



Early Learning Center Handbook

- Preschool
- Enhanced Preschool
- Transitional Kindergarten
- Child Care Before & After School
- Volunteers

543-3460 ext. 37
stmaryschoolcharlotte.org

Mission Statement

Shaping hearts and minds in the service of Christ.

Program Philosophy

Each student is endowed with their own set of God-given gifts and talents. Our certified and dedicated staff members are committed to meet each child's individual needs and help them reach their full potential as learners. Our programs are designed to address the developmental needs of young children. Each child is encouraged to develop their gifts and talents as a whole person; spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs are all part of our curriculum.

We believe:

1. That children have different needs, interests, talents, and develop at different rates.
2. That social, emotional, and physical development are important to the growth and well-being of the whole child just as intellectual development.
3. Children learn best when there is a planned, multi-cultural, non-sexist, developmentally age appropriate curriculum.
4. That children learn and develop by discovering through direct experience, how the world works.
5. That the program environment should be safe, affective, warm, and filled with variety.

Our Spiritual Goals:

1. To have Christ as the model of our staff and inspiration to our students.
2. To provide an atmosphere of caring for each individual child, creating a sense of family.
3. To instill a sense of Christian responsibility for our world.
4. To prepare students through religious and academic curriculum to become actively involved in bringing about God's Kingdom on Earth.
5. To guide each student to develop the powers of constructive problem solving, independent reasoning, and acceptance of responsibility.
6. To encourage parents and teachers to share the privilege and responsibility of Christian education by witnessing to the faith we profess.

Parents are the primary role models for their children. Their belief in prayer, worship, and respect for authority will have a strong influence on the faith and moral development of their child. The cooperation and support of teachers, parents, and administrative personnel is essential for the development of our faith community.

Our goal is to promote a healthy child with a positive view of him/her self. For this to happen, development is nurtured for each individual child. Close observation occurs constantly by the teacher, who prepares activities appropriate for each child's developmental timetable. These activities are to:

- Promote **religious development** by offering bible stories, prayers, songs, understanding of religious holidays, and the Christian way of life. We are invited to attend mass on Thursday mornings at 10:30 with the entire school.
- Promote **physical development** by offering large muscle activities (dancing and climbing), small muscle work (blocks, scissors, and crayons), and eye-hand coordination (blocks, stringing beads, painting).
- Promote **sensorial development** by offering opportunities for stimulating the five senses (music, snack foods, colors and play dough) and different mediums in which to work (sand/water table and clay).
- Promote **cognitive (intellectual) development** by offering self-help practical skills, such as dramatic play, centers with the teacher and clean up time. Peer interaction, such as large group and free play times.
- Promote **emotional development** by teachers continuously modeling courteous, respectful, and empathetic behavior and assist children in learning the same.
- Promote **creative development** by offering the use of a variety of art materials, creative movement, vocal and musical experiences.
- Promote **language development** by helping children to grasp the English language, gaining new vocabulary, value reading, and recognize words in print.

Teachers maintain a beautiful environment, showing each child how to care for this environment and how to keep safe and healthy.

Through these experiences in learning about themselves and the world around them, each child develops and learns through the faith and love of Jesus Christ.

Days and Hours of Operation

St. Mary's Preschool, Enhanced Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten programs are available Monday through Friday on the school year calendar, in conjunction with St. Mary School and Charlotte Public Schools. At the start of each school year, a calendar with scheduled closed days, holidays, and all St. Mary events will be given to you. Preschool, Enhanced Preschool, Transitional Kindergarten, and Child Care needs are selected at the time of registration and maintained throughout the school year. Early Learning Center Program students begin their day at 9:00 a.m. and class ends at 11:30 a.m. Child Care is available from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Fog Delays and 2-hour delays – When the district issues a 2-hour delay for the public school system, St. Mary Child Care will be open at the regular time. There are NO Early Learning Center Programs held on days with a 2-hour delay.

Snow Days – St. Mary Child Care will normally be open during “non-school” snow days. Child Care may close for the full day when severe weather conditions are present. There are NO Early Learning Center classes held on snow days. **When the public school district (Charlotte Public Schools) closes their Child Care, our Child Care will close.** Hot lunch is not available on snow days or no school days.

Power Outage – St. Mary's Early Learning Center will be closed due to a power outage. Check our St. Mary's Facebook page or your e-mail.

Watch and listen for Charlotte Public Schools Child Care to be announced on local radio and television stations beginning at 6:00a.m.

Absence Policy – Fees are based on enrollment, not attendance. Parents are responsible for contracted fees even if their child is not in attendance. **This includes absences due to illness.**

Admissions and Registration

- St. Mary's Early Learning Center accepts children from age 2 ½ to 6 years, and completely toilet trained.
- We are open to children of all religious, ethnic, and national backgrounds.
- We are in compliance with all requirements of “The American Disabilities Act,” and do not discriminate based on a child's abilities.
- Class openings are filled on a first-come first-served basis, with a waiting list for the class desired. Vacancies are filled from the waiting list first and then from new applicants that are submitted.

Tuition Rates

Registration Fees – Pre-registration is necessary in all Child Care and Early Learning Center programs. A registration fee of \$50.00 must accompany the initial registration form and is non-refundable.

Enrollment Forms – Enrollment is necessary for both programs. Enrollment is non-discriminatory and is based upon space availability. All fees, registration forms, emergency cards, immunization records, etc. must be submitted to the appropriate office at least 12 business hours (1 day) before your child's first day. All forms must be updated on a yearly basis prior to September 1.

