

St. Mary Preschool

16 Summer Street
Shrewsbury, MA 01545
(508) 842-1601



Parent/Student
Handbook

ST. MARY PRESCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

St. Mary Preschool is based on Christian values which foster each child's individuality with respect for the school community. Our child centered environment provides a loving, safe, first school experience, which focuses on the development of the whole child. Children construct knowledge through the discovery and exploration inherent in developmentally appropriate activities.

PHILOSOPHY

Our preschool provides a loving, safe, stimulating, and Christian environment that values and respects the individuality of each child. Our child-centered program strives to enhance the total development of each child: spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, and physical. Play is a critical component to an excellent early childhood education. Our curriculum offers opportunities for each child to develop his or her own knowledge through the discovery and exploration inherent in quality play activities. Above all, our priority is to provide an exciting and happy school experience for young children

PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK

The Parent-Student Handbook provides the policies and procedures established at St. Mary Preschool for parents and students alike. In order to ensure a fair and favorable atmosphere for learning, as well as to teach our students to be responsible for their actions, St. Mary Preschool faculty adhere to the policies set forth in this handbook.

Please remember that no situation is perfect and that problems may sometimes occur. Should something of concern come up, please take the time to discuss it with the teachers as soon as possible. Doing this will prevent tension and hard feelings from developing.

If there are any unusual circumstances that arise, such as the death of a family member, close friend, or even a pet, marital problems, or other events which might significantly affect your child(ren), we will make every effort to be sensitive to the situation and keep such circumstances confidential.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

SPIRITUAL GOAL

To express kindness and concern for people and the world around us

OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate God's presence in our daily lives
- To reinforce Christian values which foster respect for each child's individuality
- To develop a spirit of cooperation and kindness towards one another
- To be respectful and participate during prayer
- To use kind words

ACADEMIC GOALS

To prepare children to confidently continue on their educational journey

OBJECTIVES

- To create developmentally appropriate activities within the child centered environment
- To recognize individual abilities and adapt teaching methods to address a variety of learning styles

SOCIAL /EMOTIONAL GOALS

To guide each child to develop the appropriate social skills as they interact with others

OBJECTIVES

- To guide children through the process of problem solving
- To help each child develop a positive self image
- To guide each child in appropriate ways to express his/her feelings and body
- To be able to join others in cooperative play as well as to be able to play independently

PHYSICAL GOAL

To guide each child in appropriate control over his/her body as they grow in body awareness

OBJECTIVES

- To assist children in the use of materials which are age specific for each group
- To provide an environment which addresses fine and gross motor development
- To provide the opportunity for outdoor play each day

POLICIES

ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION

- Re-Registration for children already enrolled in the Preschool will be held in February.
- Registration will begin during Catholic School Week in late January.
- Acceptance to St. Mary Preschool is not acceptance to the K-8 school. Kindergarten is a separate registration
- St. Mary does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, national origin, age or physical handicap.
- Tuition payments are made through the FACTS Tuition Management Plan.
- All children must be potty trained before attending St. Mary Preschool.

EARLY DISMISSAL

For the safety and protection of each child, a parent/guardian must send a written request for his/her child's early dismissal. The teachers may release a student only to a parent or authorized person who must come to the school and sign the child out.

DROPOFF / PICKUP

Parking for the Preschool will be designated by orange cones in the parking lot. Please do not park your cars beyond these cones. Proceed to the Preschool building through the open gate in the back of the school. Enter the building through the door marked **Entrance** in front of the school.

If someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, we **must** have a written permission note **each** time, unless you are in a carpool or have a delegated alternate who has been documented as the **regular** pickup person.

All families must use the school parking lot to drop off or pick up your child. Do not use Alden Avenue.

VACATION

Each family receives a copy of the school calendar the summer before school begins.

WITHDRAWAL OR TRANSFER PROCEDURE

Please inform the school office (administration) as soon as you make a decision to transfer your child. A release form must be signed by the parent to authorize the transfer of records. You may obtain a transfer of records form from the school office.

Parents should provide the name and address of the new school, so that the office manager may mail all the appropriate records within a few days. School records cannot be given to the parents - they must be mailed directly to the new school.

BEHAVIOR AND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Discipline is essential to the creation and maintenance of a positive educational environment where all students will be allowed to work to their fullest potential. If it is to be successful, discipline must be based upon and exercised with an unconditional Christian love. It demands being caring enough to give a youngster structure, order, and security. Discipline, when applied in a positive fashion, makes it possible for a child to place limits on himself/herself, and experience the freedom of being in control of his/her own behavior.

St. Mary School employs consistent and fair application of disciplinary measures exercised in a positive fashion and atmosphere. Principal, teachers, and parents have the same high expectations of the student. The child must be free to choose his/her behavior, learn that behavior has consequences, and experience those consequences fully.

