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| St. James School Early Childhood Family Handbook | logo1 |
| MISSION STATEMENTSt. James Catholic School is dedicated to providing a faith, safe and caring environment. We provide a challenging academic program of a strong moral foundation that incorporates relevant skills with Gospel values. We encourage our students to become life-long learners to serve God and others. | 2020-2021 |

Please understand that due to COVID-19 some policies & procedures will be altered this year. Parents please sign the last page. Remove last page and return it to the main office.

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Updated 10/5/2019

## Goals of the Early Childhood Program

* Facilitate opportunities in spiritual, physical, social, cognitive, language and aesthetic development.
* Create an atmosphere where children appreciate a quiet time preparing to begin a friendship with God.
* Initiate in the early learner the sacredness of life.
* Nurture a warm, caring environment that develops self-esteem and a positive attitude toward learning.

## Entrance Requirements

Each school will adhere to the Diocesan policy regarding entrance requirements. Each child entering Kindergarten must be five (5) years of age no later than December 31 of the current year. All students entering Kindergarten will be evaluated in the spring using the Brigance screening to determine their level of readiness.

The three (3) year-old Pre-Kindergarten program will admit students whose age is three no later than December 31 of the current school year. All applicants must have proof of age (and certificate of Baptism, if Catholic), state health requirements, and toilet trained. Documentation of records must be provided before acceptance. Records of prior school attendance and social experiences shall be submitted for review. The Principal will make the final determination of acceptance. All accepted students will be accepted on a probationary period of six weeks.

A four (4) year-old Pre-Kindergarten program will be held five (5) full days a week. This is a separate program. The teacher will provide progress monitoring through report cards, phone calls and e-mails. Each student will be administered the Brigance Assessment test as a pre-test and post-test before entrance into Kindergarten.

Students in both programs will participate in approved Diocesan curricular programs.

Pre-K 3 and 4 year olds have the options to attend school three full days, five half days, or five full days. Pre-K 3 students also have the option to attend three half days per week. If the students are coming three days a week, it is recommended they come three consecutive days.

## Procedures for Safe Pre School Arrival

Our school day begins at 8:40. You may drop your child off any time after 8:15. Please park in the church parking lot, in the area closest to the fence. Walk your child to the classroom by walking to the right of the carline, along the fence. Bring your child to the outside door. Pre K 3 is the first door to the right if you are looking at the building from the church parking lot. Pre K 4 is the second one which is clearly marked. Knock and wait for one of the teachers or assistants to let you in Thank you so much! The goal is to keep you and your child as safe as possible. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

## Procedures for Arrival in Inclement Weather

Inclement weather drop of for Kindergarten and Pre K Students is the same as the rest of the school. All children will be dropped off at the back door. The back door is open and supervised by a teacher to accept students coming in. Parents can drop children at the door and they will be escorted to their classrooms. This eliminates parents and children having to walk to the side doors and cross the traffic.

If you need to arrive before 8:15, you will need to call the office and ask about extended day services.

## Noon Time Dismissal Instructions

Preschool morning group leaves at 12:00 and the children should be picked up by the outside door. You may park in the front of the classroom in the car line marked for preschool and kindergarten. Please pull up to the stone wall and stay to the right, in order to let other cars pass by. Please GO SLOW and WATCH for little ones. We will open the door when we are ready for your child to leave. I apologize ahead of time if we are ever a few minutes late, as I like for children to finish their projects and I like to say a proper goodbye. It is possible that we would be playing outside at this time and you are welcome to walk to the playground to pick up your child. If you would like, you may stay while your child plays and leave when we go into the classroom.

On schoolwide early dismissal days, the school day ends at 12:40. If a child typically leaves at 12:00, parents may pick their child up at 12:00 as usual or they are welcome to come through the carline at the 12:40 time. Please let the teacher know in advance if they will be staying till 12:40.

## End of Day Dismissal

School ends at 2:40. The children will either go to extended day or they will be led to the car line. Before school begins in September, please let us know in writing, what your child will be doing for dismissal, by sending in a written schedule. If the schedule you give us ever changes, please let us know in writing. Thank you for your help with this matter, as we want your child to be safe. We need to know where your child is supposed to be. Unless you sign your student out early from the front office, we will not be releasing them until the dismissal bell rings at 2:40pm. If your preschool or Kindergarten student has older siblings, they will be sent to the preschool or kindergarten room respectively for dismissal.