Child Information Forms "Emergency Forms" – Licensing requires that these cards be complete with no blank spaces. Each space must have something written in it – even if it is NONE or UNKNOWN. Please complete both sides of the form and sign giving St. Mary's Early Learning Center permission to obtain emergency medical care. The following is taken from the licensing handbook: *If the information is not known or does not apply "unknown" or "none" is the required response. A blank field, a line through a field, or "N/A" are not acceptable responses. Exception: If unknown is listed in one field, subsequent related fields can be left blank. For example, if the address of the child's father/mother is listed as unknown, the city, state, and zip code fields can be left blank.* Emergency forms must be updated annually or when changes occur.

Custody Situations – The custodial parent/guardian must be the person to complete the registration forms and emergency form. In cases where the non-custodial parent is not allowed to have contact with/pick-up the child, the center will need a copy of the legal document (custody agreement, divorce decree, guardianship papers, or restraining order). St. Mary's Early Learning Center must be notified in writing of any changes in custody arrangements. Parents/guardians who enroll their children are responsible for all payments unless previous arrangements have been made.

Release of Information – We do not give out information on any child unless we have a court order giving us direction to do so or with the enrolling parent's/guardian's written consent. An exception would be Child Protective Services, we are mindful of all state and federal statutes that relate to child privacy (FERPA).

Health Forms – All children are required to have a current health appraisal completed and signed by a licensed physician; along with a copy of the immunization record on file with St. Mary's Early Learning Center. The health appraisal is required within the first 30 days of attendance. It must be completed every two years. The immunization record is required before the child can attend and the child's immunizations must be up-to-date within 4 months of first attendance.

Returned Check – A return check charge of \$30.00 will be assessed for any check returned to us by the bank. The amount of the NSF check and the \$30.00 must be paid in cash. If any additional checks are returned, all payments must be paid in cash or money order.

Child Care Arrival and Departure

A great way to communicate with your child's teacher is during arrivals and departures.

1. An adult **MUST** accompany the child into the building. An adult (**not the child**) must sign him/her in and depart only when the child is in the classroom and has been greeted by a staff member.
2. Dismissal occurs at the end of your child's day. An adult (**not the child**) arriving to pick up children must sign the child out, pick up belongings, and check for any announcements.
3. **Children are released ONLY to parents or persons authorized IN WRITING on the child information form, and signed by parent.** Siblings, relatives, or friends also must be listed on the child information form before they can pick up the child. To authorize an adult to pick up the child who is NOT on the information card, the parent must come to St. Mary's Child Care in person or call and let the teacher or staff member know. Adults who are on the information card and are picking up your child, please inform them that an ID card may be requested if the staff is not familiar with them. It also helps if you are able to inform us ahead of time that a person who is listed on the information form is picking up your child. We will check to make sure that this is the person you authorized when they arrive to pick up your child. **We cannot, by law, refuse to release a child to a non-custodial parent without a court document on file stating the child is not to be released.**
4. Minors (under 18) that arrive to pick up a child must be authorized in writing on the child information form as stated above. They also may be requested to have an ID card. Parents who allow the release of their child to a minor accept full responsibility for the safety and welfare of their child upon the child's release from the building.
5. The sign-in and sign-out paper is located in the Preschool room.
6. **The Child Care classroom closes at 6:00 p.m. and all children need to be picked up by this time. If you are late in picking up your child, you will be charged \$10.00 for every 15 minutes. Example: From 6:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. is \$10.00, from 6:15 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. is another \$10.00, etc. This is to be paid directly to the staff member who is caring for your child when you child is picked up. Our staff members are on a time clock and do not get paid after 6:00 p.m. They also make appointments, have plans after work, and have families waiting for them. Please be considerate. If you know**

you are going to be late, please make arrangements for someone else to pick up your child or call so we do not worry. Remember, your child worries too.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS NOT BEEN PICKED UP ONE HOUR AFTER CHILD CARE HAS CLOSED, YOUR CHILD WILL BE CONSIDERED ABANDONED. WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO CONTACT CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES.

IF THERE IS ANY SUSPICION OF ILLEGAL DRUG OR ALCOHOL USE WHEN A PARENT/GUARDIAN OR APPOINTED PICK-UP IS PICKING UP A CHILD, THE PROPER AUTHORITIES WILL BE NOTIFIED.

Parking

If you are picking your child up at 11:30 after their Preschool Program, please park on St. Mary Boulevard. The first car in line should pull all the way up to the Church mailbox. To be courteous to the other parents, **each car after that should park directly behind the last car in line**. Please do not park after the maintenance road near the playground. This makes parking easier for all parents/guardians who are picking their child up. It also allows vehicles to turn on the Boulevard without difficulties.

Attendance

Schedules – All parents/guardians are to provide and commit their child/children to a regular schedule. Monthly schedules are set and provided to the Director. Parents/guardians may find it necessary to change their child/children's schedule. We ask that you try to provide at least a week notice in changes. We will make every effort to accommodate these changes; however, licensing regulations require us to maintain staff and room ratios at all times.

Children should be brought in and picked up at their scheduled time, not to be brought in earlier or left later. We staff according to the schedule we receive from the parents. Therefore, we may not have space available for a child not currently scheduled for that time slot, exceptions may be granted rarely and only with prior approval.

Absence Policy – It is important that we know when your child/children will not attend. If your child/children will be absent for any reason, please notify the center or school before 9:00a.m. Fees are based on enrollment, not attendance. Parents are responsible for contracted fees even if their child is not in attendance. This includes absences due to illness.

Withdrawal Procedure – You may withdraw your child/children at any time from St. Mary's Early Learning Center. To withdrawal a child from a Program, notification of two weeks is requested. The center reserves the right to charge one week's tuition for withdrawals made without notice. Preschool enrollment is for the school year. If you should withdraw your

child/children from any program and wish to return, you must complete the enrollment process and pay all registration fees.

Children Illness Policy

State health requirements are strictly adhered to in maintaining a healthy environment for the physical welfare of your child. St. Mary's Early Learning Center does not provide "sick" child care.

