PreK we want each child to feel included and cared for!
- We ask each family to donate the following items within the first week of school, if you have not already done so:
 - 1 roll of paper towels
 - 1 canister of disinfecting wipes (Lysol or Clorox)
 - 1 bottle of hand sanitizer
 - 1 hand soap
 - 1 container of baby wipes
 - 1 box of tissues

Thank you for your contribution!

EMERGENCY PLANS

ILLNESS AND INJURIES

Please do not send your child to class if you suspect he/she is ill. A child who is sick will be isolated and a parent will be contacted. Please let us know if your child contracts a contagious disease (i.e. chickenpox, conjunctivitis, etc.). Please talk to your child about using tissues when needed.

In case of injury, first aid will be administered by the Health Aide. Parents will be notified of injuries and it will be documented. If necessary, 911 will be called as well as your child's physician. The school principal will also be authorized to transport the child to the hospital.

FIRE

Children will participate in fire drills several times during school sessions. In case of a fire alarm sounding, the children will be led outdoors via the nearest exit. If exiting through a doorway is not possible, the children will exit through the fire window located in the classroom. I will notify you on days we have a fire drill and I ask for your loving words to support our need to care for the children.

LOCK DOWN DRILLS

Children will participate in lock down drills several times during school sessions. We discuss this drill with the children carefully, but fairly honest about its purpose. I will notify you on days we practice this drill and I ask for your loving words to support our need to care for the children.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Weather emergency **no school** days are announced on local morning news channels, and through our School Reach program (which you will be asked to sign up for in your Orientation packet). If Bristol Public Schools cancel classes, the PreK program will be closed as well.

If weather conditions become poor during school, parents are free to come early to pick up their child. If we should have to dismiss school early at any time, an announcement will be made through our School Reach program, and on station WTIC 1080 AM radio. School will remain open until every child is picked up.

A delayed opening of **2 hours** means our morning AM session is cancelled. However, the all-day session will follow the delayed opening schedule.

AFTER CARE

This program begins immediately after regular school hours and ends at 5:30 pm. There is a form in the school office that you must fill out before attending. The fee is listed on the initial sign-up form. Payment is due at the end of the week. There is no aftercare when there is an early dismissal due to inclement weather, conferences, or before a holiday.

Only all-day PreK students may attend the after school program if he/she is socially/emotionally ready to attend an all-day session. The after school teachers will determine this within the first few weeks of the program.

BEFORE CARE

The teacher arrives at school by 7:00am each morning to provide before care services to working parents. Fees are collected at the end of each week. For safety reason, the doors of the school will be locked, so the teacher will meet you at the back door. The fee schedule is as follows:

1 hour before school- \$10 /day

40 minutes before school- \$7/day

30 minutes before school- \$5/day

PreK-4 DAILY AGENDA

Prayer / Circle Time

- Welcome Song
- Daily Prayer
- Pledge
- Circle Time Activities
- Discussion of Daily Themes and Activities

Small Groups / Center Play

Clean Up / Snack Time

Specials: GYM, ART, MUSIC, LIBRARY

Whole Group Activities

- Exercise and Gross Motor Activities
- Story Time
- Songs, Poems and Finger Plays
- Flannel Board and Magnet Board Activities
- Rhythm Instruments

Afternoon

- Lunch
- Rest time
- Enrichment activities (Art, Computer, and Physical Activities)

Dismissal