If your child needs to be extended day, please call the office for that information. Extended day begins at 2:40 and ends at 5:30.

## Early Dismissal for Individual Children

If your child has an appointment and needs to be picked up early, please send a note in the morning so we know ahead of time. You should go to the front of the school and come in through the front door. Then you will need to go to the office and sign your child out. Someone will call down to the classroom and a teacher will bring your child down to you.

## End of Day Car Line Dismissal Instructions

ALL students including full day Pre-K and Kindergarten will be using the pick-up line on the school playground. If someone different from usual is picking your child up from school, please send in a note ahead of time. The adult will be asked to show their ID to confirm they are on the allowed pick up list. They must do this before they can take the child. This, although can be an inconvenience, is for the safety of your children. Thank you so much for your understanding and cooperation!

School Cancelations or Delays

If the school has a delay because of dangerous weather, half day children will not have school. If a child typically comes three days a week, whether half day or full day, and one of the days they usually come, school is canceled, they may make up the day if discussed with the teacher first.

## Tardy

If you arrive later than 8:40, you will need to come into the school through the front door and bring your child to the office where they will get a late slip to give to their teacher. Someone will walk your child down to the classroom.

## Home/School Folders

Your child’s folder is meant to transport important notices, lunch money and notes, (both parent and teacher notes), to and from school.

Please send the folder to school EVERY DAY, even if there is no correspondence in it. Missing folders make it more difficult for us to manage our notices.

When sending money to school, please place it in an envelope including their name, the amount of money and what the money is for, on the front of the envelope. Thank you so much for helping us with this matter so that we do not confuse your child’s money for another child’s.

## Extra Clothing

In the event of an accident or spill, your child will need extra clothing to keep at school. This includes pants, shirt, underwear and socks.

Soiled wet clothes will be sent home in a plastic bag. In case we need to send home soiled clothes, please send spare clean clothes on the next day.

In order for us to identify your child’s clothing, it is important that you label all clothing. This includes coats, hats, mittens and boots.

If for some reason your child does not have a spare set of clothes at school and needs them, the nurse will provide clean clothing. Please wash and send the clean clothes back as soon as possible.

## Fieldtrips

Our classes will go on fieldtrips during the school year. Some will be free and some will have a fee. Part of the fee is to pay for the bus service. The field trips will be fun and will always enhance what we are learning about. Parents will always be invited to join us, as it is very helpful to have extra hands and it is special for the children! If a parent can’t make the trip, a grandparent or aunt/uncle may come. All children MUST ride on the bus.

## Specials/the Art’s

The preschool children will have 3 specials each week, including Art, Library, and Music & Movement. Kindergarten has 5 specials a week which include Library, Gym, Music, Art and Computer.

## Recess

The children will go outside most days. If it is raining, snowing or just too cold, we will stay inside. We may go to the gym if it is available or stay in the classroom and do music and movement activities.

## Preschool Nap Time for Afternoon Children

Children 3 and 4 years of age are required, by law to have rest time, if they are in a full day program. We encourage the children to be, “respectfully quiet”, so that those children who need to sleep are given the chance.

The school will provide mats for each child. We ask that parents send in a SMALL blanket and a SMALL pillow. Do not send in large items as we do not have the room. The children may bring in a stuffed animal from home, or they could use one from the classroom if they like.

When a couple months have passed and we know who usually sleeps, and those awake are “respectfully quiet”, we will pass out books during the second half of nap or we may call them to quietly catch up on any work. During the second half of the year, I will call students to practice reading easy readers.

Kindergarten students do not have a nap time. Instead, we have a restful story time where the students are invited to bring in a stuffed animal from home, grab a sit upon from the bin in the classroom and curl up on the carpet for a few chapters of a book.