Staff will continuously monitor the physical and mental well-being of each child including but not limited to, medical conditions and general discomfort. All staff attends an annual update on communicable diseases and center illness policy.

We follow Health Department recommendations when sending children home or excluding them from our center.

If your child should become ill while in our care, a parent/guardian will be notified immediately. If parents cannot be reached, the staff will call the person designated for emergency notification. Parents or their emergency contact will be expected to pick up their child. *Failure to do so may result in your child's dismissal.*

A child should never be sent to school if he/she has symptoms of illness. **Do not send your child to St. Mary's Early Learning Center if they have any of the following:**

- A temperature of 100 or above
- Vomiting (more than once in a 24 hour period)
- Diarrhea (more than once in a 24 hour period)
- Consistent stomach cramps
- Your child has been on antibiotics less than 24 hours
- Your child has discharge from the eye, with or without redness
- Your child has an unidentifiable rash
- Yellow or green discharge from the nose
- A persistent cough
- An ear ache
- A sore throat
- Chills and body aches
- Your child has a communicable disease
- Your child has head lice

Notification of Illness – For the health and safety of your child and others, communicable diseases must be reported to St. Mary School or Early Learning Center between 7:45a.m. and 9:00a.m. Please call and inform us of the type of illness your child has so that we may inform other parents that their child may have been exposed and so that we may better observe possible symptoms in other children.

When a child is sick and unable to attend their class, the parent should call or email the school/center before 9:00 a.m.

Communicable Disease - If the St. Mary's Learning Center becomes aware that a child in care has contracted a communicable disease, the center shall notify all parents in the affected classroom of the following:

- The name of the communicable disease
- The child may have been exposed
- The symptoms of the disease

Children who have been diagnosed with a communicable disease must be kept out of the center a minimum of twenty-four to forty-eight hours to give the antibiotic time to work.

Health Department recommendations and School Policy will be followed in infectious disease situations.

We submit weekly reports to Barry-Eaton Health Department with information on communicable diseases and other types of illnesses.

Your child may return to school when:

- **Fever** - Your child has been fever free for 24 hours without fever reduction medication
- **Infection** - Your child has been on antibiotics for a minimum of 24 hours
- **Vomiting/Diarrhea** - It has been a minimum of 24 hours since the last episode of vomiting or diarrhea
- **Pink Eye** - Eyes are no longer discharging, or the condition has been treated with an antibiotic for 24 hours
- **Rash** - The rash has subsided or the physician has determined the rash is not contagious
- **Chicken Pox** - It has been a minimum of 5 days from the onset. The sores should be scabbed over.
- **Impetigo** - It has been 24 hours from the start of treatment.
- **Ringworm** – It is under medical treatment from a physician.
- **Lice** – It has been treated and is nit free.

Description of Illnesses

Fever – A child whose temperature is 100 degrees or higher cannot be in the center. The child's temperature must be below 100 degrees for a minimum of twenty-four hours, without the use of fever reducing medication before the child may return to the center.

Vomiting and/or Diarrhea – A child who vomits at the center will be sent home immediately and may not return for a minimum of 24 hours after the vomiting has ended. Children who are experiencing diarrhea should not be brought back to the center until the diarrhea is gone for a

minimum of 24 hours or child is on an antibiotic for a minimum of twenty-four to forty-eight hours. If the child has two loose stools, he/she will be sent home.

Eye Discharge – A child with a discharge from the eyes that is green or yellow may not return to the center until their physician or optometrist has examined them and has found they are not contagious. If we suspect the child has pink eye, we will ask that the child be picked up and brought to the child's physician or optometrist for proper diagnosis.

Open Sores – A child with an open sore on any exposed area of the body that has fluid/discharge seeping from it will be required to keep the area covered until the seeping stops.

Unidentified Rash – A child with a rash on any area of the body may be sent home and not allowed to return until the rash is gone or the child's physician has stated in writing that he/she is not contagious.

Head Lice – We follow the Health Department Guidelines for Head Lice. Children with head lice must be treated and may not return if there are live lice or viable nits.

Medication Policy

Medication shall include prescription, nonprescription and herbal taken by mouth, inhaler, injection, or application (including cough drops, eye drops, creams, Tylenol, etc.). The following procedure will be used when dispensing medication to a child:

- Parents must complete a medication permission form before staff can administer any type of medication. Forms can be obtained from the office.
- Medication forms must be completely filled out by parent or physician and instructions must match those on the medication.
- All medication must be brought to the office in its original container, clearly labeled with the child's name.
- All prescriptions and nonprescription medication must have the child's name, dosage, and directions for dispensing on the container.
- In accordance with State Law, prescription medication must have the original pharmacy label indicating the physician's name, child's name, instructions, and name and strength of the medication (dosage and frequency must be specific) and shall be given in accordance with those instructions.
- Nonprescription medications must be given/applied following the parent's/physician's orders. If the nonprescription medication does not specify a dosage (for example the bottle might say, "Children under 2 years of age consult a physician") a doctor's note must be provided stating the dosage to be given.
- A written record of dosage and time of day will be kept.
- A designated staff member will administer all medication with an adult witness present.
- Parents must transport all medication to and from the center/school.

- All medication will be stored out of reach of children.

Medications are never allowed to be in the possession of your child.

Special Medication Needs – It is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to complete appropriate emergency forms and to make available medical supplies in the office if a child has special medical needs (i.e. allergies, seizures, asthma, bee sting).

Injuries/Serious Illnesses

Injury – Minor injuries such as bumps or scrapes will be treated by a staff member trained in First Aid procedures. Injuries will be cleaned with soap and water, or treated with an ice pack and loving care. Parents will be notified of the accident upon their arrival. Please inform St. Mary’s Early Learning Center if follow-up care is provided by a physician for any injury occurring while in care. The center must provide a verbal report to licensing within 24 hours of an injury requiring outside medical treatment. Ice and band-aides are always available and an updated first aid kit is ready for use when needed.

