

There is a lot of information contained in this handbook. Please read ALL of it carefully. The policies listed within are set forth by the St. John Preschool Program and St. John School. These policies and accompanying contracts become effective upon acceptance by the parent/guardian and the teacher/director.

### **Location**

The 3 & 4 year old preschool and PreK classroom is located in the Benedict House between the Mary House and St. Aquinas Hall on Military Street

### **The Preschool**

The 3 & 4 year old programs at St. John offer a variety of experiences to promote the development of the whole child. The curriculum provides hands-on, developmentally appropriate activities to enhance the cognitive, social, emotional and physical well being of each child. Themes are utilized throughout the year and learning games are implemented to introduce and reinforce pre-literacy and pre-mathematical skills. The child is free to explore and experiment at his/her own pace. This stimulating free-choice environment encourages positive adult/child interactions, and also fosters the love of learning.

An important aspect of Developmentally Appropriate Practice is that classroom activities need to be age appropriate and individually appropriate for all children. In other words, we provide a classroom filled with age appropriate materials and activities; however, we are equally concerned with each individual's child's development. A child who needs support in an area will get it, while a child who is functioning at a higher level will be challenged.

### **Curriculum**

The classroom curriculum is a product of many factors. Our top priority is for our activities to be developmentally appropriate. We do not pressure children into learning the alphabet, recognizing numbers, or beginning to read. Instead, we have activities available that are alphabet and number oriented. We encourage "hands on" learning and experimentation with real materials. We have a child-friendly environment that encourages exploration, thinking, dramatic play, and sensory awareness. Our goal for your child's first school experience is to foster a safe learning environment and install a love of learning. We look forward to beginning this journey with your child!

### **Learning Centers**

The preschool classroom is set up in "centers" for the children to explore daily during free choice time. These learning centers play a major role in your child's education. They may choose to explore a few centers or all of them in one day. Our learning centers include: Table activities (writing/art, math, and tactile), Dramatic Play, Block, Science, Library and Computer. Remember---your child's play is their "work".

### **Art/Writing Table**

The children are encouraged to express themselves at these tables. We believe in providing art activities, which are open-ended. We believe in promoting children's self expression and do not want to stifle their creativity. At this age, children are experimenting with fine motor skills such as paint strokes, learning how to grasp markers, pencils and crayons, cut with scissors, and use glue. It is our job to promote their independence and provide them with the time to experiment with different artistic mediums.

Because the artwork is their own creation, we praise them on the process of their work, instead of the final product. In other words, we comment on the time spent creating the picture, or the colors used throughout the paper. Praising children in this way increases their self-esteem and gives them a feeling of accomplishment.

## **Outdoor Play**

As part of our commitment to quality care, we give the children time outside each day if the weather permits. Being outside is important for many reasons. Children need time to exercise and breathe fresh air. We will play outside in all seasons. Thus it is important to dress your child appropriately for outdoor play. Due to the playground surfacing (mulch) it is important that your child **wear only sturdy, athletic-type shoes**. **Open-toed (sandals) or open-heeled (back-less slip-ons) shoes are not allowed on the playground**. All pose a safety hazard.

All children are expected to participate in outdoor play. We do not have the staff to keep some children inside while others go outside. If your child is well enough to come to school, we will assume he/she is well enough to go outside. On days that the weather does not permit us to go outside, we will exercise our gross motor muscles inside with a variety of activities.

## **Snack**

There will be a snack time available in the morning and afternoon. Each child will need to bring in their own snack and drink everyday. It should be something simple and easy to open (not a meal or “lunchable”). If your child stays all day, please bring two snacks and drinks, one for the morning and one for the afternoon. A water bottle is fine and can be refilled throughout the day.

## **Birthdays**

If your child has a birthday during the school year and you want to bring a special snack to celebrate, please call or email us ahead of time. We will give out an allergy list at the beginning of the year so you will be aware of the allergies in your child’s class.

## **Backpacks**

Your child’s backpack is very important to us all. It will serve as a very important source of communication between you, your child and the school. Please choose a REGULAR SIZE backpack with two straps (versus the one strap over the shoulder). Please make sure a regular size pocket folder can fit in the backpack without being folded or getting caught in the zipper. If it has latches or hooks, please make sure your child can open and shut it without assistance. Rolling backpacks are not allowed. They are fun, but difficult for preschool children to manage.

Please do not allow your child to make their backpack a “junk” holder. Please check it daily to remove any papers from the folder that need to stay at home.

## **Cubbies**

Each child will be assigned a cubby. They will use the cubby to put their backpacks, outerwear, a change of clothes, finished work, and office folders in. Please assist us by discouraging your child from touching anything in another child’s cubby. We want the children to be respectful of other’s belongings.

## **Potty Training**

Per state policy, we are not allowed to accept children who are wearing diapers or pull-ups. We also cannot be responsible for potty training your child. We do, however, understand the frustration of the process. Please note that if your child’s potty issues (too many accidents) become a distraction to the class, a conference will be necessary to determine if the child may remain in the class.