WE DO NOT:

- scream
- use physical punishment
- get in a power struggle
- take away food
- expect perfection
- belittle or embarrass a child in front of the group
- compare children
- threaten or make empty promises
- argue
- procrastinate in handling a problem
- punish the entire group

WE DO:

- give clear expectations and limits
- redirect positively
- be fair and firm
- be consistent
- give lots of praise
- prevent problems
- act promptly
- give choices
- do something different if what we're doing doesn't work
- use developmentally appropriate activities
- respect children
- listen to children
- encourage children to verbalize feelings and frustrations
- show affection (hug and cuddle)
- follow through

PRAYER

Prayer is a part of our daily life at school. We start each day with a prayer and say grace before snack time.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Please inform the school office of any change of address, home telephone, work telephone or emergency telephone numbers. It is essential that all information is current in case of an emergency.

CHILD ABUSE

In accordance with the circumstances, the school is legally mandated to report any suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate agency.

FIELD TRIPS

Parents will receive written notification of any trip their child's class is sponsoring *no later than one week before the scheduled departure date*. The written notice will include a permission slip like the following (**to be filled out by the parent**).

Field Trip Request Form

Date of Request _____

I/we ask to allow my/our child _____
(Name of Child)

to take part in _____ on _____
(Name of activity) (Date)

from _____ to _____. Total cost of trip _____.
(Start) (End) (Cost)

I/we understand that _____ assumes no liability concerning this activity.

(Signature of Parent/Guardian)

Parent phone number on day of activity: _____

Emergency Phone number: _____

Parent permission slips for field trips must also be returned to the school two days in advance. No child may attend any trip for which his/her permission slip has not been returned.

HEALTH CONCERNS

A school nurse is available each day of the week. The school nurse and the teacher must be aware of any special needs of the student, such as physical problems, allergies, seizures, etc. If a child is allergic to any substance and has medication to take for a reaction, please be sure the medication is labeled with the name of the student, the name of the drug, the strength and amount to be taken and physician's name if such medication is to be brought to school. (See Medication – next section).

Students who have been ill during the night or appear to be ill in the morning should be kept home. A child should come to school physically well. To prevent the spread of infectious illnesses/diseases to others at the Preschool a child will be excluded from the program for the following reasons:

- Vomiting or infectious diarrhea (return 24 hours after symptoms are gone)
- Untreated conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Impetigo
- Ring worm
- Head lice (all nits must be removed from hair before returning)
- Scabies
- Chicken Pox (until 24 hours after blisters are crusted over)
- Fever above 100, or fever along with other symptoms
- Strep (24 hours and fever is resolved)
- Fifth's disease-contagious before rash appears. Please inform teachers so any pregnant mothers can be informed of possible exposure.

Children will be excluded from Preschool for at least 24 hours after symptoms are gone or until a child has been examined by a physician and has written authorization to return.

If a child comes to Preschool and symptoms are noticed, arrangements will be made for him/her to go home. A parent or emergency contact person will be notified to come to pick up the child immediately.

Teachers and staff are CPR and first aide certified to handle emergencies.

Parents should notify the school (508-842-1601) before 8:15 a.m. if their child/children will be absent. They should give the following information:

- name of caller
- student's name
- reason for absence

MEDICATION

Medication is to be left at the office and taken in the presence of the school nurse, Principal, or a person designated by the Principal. Teachers cannot administer medicine, prescription or non-prescription, under any circumstances.

Medications, prescriptions, or non-prescriptions can not be administered to your child without a prescription from your child's physician.

- All medication, prescription and non-prescription are to be brought in by a parent to the health office.
- All medications must be in the original bottle with child's name, name of the medication, the dose, reason for taking, and time to be given. This includes Advil, Tylenol, eye drops, cough drops, cough syrup and allergy medications.
- No student is allowed to have any medication in their possession including in their cubby or backpack. All medication is dispensed through the Health Office.
- No loose medication will be accepted in a baggie or plastic bag. This is unsafe.
- Parents are to pick up any medications from the health office on the last day of school in June, or they will be disposed of.
- For children with asthma who use an inhaler, both the inhaler and prescription order must be in the office regardless of whether or not it is on a regular basis.
- If your child is vomiting or has a fever, they need to be picked up within ½ hour of the initial telephone call.
- Many students are prone to severe allergic reactions that are treated using an epinephrine-pen (epi-pen). This medication should be provided to the nurse and will be administered to the child on an emergency basis as required. Epi-pens for the Preschool children are stored at the Preschool.

PHYSICAL EXAMS

Massachusetts State Law requires that all new students, regardless of grade level, have a copy of a recent physical and updated immunization record on file before entering school. Any student not in compliance will be excluded from the program.

HOLIDAYS

Legal holidays are school holidays. Refer to the school calendar.