Serious Injury/Illness/Emergency – In the event of an accident, serious injury, or emergency, parents/guardians will be contacted immediately. If we are unable to reach the parent/guardian, we will contact those listed on the child information form. Emergency services will be contacted and child may be transported with an adult to the hospital of preference listed on the emergency card. The parent/guardian will be responsible for any incurred expenses.

Sudden Illness – If your child becomes ill while at St Mary, we will keep him/her as comfortable as possible and away from the rest of the children. We will call you or the designated number on your child information form. Your child must be picked up within one hour.

For your child’s benefit, please keep the office staff updated on any emergency phone numbers.

Vision and Hearing

Vision and hearing screenings are provided in the fall. Vision will be screened for 1st, 3rd, and 5th graders. Hearing will be screened for Enhanced Preschool, Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, and 4th graders. Follow-ups on all students with known problems are conducted.

School Safety

Requirement/Guidelines – St. Mary’s Early Learning Center follows state and local regulations regarding school buildings and facilities, fire, tornado, and lockdown drills which are conducted on a regular basis. Emergency EXIT ROUTES are posted in each classroom.

If severe weather conditions are present, staff members will tune in to local weather announcements.

In the event of a national emergency, please proceed to your child's classroom as quickly as possible to pick up your child. Emergency information will be provided through local TV and radio stations.

Tornado Watch – Students will be kept in school and dismissed at the regular time.

Tornado Warning – If severe weather conditions are present, staff members will tune in to local weather announcements. If a tornado warning is issued, or local warning siren sound, staff and children will proceed to shelter areas within the building. Students will be kept in a safe area until the ALL CLEAR is received. Students can be released to parents during a tornado warning.

School Safety/Lockdown Drills – For crisis management, we follow a lockdown plan. Children will not be allowed to be dropped off or picked up during a lockdown.

**Silence is always maintained during emergency drills.
Emergency EXIT ROUTES are posted in each classroom.**

Environmental Safety

Building – Our center meets all building, fire safety, and environmental health requirements for licensed care in school buildings or child care centers.

Playground – Not all of the outdoor playground equipment at St. Mary Early Learning Center meets all safety requirements for playground safety established by the State of Michigan child care licensing. However, our center has grade level rules for each piece of equipment. The children at our center are only allowed on the equipment that does meet licensing requirements.

Pest Management – The St. Mary's Early Learning Center addresses pest management through the church custodian. At no time will a child be allowed in a room or space/area that has been treated until a minimum of 4 hours has passed.

School Crisis Plan

St. Mary's Early Learning Center follows the school's crisis plan. It has been developed in partnership with the Charlotte Police Department, to address emergencies such as fires, shootings, accidents, as well as biological, radiological, chemical, and other terrorist activities. (Natural and Man-Made Disasters).

Including Electrical Power Failure, Natural gas or Water main break, and flooding. In case of gas leak at school the students and staff will be sent across street to the Rectory at 812 St.

Mary Blvd. Parents will be notified by email and phone. Watch channel 10 WILX TV for School Closings or delays. Preschool Programs are closed when Charlotte Public Schools are closed. Child Care will be emailed or on news screen.

In accordance with Diocesan policy during a period of heightened state of alert, St. Mary's Early Learning Center along with St. Mary School will institute a locked down condition. During these times be aware that the school doors will be locked. If assistance is needed, or for more information, please call the school office at 543-3460, or the parish offices at 543-4319. No one will be allowed to enter or exit the building at this time. Parents will be notified by phone of relocation area by police or administration after the incident is over.

Programs

Before and After School Care

Before and after school care is a religious, licensed, Child Care program designed to meet the needs of children with working parents. We are available from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Before and After School Child Care will be available from the first day of school until the last day of school in June. CHILDREN MUST BE CHECKED IN AND OUT BY A PARENT OR RESPONSIBLE ADULT. THE ONLY EXCEPTION IS WHEN COMING DIRECTLY FROM OR GOING TO SCHOOL. A member of our staff will check each child in or out during those times.

A large variety of activities will be available which will appeal to children who have been on school all day and are ready for a change of pace. It is important to all of us that we meet the needs of different ages, back grounds, developmental levels, and interest. Freedom of choice will be honored and our caring staff will stay attuned to the needs of individuals. Age grouping will be applied as needed. Some activities may include:

Arts and Crafts/Free Choice – Each child will have a variety of materials to choose from and create whatever they wish. We will change different items or add to them frequently for variety.

Specific Art Projects – Written or oral directions (depending upon age) will be given and materials will be provided for children to make certain craft items. The directions will be general so that each child has freedom and create in their own way.

Quiet Time – There will be a choice of games, puzzles, books, tapes, or manipulative activities during quiet time. The children can also do their homework if they desire.

Free Choice/Outdoor – One or more staff members will be out at the playground while children are there. Balls, hula hoops, sidewalk chalk, etc. are available for the children. Required time of 25 minutes for 3 hours of care.

Custodial Duties – Every child will help to keep our room clean and orderly, this helps give the children a sense of responsibility.

Volunteers – We are looking for volunteers who would like to help our children with a skill or craft. These may include knitting, sewing, pottery, painting, Christmas ornament, etc. The children love it when these volunteers come and help. Please remember to review the volunteer policy.

Snacks – After school, children are given a snack. It is a long time before dinner for many of them. We ask that that families of before and after school child care bring a healthy (pretzels, crackers, cheese sticks, etc.) snack each month (or a Meijer gift card) for at least 24 students.

Items from home – Items from home are not allowed in the child care room. This includes items such as: electronics, cell phones, games, toys, candy, gum, etc.

Please keep these at home.