## **Newsletters**

You will receive newsletters throughout the school year to keep you up to date on the themes and activities we will be accomplishing. This will include any important dates or activities you need to know. You will also receive weekly e-newsletters from the school office. Please provide your email to the office

if you have one.

### **Office Folder**

Each child will receive an office folder so that newsletters, artwork, etc., can be sent home. It is also there for you to send notes, school payments, etc., back to school. It will come home daily. **PLEASE CHECK IT DAILY.** If you do not check it daily your child could miss out on something.

### **Clothing**

As part of the preschool experience, children are encouraged to be independent. Part of being independent is being able to dress yourself. This gives the child satisfaction of achieving independence and success. Thus, please send your child in KID-FRIENDLY clothing. Elastic waistbands are much easier than snaps, buttons, and zippers. Overalls and belts are discouraged unless your child can manipulate them independently.

We do get involved in messy activities, so please dress your child appropriately. The children will wear smocks, but they only cover part of their clothing.

Per school dress code, shorts can only be worn August-October and April-May. Girls may wear dresses but please **no spaghetti straps**. We cannot permit children wearing open-toed or open heeled shoes on the playground (see “Outdoor Play”). For rainy days we recommend rain jackets with hoods. **Umbrellas are not allowed to be used during school.** Walking in line and carrying an umbrella do not mix very well! For cool days (60 degrees or less) we highly recommend sending a sweatshirt or jacket with your child. Even if it’s going to be a warm day, it can still be chilly for the children in the morning class out on the playground. We do suggest that each child keep a seasonally appropriate change of clothing in their cubby/backpack at all times just in case of an accident or accidental spill.

**Please label all of your child’s removable clothing (sweaters, sweatshirts, coats, hats, gloves).**

### **“Peace builder” Program**

Our environment at preschool promotes non-violence. We are currently using the “Peacebuilder Program”. This program encourages non-bullying at all ages at school and at home.

If a child exhibits violent/disruptive behavior such as hitting, biting, kicking, pushing, abusive language or bullying, etc., every effort will be made on our part to help the child understand that this kind of behavior is not acceptable. If after a predetermined period (set by Teacher) the child continues to exhibit this repetitive, unacceptable behavior, a parent/teacher conference will be scheduled. If the situation cannot be resolved in a timely manner, we can request the parent to pull their child out of our program.

### **Sharing**

Children naturally want to share things they think are fascinating: toys, coins, jewelry, etc. However, since these items can get lost or broken and present a choking hazard, they are not allowed at school. Each preschool classroom will have show and tell once a week. This is when your child will be able to show their class an item from home (something that will fit in their backpack). Your teacher will let you know what day and the type of items the children are allowed to bring.

### **Separation Ideas**

Separation issues may or may not be a concern with your child. Each child handles separation differently. If your child does exhibit anxiety, the following advice may help.

- Develop a morning routine and follow the SAME sequence each day!
- Be positive. Your child will pick up on your uneasiness.
- Make your departure quick. Say goodbye to you child and leave the classroom. (Long

goodbyes usually yield more tears.)

- If needed, your child may bring a small transition object to school. They will be allowed to have it for the first 15 minutes before we start circle time. Then they will need to put it back in their backpack.
- Engage your child in an activity before saying goodbye.

Parents often ask if staying in the classroom will help their child's transition. Each child is different - sometimes it does help, and other times it does not. If you feel your child needs you to stay, we recommend staying for a few minutes. We have found that children are typically fine within a few minutes of their parent's departure. We promise to contact you in the event that your child is unable to be comforted.

### **Health Policy**

**Do NOT send your child to school if they have had any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours:**

- Fever
- Nausea or vomiting
- Earache
- Abdominal cramps
- Diarrhea
- A cold (when symptoms are not due to allergy)
- Sore throat
- Unidentified rash
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Any infectious disease your doctor has diagnosed
- Head lice

If your child is sent to school with any of the above symptoms, you will be contacted to pick up your child.

It may sometimes be necessary for a child to take over-the-counter or prescribed medication during the school day. **All medicine sent to school must be properly labeled and in the original container.**

Written instructions must be made available to the teacher giving the following information:

1. Time the medication needs to be taken
2. Amount of medicine to be given
3. Parent's signature

### **Immunizations**

State law requires that all children enrolled in preschool have a current immunization certificate on file at school. Please send it in with the required forms for your child's file. It must be on file by the first day your child attends. These forms are checked quarterly for expirations. If your child's immunization certificate expires, you will be notified. These must be kept current in order for your child's enrollment to remain active.

### **Special Circumstances**

We would appreciate you letting us know of any significant changes in living arrangements or other circumstances in your home. This information will be kept confidential. It will allow us to better assist your child in dealing with changes if we are aware of what's going on.