CELEBRATIONS

The Preschool has a multicultural approach to celebrating holidays with age appropriate activities. As a Christian school we celebrate Jesus' birth during the Christmas season and new life during the Easter season.

MONEY

All money collected for various activities or projects must be brought to school in an envelope appropriately marked with the child's name, date, amount and the purpose of the money (i.e. book order money, picture money).

PARENT/TEACHER PARTNERSHIP

We believe a good parent/teacher partnership is necessary for school success. Throughout the year we will communicate through weekly highlight memos, monthly newsletters, notes, phone calls, and conferences. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to send a note or call us at school (508-842-1601).

PARENT ADVISORY GROUP

A Parent Advisory Group is formed in the fall to establish goals to complete during the school year.

PARENT CONFERENCES

The preschool teachers will schedule conferences with parents in the fall regarding Progress Reports. A written student evaluation will be sent home to the parents in February and June.

PERMANENT RECORDS

Health and academic records are kept on file in the school offices for each child who attends the school. These records are confidential and are submitted when lawfully requested.

PHONE CALLS

The Preschool number is unlisted, but is distributed to parents at the beginning of each school year.. This is the only number to be used for school matters. We may not answer the telephone during school session, but you can leave a message on our voice mail and we will return your call.

SCHOOL CANCELLATION

St. Mary School coincides with Shrewsbury Public Schools in weather-related school cancellations. **Listen to radio stations WSRB, WTAG, WFTQ, or WAAF for cancellations, or go to:**

www.ci/shrewsbury.ma.us/Sps/Schools/Central/snow/delay.htm

and click on school delays/cancellations.

If you do not hear that Shrewsbury schools are cancelled, then there will be school. Program C is cancelled in the afternoon when Shrewsbury cancels their afternoon Preschool and Kindergarten classes.

If there is a one-hour delay, there will be a morning session. If there is a two-hour delay there will be no morning session.

Again, please listen to the radio and do not call the school, Pastoral Center or Rectory.

SCHOOL DAY

The school is responsible for the students from Session A (8:30-11:00 am.), Session B (8:30-11:00 am.), and Session C (12:00-3:00 pm.). We open our doors and welcome the children at 8:30 a.m. and 12:00 noon.

Arrival

The arrival and dismissal of students presents a potentially dangerous situation. We take every precaution to safeguard your child(ren). However, there is considerable traffic during pick up and drop off times. Our safeguards are dependent upon your cooperation with the rules below. Please read them carefully and obey them.

- The traffic flow in the parking lot is one-way.
- Parents dropping their child(ren) off at the Preschool must park their cars behind the orange cones. They must walk their children up the tar walkway to the front of the Preschool. Parents will then enter through the coat room door (marked Entrance).

Dismissal

Pickup for each session is as follows:

Session A 11:00 am

Session B 11:00 am

Session C 3:00 pm.

Your children anticipate your arrival at the scheduled times and become distressed if you are late. We would greatly appreciate your cooperation in promptly picking up your child(ren). **A late fee** of \$1.00 per minute will be charged to parents who arrive late picking up their children. A late fee slip will be given to the parent with payment due the next school day.

Every time a student is picked up by someone other than his/her parents a note needs to be sent into the classroom teacher.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Parents will meet with teachers in November and a progress report will be sent home in February and June.

TECHNOLOGY

Students in the Preschool will be using computers under the direct supervision of the teachers.

TUITION

The St. Mary School Advisory Board, in conjunction with the Pastor and Principal, annually set the School's budget and corresponding tuition and fees. Great effort is made to keep St. Mary educational offerings at a reasonable and affordable rate for families.

Tuition Payment Plans

Families will be able to pay their tuition in one of four ways (Note: Plan 2 through 4 are administered through the F.A.C.T.S. Management Company, which authorizes the bank to make an automatic payment from your bank account to them):

Plan 1- Payment in full by July 1st. This payment is made directly to the school and entitles you to a 2% tuition discount. Payments made after July 1st are considered late and the 2% discount will be forfeited.

Plan 2- Two-payment option with payments made through F.A.C.T.S. due on June 5th or 20th and December 5th or 20th (an additional non-refundable F.A.C.T.S. enrollment fee of \$15 per family will apply).

Plan 3- Four quarterly payments through F.A.C.T.S. due on the 5th or 20th of June, September, December, and March (an additional non-refundable F.A.C.T.S. enrollment fee of \$38 per family will apply).

Plan 4- Ten monthly payments through F.A.C.T.S. beginning in June. Payments can be made on either the 5th or 20th each month (an additional non-refundable F.A.C.T.S. enrollment fee of \$38 per family will apply).