Before and After School Child Care is different from daily school. Children involved have much freedom, but a great deal of responsibility as well. It is necessary to share space and equipment while working and playing, so that each child is sensitive to the needs and space of others. Everyone is responsible for keeping things running smoothly. Hence we have developed a daily schedule. A familiar routine helps to give the children a sense of security.

We strive to build religious awareness, self-esteem, creativity, and a fun filled atmosphere. Through nurturing, a positive attitude, and a partnership with parents, we help to build healthy, happy, well-adjusted children.

Preschool Program students who stay for Child Care are required to nap/rest during the afternoon for 1 hour. St. Mary's Early Learning Child Care supplies the cots. To meet with State requirements, parents are to bring a toddler-size fitted bed sheet and a toddler-size blanket. The sheet and blanket will be sent home at the end of your child's week for washing.

During the school year, these children may bring a cold sack lunch with drink to school or a hot lunch is available to buy. We feature Reidy's Pizza on Thursdays. Please check the monthly menu for meals and prices.

A sack lunch and drink will be needed for NO SCHOOL days. Hot lunch is not available.

Child Care Calendar – The following days are when Child Care is **CLOSED**:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Break (Only Open Select Days)
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Teacher Service Day
- Spring Break (Only Open Select Days)
- Good Friday

- Memorial Day

All dates may be subject to change at any time.

A yearly calendar will be provided at the beginning of the school year.

Preschool Programs

Preschool – Preschool is from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. It is designed for children between the ages 3 to 5. Children must be potty-trained. This class has optional 3-5 Days a Weeks schedule.

Enhanced Preschool – EP is from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. EP is designed for children between the ages 4 and 5. This program is intended to prepare children for their next school program after preschool, which is appropriate for that individual child.

Transitional Kindergarten – TK is from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. TK is designed for children who are 5 or will be turning 5 during the school year. This program is intended for children who would benefit from another year of growth before entering Kindergarten

Curriculum

Our Preschool Programs emphasize socialization, sharing, and getting along with others in a group through the creative use of activity centers. Each child is encouraged to explore many aspects of their world. Children are exposed to basic shapes, body parts, colors, numbers and letters, prayers, and bible passages in a way that is appropriate to their developmental levels. Listening skills are fostered through music, games, finger plays, and stories. Many art materials are introduced with creativity being more important than the looks of the finished product. We incorporate the Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten, Zoo Phonics curriculum and monthly creative curriculum themes.

Each child will make some decisions about what they will do each day guided by our experienced and caring teachers. Our goal is to make this early school experience a positive and happy one to store in the bank of their memories.

Daily Activities

- Children go outside every day unless inclement weather for at least 25 minute per 3 hours in care.
- Children have time to explore their interests
- Small and large group activities
- Developmentally appropriate language, literacy, math, science, and social studies activities.
- Activities that encourage creativity
- Quiet time or nap time for children in attendance 5 hours or more
- Activities are designed to complement the kindergarten curriculum

Required Items for Preschool Programs

Every child should have at least one complete change of clothing to be kept at school at all times. It is very important should a spill or accident occur. One of each item is needed: underwear, shirt, bottoms, and socks. Please send these items in a shoe box or bag that will fit in their cubby.

Label all of your child's belongings with your child's name or initials. This includes the following items: lunch boxes, water bottle, backpack, extra clothing, outdoor clothing, etc. Many times the children come to school with the exact items bought from the local stores. We will not be able to tell the difference if they are not marked.

Supply List – An updated supply list will be distributed at the beginning of every school year to meet the needs of the teacher.

Snack time - We ask each parent of our Preschool Programs to provide a monthly snack for their class. A snack calendar will be sent home each month.

We ask that the snacks are healthy (fruit, crackers, cheese, yogurt, etc.).

Alternative snacks are available for children that may have allergies or medical problems.

Communication

You will receive newsletters and calendars to help keep you up to date on the themes and activities that we have planned. Hand-outs, notes, phone calls, and e-mails are other ways we can communicate with parents. We welcome and encourage communication with our parents and guardians. Feel free to visit, email or call us at any time.

When picking up your child, please remember to check your child's cubby for written communication. Not only are newsletters and calendars often put in cubbies; information regarding field trips, snack days, special guests, etc. is also printed in cubbies. **Your child may miss out on special events if you do not make it a point to collect and read this information.**

Daily Schedule

- 7:00 a.m. Child Care Opens. Activities such as games, puzzles, and arts and crafts are available for the children before school begins.
- 8:30 a.m. St. Mary School children are dismissed for school.
- 8:45 a.m. Transitional Kindergarten and Enhanced Preschool students are dismissed to their classroom.

- 9:00 a.m. Preschool Programs Begin
- 11:30 a.m. Preschool Programs are dismissed from the class.
 Afternoon Child Care begins.
- 11:45 a.m. Lunch
- 12:15 p.m. Children have recess or free play depending on weather.
- 1:30 p.m. Rest and relaxation begins for 1 hour.
- 2:45 p.m. Snack
- 3:00 p.m. Storytime with Arts and crafts
- 3:45 p.m. St. Mary School children are dismissed from class and begin afternoon Child Care. They have snack, recess, and begin their homework if they wish.
- 6:00 p.m. Child Care Closes.

Field Trips

Field Trips – Field trips are a part of our Preschool Programs. Parents are given permission slips to sign and return, along with detailed information about the field trip and fees. Field trips are scheduled to include all Preschool Programs children. There are two field trips we like to plan for the school year. One is to the Country Mill in the fall and the other is to be announced in the spring. Dean Transportation is to take us to and from our field trip sites.

Chaperones – Parents and guardians are encouraged to attend to help the teachers and classmates on their trips. Volunteers are required to follow our Volunteer policy.