## Discipline

Our goal of discipline is to help a child to develop self-control. Expectations are made clear to the students to encourage the safety and respect for others and materials. If a child does not adhere to the expectation set forth within the classroom or on the playground we will address the behavior accordingly. We strive to help the children make positive decisions for themselves that will allow them to develop self-discipline and appropriate social skills. Children are guided and urged to solve social conflicts on their own. We encourage children to use their words to communicate what they want and how they feel. We use Jesus’s love as a model and a guide to discipline and resolving social conflict.

## Volunteering in Kindergarten

Volunteers are wanted and welcome in the classroom! There are many jobs for a volunteer. You can come read to the students some books you’d like to share, you can come lead a special project for the students or you can come be a teacher helper. We will not have volunteers for the first couple weeks of school as we get to know the students and as we establish our routine. Mrs. Barrette will send out a calendar shortly after school starts for you to fill in your availability. Grandparents are also welcome to volunteer! Over the course of the year Mrs. Barrette will be asking for volunteers to attend the monthly masses. Mrs. Barrette helps with the music ministry and needs some extra eyes on the students while she is on the altar. There is a mass on the first Friday of every month.

## Preschool Volunteers

Parents are welcome and encouraged to volunteer in the preschool program. In mid- October, a letter will go home to the parents asking for volunteers. You have a choice to come weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or occasionally and the most helpful time would be between 9:00 and 1:00. Volunteering begins in November in order to give the children time to get to know their teachers without parents present.

## Volunteering Procedure

When you come into the school to volunteer, you will need to come in through the front door and stop in at the main office. You will need to leave your license and pick up a visitor pass before heading to your students classroom. At the end of the day you will bring your visitor pass back to the main office. Only after receiving the visitor pass will the secretary give you back your license.

## Visiting

We have many occasions for families to come in and visit, such as holiday celebrations, field trips, family share time, story time and our end of the year celebration.

If you have a talent to share, please see the preschool teacher to schedule a time for you to come in. Some examples of talents would be art, music, cooking, dancing or reading.

## Home

The most important way you can participate in your child’s education is to read to them every day! Read alphabet books, picture books, chapter books that you read over a short period of time, poetry, nursery rhymes, letters and environmental words, such as traffic signs and names of stores and restaurants.

## Lunch

We will have lunch in the cafeteria, every day, at 11:00. Because we have lunch so early, we will not have a morning snack. Children may purchase a school hot lunch or have a meal sent to school by their parents. During lunch time, the half day children may have a snack or lunch, provided by their parent, or they are also welcome to have the school hot lunch. If your child brings a lunch/snack, please label the lunchbox or paper bag with their name, as this is a great help to us.

Choices for lunch time include:

* Children may bring in a lunch and drink from home.
* Children may bring in a lunch from home and buy a drink from the cafeteria.
* Children may buy hot lunch which includes a drink from the cafeteria

Prices:

* Hot lunch- (see monthly lunch calendar) - $3.00
* Milk- (white, chocolate, strawberry) - .50
* Juice- (apple, orange grape) - .50

You may pay for lunches daily, weekly or monthly. Please send lunch, milk or juice money in an envelope marked cafeteria. Include on the envelope, your child’s name, the students class and the days they will have lunch, milk or juice. If your child will be getting milk or juice from the cafeteria, and you have a preference as to what they should drink, please let us know what kind they should get.

## Toys from Home

In preschool we, have many toys available in our classroom; therefore, we do not want the children to bring toys from home. If the children bring toys, they run the risk of the toys being lost or broken.

We may ask a child to bring in a toy if it supports what we are learning about or if we do show and tell.

In Kindergarten and Pre School stay in backpack til nap the students are allowed to bring a stuffed animal for story time. Other toys may be brought in but will only be allowed out of the students backpack for afternoon recess.

## Birthdays

When it is your child’s birthday, we will have a little celebration to acknowledge the special occasion. If you would like to send in cupcakes or a special snack, please let me know ahead of time. This is very special for the children.

## Evaluations

In November, after the children have had a chance to adjust and feel comfortable with their teacher’s, peers, classroom and school, preschool students will be evaluated, using the “Brigance” screening. This gives the teacher information on the child’s strengths and weaknesses. This screening will also be administered at the end of the year in May, to measure growth the child has made. Other means of evaluation will be check lists for classroom work, anecdotal notes, pictures and observations.

## Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are encouraged as a means of greater understanding and cooperation between the home and the school. Preschool and kindergarten conferences are held in October. Additional conferences may be set-up at any time at the request of either the parent or the teacher. Parents interested in having a conference with a teacher are asked to first make an appointment by phoning or emailing the teacher at school or by writing a note, stating the day and time the conference is desired. Parents should not expect any teacher to confer with them without an appointment. Teachers should be called at school and NEVER at home. The school phone number is (860) 774-3281. Michelle Brown’s email address is M.Brown@stjamesdanieson.org. Kimberly Barrette’s email address is K.Barrette@stjamesdanielson.org. Gabrielle Costello’s email address is gn.costello@stjamesdanielson.org .

## Preschool Daily Schedule

* 8:15-8:40- Arrival/Free Play
* 8:45-9:00- Attendance/Prayers
* 9:00-9:15- Opening- Everyone gathers on the rug to sing good morning song, pick and do jobs,( recite “The Pledge of Allegiance”, sing “God Bless America”, daily weather and calendar, line leader, caboose, mail, milk, placemats, story, center circles and lights).
* 9:15-9:30-Religion/Alphabet/Theme/Skills
* 9:30-10:00- Specials- Art/Library/Music and Movement
* 10:00-11:00- Centers- Drama/Blocks/Reading and Listening/Sensory and Science/Math/Arts and Crafts/Writing/Playdough/Theme-Skills Activity with Teacher
* 11:00-11:30- Lunch
* 11:30-12:00- Recess
* 12:00-1:00- Centers- (see above)/Small Groups
* 1:00-2:00- Nap/Rest Time/Quiet Work
* 2:00-2:20- Pack Back Packs and Get Ready to Leave
* 2:40- Story/Dismissal

## Kindergarten Daily Activity Schedule

* 8:15am-8:40am. Arrival
* 8:40am-9:00am the students will complete our morning routines. Morning routines include unpacking their backpacks and finding their morning work station.
* 9:00am-9:30am will begin saying the school prayer, classroom prayer, pledge of allegiance and singing a patriotic song. Next we will have morning meeting. Morning meeting will review the date, days of the week, months of the year and the weather.
* 9:30am-10:00am will be our Language Arts block.
* 10:00am-10:20am is morning recess on the playground closest to the Kindergarten door.
* 10:20am-11:00am will typically be math and science spending on our specials schedule that day. Math time varies depending on what we are learning that day. Some days we will have an activity and some days we will do worksheets. At the end of every chapter there is a chapter test. Students receive tests about once a month.
* 11:00-11:35 is lunch down in the cafeteria.
* 11:35am-12:10 is recess.
* 12:10-12:40 is story time. Since we do not have nap time in Kindergarten, we have a restful story time where the students are invited to bring in a stuffed animal from home, grab a sit upon from the bin in the classroom and curl up on the carpet for a few chapters of a book.
* 12:40-1:20 is religion. Religion will also include activities, worksheets and memorization of prayers. The prayers the students are expected to know by the end of Kindergarten are the Our Father, Hail Mary, Angel of God and the Glory Be.
* 1:20pm-1:40pm is snack time
* 1:40pm-2:15pm is special time some day. Specials include library, gym, music, art and computer.
* 2:10-2:30 is afternoon meeting where we discuss our day and add stickers to our incentive charts.
* 2:30-2:40 is where we assist the students in packing up.
* 2:40pm is dismissal. You are expected to be at the school at or before 2:40pm. If your student is not picked up by 3:00pm they will be sent to extended day where you will be charged for their time spent there.

**AGREEMENT TO BE SIGNED BY PARENTS**

It is important the parents read and understand the policies contained in the Saint James School Handbook. **This handbook is part of the contract existing between the school and the parents/students. Therefore, it is imperative that the handbook be read and that the following statement be signed and returned by the due date stated below.** Any parents who disagree with these policies and will not sign this agreement will be asked to seek alternative education for their child/children. **There is no exception to this policy.**

**Saint James School**

**Danielson, Connecticut**

We have read and agree to be governed by the Saint James School Early Childhood Handbook as it regards all stated policies.

Print Parent Name:

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Parents/Guardians Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Print Child(ren)’s Name (Pre-k Only):

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