

Parents must sign the last page.
Last page should be torn out and returned
to the main office by 9/8/2023

St. James School Early Childhood Family Handbook



MISSION STATEMENT

St. 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.

2023-2024

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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

We adhere to the Norwich Diocesan policy regarding entrance requirements. We follow all State of Connecticut health mandates including required vaccines for pre-school and kindergarten students.

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.

All Pre-Kindergarten applicants must have proof of age (and certificate of Baptism, if Catholic), state health requirements, and be 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.

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. Children must be three before they start school. Students who turn three between the first day of school and December 31 will be eligible to attend starting on their birthday for that school year.

The four (4) year-old Pre-Kindergarten program will admit students whose age is four no later than December 31 of the current school year. 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 curriculum programs.

Pre-K 3 and 4 year olds have the options to attend school three full days, five half days, or five full days. 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. Drop off 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. Students in pre-school are encouraged to use the left drop-off lane. A teacher or aide will be available to escort your child from their vehicle into the building.

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 half day students leave at 12:00 and the children should be picked up by their classroom's outside door. You may use the same left lane for drop off to pick up your child. 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. 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 12:40. 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 child needs to utilize extended day, please call the office for that information. Extended day begins at 2:40 and ends at 5:30.

End of Day Car Line Dismissal Instructions

ALL Pre-K students will be dismissed through the gymnasium doors. Please meet your child at the gym door and a teacher or aide will dismiss the child to you directly. Kindergarten students will use 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!

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.

School Cancellations 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, socks and shoes.

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 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. 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 and chaperones 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.

We ask that parents send in a nap mat, blanket and pillow. We highly recommend you purchase an all-in-one nap mat that rolls up. 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, we 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. 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. Children may purchase a school hot lunch or have a meal sent to school by their parents. 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) - \$3.50
- 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 student's 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.

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 Pre School, students will keep their stuffed animal in their bag until nap. In Kindergarten, students will keep their stuffed animal in their bag until story time.

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. Birthday invitations may only be handed out at school if the entire class is invited. Please do not send in any candy, soda or other high-sugar items.

Evaluations

In October, 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 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. Kimberly Barrette's email address is k.barrette@stjamesdanielson.org. Karen Lortie's email address is k.lortie@stjamesdanielson.org.

Daily Schedules (Approximate)

Preschool Three Year Old Class

- 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
- Recess: 11:00-11:40
- Lunch: 12:10-12:40
- 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

Preschool Four Year Old Class

- 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
- Recess:
- Lunch: 11:40-12:10
- 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 Schedule

- 8:15-8:40. Arrival
- 8:40-8:50: Morning zoom
- 9:00-9:30: Singing a morning song and patriotic song. Morning meeting: review the date, days of the week, months of the year and the weather.
- 9:30-10:00: Language Arts block.
- 10:00-10:20: Morning recess on the small playground.
- 10:20-11:00: Math/Science: At the end of every math chapter there is a chapter test. Students receive tests about once a month.
- 11:10-11:40: Lunch
- 11:40-12:10: Recess.
- 12:15-12:40: Story time. 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: 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.
- 1:20-1:40: Snack time
- 1:40-2:15: Specials including library, gym, music, art and computer.
- 2:15-2:30: Afternoon meeting.
- 2:30-2:40: Packing up.
- 2:40: 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 St. James School Early Childhood Handbook. This handbook is part of the contract existing between the school and the parents. Therefore, it is imperative that the handbook be read and that the following statement be signed and returned by the due date stated on the front cover. 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
120 Water Street
Danielson, Connecticut 06239**

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

Print Parent Name:

Parents/Guardians Signature:

_____ Date: _____

Print Child(ren)'s Name:

All Early Childhood Handbook agreements must be signed and returned to St. James School by Friday, September 8, 2023.