Confidentiality

Any information regarding a child enrolled at St. Mary’s Early Learning Center is highly confidential. Staff members adhere to a strict Code of Ethics that does not allow them to share private or detailed developmental information with any person other than the parent. Parents who observe, or volunteer with the children are expected to uphold this level of confidentiality as well.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Michigan State Child Protection Law requires that school administrators, counselors, teachers, and childcare staff report all incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect to the proper authorities (Child Protective Services). In addition, school employees having reasonable cause to believe that a child is being abused or neglected, shall notify the administrator in charge of the child. Child Protective Services workers may interview students at school/daycare. Staff members are prohibited from contacting parents/guardians in these situations. Staff receive training each year on Michigan’s Child Protective Law. In addition, the preschool programs

either meet or are working towards meeting the Standards of Quality for pre-kindergarten programs approved by the State Board of Education.

As Mandated Reporters we are required to:

- 1.) Make an **IMMEDIATE** verbal report to (855-444-3911) CPS
- 2.) A written report (DHS-3200 form) within 72 hours when the suspected child abuse or neglect is witnessed. The reports will include all the information required under the law.
- 3.) The reporter **must notify** the **superior administration staff** after the call is made.

Sexual Abuse – All of our staff members are carefully screened. Our staff receives clearance from the Michigan Department of Human Services stating that there is nothing of this nature on their files. All staff have background checks (ICHAT) every two years.

Parent Resources – The following is just an example of the resources available in our area that provide training, direct services, referrals, and information.

The identity of a reporting person is confidential under the Child Protection Law.

St. Mary Early Learning Center Staff

Program Director – Oversees St. Mary's Early Learning Center

Lead Teachers – Each classroom has at least one lead staff member who is responsible for:

- Overseeing the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the classroom program
- Child assessments
- Overall care and supervision of children

The teachers and care givers consists of professionals who are educated in early childhood development. Each staff member is required to attend 16 hours of yearly workshops, conferences, and classes to continuously further their education on the latest research. Teachers and care givers are trained to understand early childhood development, implement our philosophy, and follow discipline policies as stated within this handbook. CPR and First Aid are required every two years.

The staff working with your child are dedicated to providing a quality experience for your child.

- Fingerprinting is completed on each employee
- Criminal history check is completed for all employees (ICHAT)
- DHS child abuse/neglect check is completed for all volunteers and employees
- Physician's health report attesting to the employee's physical capability to work with children is on file for each employee
- Negative TB test is on file for each employee
- All staff receive annual training in Blood Borne Pathogens
- All staff receive annual training in school safety
- All staff are CPR and First Aid certified and have annual updates

- All staff members have attended Virtus training to ensure a safe environment.

Parent Resources – The following is just an example of the resources available in our area that provide training, direct services, referrals, and information.

www.intouchweb.org

- OYCC yellow pages.....517-887-4319
- American Red Cross.....517-484-7461
- Barry-Eaton Health Department.....517-543-2430
- Office for Young Children.....517-887-4319
- Great Start Collaborative.....517-541-8987
- Domestic Violence Crisis Line.....888-664-9832
- Community Mental Health Emergency.....517-346-8460
- 211 (a 24-hour link to health and human services) serves Clinton, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham, and Jackson counties

Parent Concerns

All parent concerns should be brought to the attention of the person closed to the problem.

When a concern arises, please adhere to the following procedure:

Step 1 - Speak with the appropriate person about your concerns

Step 2 – Put the concern in writing and give to the appropriate person

Step 3 – Bring the concern to the program director or building administrator

Step 4 – Bring the concern to the school principal along with the program director

Parent Involvement

Parents may visit at any time, with or without notice. We encourage you to share any special hobby, possession, or occupation you may have with the class. You and the teacher can plan how you want to present your ideas; children love it when parents participate. Here are some ideas that we have had parents share: new babies, computers, dental hygienist, a child’s special book, an 18-wheeler, pets, a police officer and patrol car. For those of you who have the time, volunteers are always welcome and needed for field trips and special activities (sewing, cooking, science experiments). St. Mary’s Early Learning Center has an open-door policy; however we must follow all court orders regarding custody and visitation.

You Can Help – Please think of us when getting rid of any toys, games, puzzles, books, dress-up clothes, etc.

Volunteer Policy

- A background check (ICHAT) request will be performed
- Completed Diocese of Lansing required Virtus Online Training before volunteering.

- Have your arrival and departure time scheduled so classroom activities are not interrupted and staff are not surprised. Enter and exit quietly if during session hours
- Please be on time. When you are scheduled and have made a commitment, we count on you being there. Call if you cannot make your scheduled time.
- Become familiar with the daily schedule and emergency plans
- Watch to see the routines children follow and how the staff guides them. Listen to the way children are spoken to and how discipline is handled by staff
- Always speak positively. For example “Please walk” instead of “Don’t run.” Describe what you see. “Oh, I see you have cleaned up all of the blocks,” instead of “Oh, that looks nice.” Know that you are the role model. Children learn from what they see and hear. Know that you are heard. You may not think that they are not listening, or will not understand, but they do!
- CONFIDENTIALITY is a must. Children in the program are not to be discussed outside the program. If a parent/guardian questions you, refer them to a staff member. Discuss learning, but not specific students outside the classroom.
- Thank you! Thank you! People like you help to make our programs wonderful!

Parent Club

St. Mary’s School has an active Parent Club. Every parent is considered a member. You are encouraged to participate and represent ELC students. Meeting dates and times are set at the beginning of each school year (usually first Wednesday of the month) and reminded by our monthly school calendar.

Parent Club provides many of the “extras” for our students and is vital to our school. Among other things, Parent club hosts a special events, fish fry desserts, and monthly all –school lunches as well as helping both physically and monetarily with many of the programs, activities, and field trips offered to our students.

General Information

Fundraising – St. Mary’s School, Early Learning Center, and Child Care must use fundraising as a supplement to the program budget. We realize that there are limits to every family’s ability to participate, however, to avoid raising tuition rates it is suggested all parents participate. We appreciate all the energy that is put into these events by the teachers, parents, friends, relatives, and to the program budget.