### **Morning Class Arrival**

Our morning class begins at 7:50 am, but you may arrive as early as 7:40 am. Please do your best to

arrive promptly. The parking lot is a very busy place in the morning so please park either on the street or in the parking lot and walk your child in the door. **YOUR CHILD MAY NOT WALK IN ALONE.**

After your child has placed his/her backpack and outerwear in his/her cubby, and placed his/her folder in the folder basket, please encourage your child to use the potty and then wash his/her hands. We have found that washing hands upon arrival helps keep germs at bay. In the beginning, your child may need assistance, however, please encourage your child to complete these tasks as independently as possible.

### **Morning Class Dismissal**

Dismissal for the morning class begins at 10:40am. The parking lot will be closed at this time so you will need to park on Military Street. Please do not block any gate or sidewalk. If you arrive later than 10:45am, you may pick up your child in the cafeteria. The all-day children are scheduled to be at lunch at 10:45am. We will dismiss from the front porch of the Benedict House.

### **Lunch**

If your child stays all day, you will receive a lunch information sheet so that you will know what is for lunch and how to order lunch. Your child may pack lunch if he/she wishes. Your child will be escorted to the cafeteria by a preschool teacher.

### **Nap Time**

Due to state regulations each child will have a two hour nap time. After an hour rest time, your child will be offered a quiet activity. Each child will need a 2 inch mat, a sheet and blanket or towel. Linens will be sent home every Friday to be washed.

### **PM Class Arrival**

Our afternoon class begins at 11:50am but you may arrive as early as 11:40am. You will not be able to enter the parking lot at this time of the day so please park on Military Street and walk your child to his/her classroom. Please do not block any gates or sidewalks. After your child has put his/her backpack and outerwear away, and placed his/her folder in the folder basket, please encourage your child to use the potty and then wash his/her hands. We have found that washing hands upon arrival helps keep germs at bay. In the beginning, they may need assistance, however, please encourage them to complete these tasks as independently as possible.

### **Afternoon Class Dismissal**

We will begin dismissing children from the front porch at 2:40pm. All children should be picked up by 2:50pm. The parking lot is closed to traffic at this time so you will need to park on the street.

### **After School Program**

If your child is in the afternoon class and he/she attends the after school program, we will take your child to the after school program at 2:50pm.

### **St. John School Parking Lot Access, Speed Limit and Safety**

For the safety of your child and all the St. John students, the parking lot is off limits to vehicular traffic between the hours of 8:00am-2:50pm. Many of our students travel back and forth between classrooms, to and from lunch, to recess, and to participate in P.E. Generally, all entrances and exits have a barricade, but if you find a gate open in the middle of the day, please do not pull in to the parking lot! The one exception would be if you are coming to drive for a field trip. The parking lot is a busy place at drop off and pick up time, so we ask that when you enter the parking lot that you drive as slowly as possible (even when your child is late!). Safety is our top priority. Also, the entrance between the two houses has a blind spot at the end of it, so please be extra careful.

### **Parent Volunteers (Very Important)**

In order to be a volunteer in your child's classroom, special activity, or participate on a field trip **you must have completed the Safe Environment training and a background check.** Please contact the school office to fill out at volunteer application. Even if you are only transporting your child on the field trip, you still must have the Safe Environment training and the background check. This policy is mandated by the Catholic Diocese and adhered to by St. John School. We will keep you informed of upcoming dates.

### **Field Trips**

We plan to take field trips during the school year. **Due to State Regulations each child has to be transported to field trip by his/her parent or guardian.**

### **Child Abuse and Neglect**

It is the law and also the responsibility of the teacher, teacher aide, or substitute teachers to report any and all abuse or neglect of a child. We cannot turn our heads on a child who has been abused or neglected. Therefore, we will notify Child Protective Services and the local police department when it appears that a child in our care is being physically, sexually, or emotionally abused, neglected or exploited.

### **Snow Days**

Please watch any of the three local TV stations for closings. You can also visit the news channel websites to sign up for email or text alerts. This is the quickest way to receive notification of weather delays. **We do not always follow the Scott County schedule.** We are listed separately under St. John's, Georgetown.

### **Admission Paperwork**

Before the teacher/director will assume responsibility for teaching and caring for your child, the following must be on record in your child's file no later than the first day your child attends:

- Signed Handbook Policy Contract
- Student Information Sheet
- Consent for Treatment of a Minor
- Release and Emergency Contact Form
- School Directory Form
- Photo/Video Permission Form
- Walking Permission Slip
- Georgetown College Waiver
- Birth Certificate
- Current Immunization Record (from physician)

**\*\*Please have all of the above forms in the office by the first day your child is in attendance. \*\***

**\*\*If any changes occur to your child's information, please remember to update the school. \*\***

Thank you!

This agreement must be detached from the Preschool/Pre-K Handbook, signed and returned by the end of the first week of school.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (the parent/guardian) hereby acknowledge that I

\_\_\_\_\_ (the parent/guardian) am aware of the conditions stated in the St. John Preschool/Pre-K Handbook, and agree to abide by the policies and requirements stated within.

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Parent/Guardian Name

Signature

Date