Food and Nutrition – St. Mary’s Early Learning Center does not participate in the Child and Adult food program. Parents are required to supply a lunch and snacks for each child. Parents are encouraged to provide healthy meals and snacks. We request that you send milk or juice with your child’s lunch and not soft drinks. Please label with your child’s name and date.

Clothing – Please dress your child/children in clothes that they are allowed to get dirty. We provide a variety of activities for your child/children and some get a little messy. We do put paint shirts on them, but that seems to be the only thing the children keep clean. Parents/guardians of children under school age are required to have an extra set of clothing available at the center. Items brought from home are the sole responsibility of the child. Students have accidents. Please provide an extra set of clothing that can be left in your child's cubby.

Please remember to provide your child with the proper outdoor attire; we go outside every day weather permitting. **In the winter, coats, snow pants, boots, hats, and mittens are a must.** Please label all of your child/children's clothing and write their names on their boots.

Tennis shoes are required for gym time activities. Slippery shoes/stockings feet will NOT be allowed in the gym for the safety of the child.

Toys and Personal Belongings – Our center provides a wide range of activities and toys for your child. Please leave toys, candy, money, and jewelry at home. **Valuable items should not be brought to the center.**

Pictures – Picture Day is in September, the actual date will be announced. A release form is included in the registration information to allow for pictures of your student to be included in the yearbook or for newspaper articles.

Stage Opportunities – Parents/guardians will be given details of these programs once the dates are set.

- **Christmas Programs** – A Christmas program is held each year in December.
- **Graduation** – An End of the Year program is held, usually held at the end of May or the last day of school.

Health Care Plan

Health Care Plan – St. Mary's Early Learning Center utilizes a health care plan to minimize the spread of communicable diseases and to provide protection for staff and children. This plan includes procedures for:

- Cleaning and sanitizing of all equipment, toys, and other surfaces
- Children and staff hand washing
- Handling children's bodily fluids
- Controlling infection, including universal precautions

- Illness and injuries
- Staff resources and training

Procedures for Cleaning and sanitizing Equipment, Toys, and Other Surfaces – Toys and equipment will be washed and sanitized weekly using an approved method for cleaning. Other surfaces, such as tables, will be washed and sanitized before and after each meal and project done at the table using the approved method. Using the 5 step process.

Hand Washing Procedures – Signs are posted at all hand washing stations. Picture signs are posted at children’s hand washing stations. Soap and single use paper towels are located at each hand washing station.

Children – Hand washing will take place at a minimum:

- Any time hands are soiled
- After toileting
- Before and after meals/snacks
- Upon returning from outdoor/gym activities
- After any contact with bodily fluids

Staff – Proper hand washing procedures will be followed by all staff. Staff receives training annually on proper hand washing procedures for children and staff. Procedures are posted wherever hand washing may occur.

Handling Children’s Bodily Fluids – St. Mary’s Early Learning Center has an Exposure Control Plan. This plan is available in the main office. All staff receive Blood-Borne Pathogen training upon hire and are updated in procedures annually. Universal precautions shall be observed to prevent contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials

Controlling Infection, Including Universal Precautions – Universal Precautions is the name used to describe a prevention strategy which all blood and other potentially infectious materials are treated as if they are in fact, infectious, regardless of the perceived status of the source individual. In other words, whether or not you think the blood/body fluid is infected with blood borne pathogens, you treat it as if it is. This approach is used in all situations where exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials is possible.

Method of Discipline

The environment at St. Mary's Early Learning Center is planned, orderly, and rich with activity. Our staff believes that minimal discipline problems occur in a busy and interesting classroom. However, problems still do arise.

Teachers

- Know certain types of misbehavior are appropriate and to be expected at certain ages
- Place age appropriate demands on children's behavior
- Evaluate each situation separately
- May redirect children to a more acceptable activity, or simply remind them of a certain ground rule
- May have to stop a child's activity and focus the child on his/her actions, then help the child to reach a solution pointing out why his/her actions were a problem
- Know at times a child may lose control and erupt in anger or frustration, at this time the teacher will bring the child aside and allow the child time to work out any anger or frustration before working on problem solving

In our programs, we emphasize the positive. Working together as teachers and parents will help most children to develop appropriate group behavior. At no time will a child be hit or physically harmed in any way. No child will ever be deprived of a snack as punishment. The only time physical restraint would have to be used is to keep a child from hurting themselves or others. If a child needs to sit in the "thinking chair" he/she will always be in sight of the teacher or other staff.

During the first few weeks, we teach a few simple rules for each child to follow. They are:

- Be kind to each other
- Use only kind words
- Ask before touching others property
- Use inside voices
- Walk inside
- Be gentle with toys
- All help clean up

After the first two weeks, if a child forgets a rule, we will lovingly and gently use the following procedures:

- 1st time – the child will be asked if he/she knows the rule, the he/she will be reminded and helped to find a better solution to the problem
- 2nd time – the child will sit in the "thinking chair" away from the group and discuss a better solution

3rd time – the child will sit in the “thinking chair” away from the group and a parent will be contacted

4th time – the child will sit in the “thinking chair” for the appropriate amount of minutes determined by their age and conference with the parents will be requested

These are all for the same or similar offense.

We will try our best to help resolve the situation. Students who fail to behave according to the aforementioned guidelines will be given these warnings. If the behavior reoccurs, a parent/teacher conference will be held. St Mary’s Early Learning Center receives the right to terminate our services to families due to child and/or parent behavioral issues.

St. Mary’s Early Learning Child Care Conduct/Golden Rule

The St. Mary’s Early Learning Center staff members will be filling in for parents while children are in our care. It is very important that our children are respectful to the staff and that they follow directions.

People and Feelings:

- Treat each other gently and with respect
- Remember that teasing and name calling hurts feelings
- Always use appropriate language
- If something is not nice, don’t say it

Property:

- All school property must always be used with care and concern
- All school property is for everyone and must be shared
- Respect property of others, ask permission to use it first
- Each child’s projects are personal property, do not touch

Safety:

- Swings and slides are to be used in a sitting, upright position at all times
- Everything on the ground stays on the ground, such as pebbles, sticks, rocks, grass, pinecones, sand, or plants. All of these items are never to be thrown.
- Carrying heavy equipment or furniture is to be done by adults only.
- Always help and have concern for others if they are hurt or upset.

General Conduct:

- Children must stay within all school areas, indoors and outdoors, unless they are accompanied by one of our staff.
- All windows are to be opened and closed by staff only.
- Any ball playing, yelling, or running is for the gym area or outdoors.
- Treat others as you want to be treated and everyone will have fun.
- If something is upsetting you, do not try to take care of it, Tell a Staff Member.

Discipline – Discipline is a positive force in a child’s life. It is not something children are fearful of and it is not a punishment. Punishment does not occur at St. Mary’s Early Learning Center. In the beginning of the school year, adults create discipline in the classroom. Throughout the year, teachers model appropriate behavior, remind children of this type of behavior when necessary, and set limits. Gradually children learn to regulate their own behavior, learn how to problem-solve, and how to create a compromise eventually achieving a goal of self-discipline.

Dress Code – The only dress code in effect is that children attend in clothing appropriate for the weather, which fosters independent use of the bathroom, and is comfortable for your child to play in. Clothing that is restraining or has difficult fasteners is not appropriate. Do not send your child to child care in clothing that you do not want soiled during our normal activities. Your child will develop and enjoy his/her school experience much more if they are comfortable and do not have to worry about getting dirty.

Outdoor Play - Please remember to provide your child with the proper outdoor attire; we go outside every day weather permitting. **In the winter, coats, snow pants, boots, hats, and mittens are a must.** In the summer months; **sun block, bug spray, swimsuits,** etc. Please label all of your child/children’s clothing and write their names on their boots.

Children who cannot go outside due to illness should not be here. It is the policy of St. Mary’s Early Learning Center that if your child is considered healthy enough to attend one of the programs, then they are healthy enough to participate in all activities, including those outdoors. We will not have outdoor time on rainy days or when the temperature/wind chill is too cold, we will go to the Gym/Parish Hall for our 25 minutes.

Playground Rules – All playground supervisors deserve the respect of the children. In the event this does not take place, or a child’s behavior does not improve, the child will be brought to the teacher or office and a report will be made. Depending on the seriousness of the offense, the parents may be called. Basic playground rules include:

- Adult supervisors are in charge. Students will respect and obey them in the same manner as they would a teacher or classroom aide.
- Children are to play on mowed field and blacktop. They must avoid playing on the front lawn, sidewalk, front curb, and in tall grass or near edges of the playground.
- Appropriate use of playground equipment is required.
- Baseball, football, and basketball games should be played in the appropriate places.
- No hard baseballs may be used on school grounds.
- Games involving tackling or throwing persons to the ground are prohibited.
- Language of students should be appropriate: foul language will not be tolerated.

- Students should play fair and not break up or interrupt other students' games.
- Students should include everyone in their games as long as they are of the proper grades.
- Students are to play on blacktop when the ground is wet or muddy.
- Students should be dressed according to the weather conditions of the day.
- Boots and snow pants are required during the winter months when there is snow or mud.
- Students should limit their play to the students in their grade as well as the grade above and below their grade.
- Students are not allowed to bring toys to school. This includes: cell phones, CD players, radios, handheld games, and computer or computer discs. Playground equipment is available and teachers have a supply of games for all to use.

Weapons

To maintain an absence of threat to the physical well-being and safety of our students and staff, St. Mary's Early Learning Center prohibits students from bringing weapons on school, child care, or parish premises, in the immediate vicinity of the school, on a school bus, or in route to or from school. Violation of this policy renders the student liable to immediate expulsion or discharge.

State law requires the expulsion or discharge of students who possess a dangerous weapon on school, child care, or parish property or at school/child care activities. A "dangerous weapon" refers to a firearm (as well as look-alike firearms), dagger, dirk, stiletto, knife, with a blade more than three inches in length, pocket knife opened by mechanical device (switch blade), iron bar, or brass knuckles.

This law (PA 328) provides for the permanent expulsion or discharge of the student who violate its provision. Also, the expulsion/discharge is mandatory, meaning that our school or child care program MUST expel/discharge the student. Michigan law does provide for possible reinstatement by the Board of Education after a certain time period. If the student/child is in kindergarten through grade 5, reinstatement is possible by board action; only after a ninety school day suspension, (180 days) for grade six. The expulsion applies to all Michigan Schools. A student cannot be admitted to ANY public school in Michigan during the expulsion period.

Discharge

If a child's behavior is dangerous or disruptive to the extent that it is harming the experience of other children in the classroom, immediate action will be taken.

- First a parent-teacher conference will be scheduled
- The lead teacher will discuss the situation with the parents
- The lead teacher may recommend a course of action
- Resources outside of St. Mary's Early Learning Center may be suggested
- If parents are not willing to cooperate with St. Mary's Early Learning Center in this effort, the child will be discharged.
- **If the child presents a major obstacle to a healthy, learning environment for other children, the child will be discharged.**
- The child must be able to control their actions and participate in the ELC and/or Child Care in a safe and healthy manner to be able to stay.
- When possible we will provide a two-week notice prior to discharge, and refund any unused payment if necessary.

Parents or legal guardians who fail to meet financial obligations, child health requirements, or repeatedly violate policy may be asked to withdraw from St. Mary's Early Learning Center.