Partial Year Attendance

Students who enter St. Mary Preschool after the school year has begun must pay the entire new student registration, but only a part of the tuition. The amount of tuition to be paid by a student during their first year depends on the month in which they start, as follows:

Starting Month	Amount of Tuition Due
September	100%
October	100%
November	90%
December	80%
January	70%
February	60%
March	50%

Students who leave St. Mary Preschool after the school year has begun will receive a partial refund of their tuition, but no refund of other fees. The amount of tuition to be refunded to a student who leaves during the year depends upon the month in which they leave, as follows:

Month student leaves	Amount of Tuition Refunded
September	70%
October	60%
November	50%
December	40%
January and thereafter	none

Delinquent Tuition Accounts

If required tuition payments (based upon the tuition payment program selected) are not made by their due date, and if no other arrangements have been made with either the Pastor of St. Mary Parish or Principal of St. Mary School, then the tuition account is said to be "delinquent". The School reserves the right to request payment in cash or certified check when payment is being made on a delinquent account and/or if the School receives a personal check that does not clear the bank. In addition, a student with a delinquent tuition account may not be entitled to continue classes.

VISITORS

Appointments to visit the preschool should be made through the school office at 508-842-1601. Monthly tours of the Preschool are offered for prospective families.

PARENT INFORMATION

Book Orders

Your child will be bringing home a form to order books each month. If you wish to order, simply fill out the form and send a check written out to Scholastic Books. These orders are provided as a convenient way for parents to buy quality books at a low price. As an added bonus, for each order the teachers earn bonus points used to purchase books for the classroom.

Snack Policy

Nutritious snacks and drinks will be provided by the Preschool program. Food allergies should be listed by the parent on their child's emergency card. Children are encouraged to try all snacks that are served.

Birthdays

Birthdays are very special! We are happy to help the children celebrate in school. Nutritious snacks may be sent to share with other children. A parent could also come in at this time to read a book to their child's class. Please send a note a few days before so we can plan to set time aside to celebrate. Weekend birthdays have an option of picking Friday or Monday. The teachers will set aside a time at the end of the year to celebrate summer birthdays.

School Pictures

Parents will be notified in the fall with the date of when a group school picture will be taken.

Clothing

Uniforms are not required at the Preschool. Please send in an extra set of clothing in a plastic Ziploc bag clearly marked with your child's name on it. Please be sure that all clothing coming into the Preschool is labeled with your child's name.

Outdoor Recess

The children will be going out for recess everyday unless it is raining or extremely cold. Please keep this in mind when dressing your child. For the most part, if your child is well enough to be at school, he/she is well enough to participate in outdoor recess. Germs that cause colds thrive more readily in the heated indoor air and it is beneficial to go outside and get some fresh air. We are responsible for outdoor supervision and are not available to stay inside with a sick child.

School Hours

Class hours are as follows:

Program A: 8:30-11:00 am.

Program B: 8:30-11:00 am.

Program C: 12:00-3:00 pm.

PARENT / TEACHER COMMUNICATON

Communication with parents is done via a monthly newsletter, our web site (www.stmarysparish.org/school) and daily contact with parents.

Teacher's hours are 8:00 a.m.-3:15 p.m. Teachers are available for telephone conferences or questions Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 11:15 a.m.-11:30 a.m. and Wednesday's from 11:15 a.m.-3:15 p.m.

PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

St. Mary School Preschool provides an outstanding preschool program that focuses on the development of the whole child: social, emotional, intellectual, physical and spiritual. Our curriculum is designed to help each child develop a positive self-esteem and to establish a foundation of learning. Instruction will provide activities to stimulate, challenge, and meet the abilities and interest of the children. Each child will have the opportunity to enjoy success by actively participating in hands-on activities and communicating in all forms.

An integrated approach will provide learning centers where children actively engage in learning. These different areas will strive to foster learning experiences that expand the children's knowledge of the world and themselves. The teachers will serve as the facilitators of this learning, setting up centers in all curriculum areas. These centers will be designed around specific themes providing a variety of learning opportunities.

Learning through Play

Your child will develop important skills that support later academic success through the quality play activities offered at St. Mary Preschool.

As you visit your child's classroom, look to see if you can find these important learning centers:

Alphabet Center

A special emphasis on letter and word recognition in this center reinforces the integrated approach our pre-school environment provides on a daily basis.

Library and Writing Center	Children are exposed to books and print. Children will use language, share thoughts, sequence events, use visual discrimination, learn to appreciate books and begin to value reading and writing as communication tools.
Math and Science Center	Children will develop an understanding of number concepts through the use of math manipulatives. Their sense of wonder and natural curiosity about the world around them is the focus for science.
Manipulative Center	Children will use a variety of manipulatives such as Lego's, sorting and building objects, pegboards, puzzles and play dough, to develop imagination and fine motor coordination. Children will also discover relationships based on color, size and shape while refining their ability to make choices.
Multi Sensory Tub	Children will develop fine motor skills and an awareness of spatial relationships within a multi sensory environment as they learn to share materials and relax tensions.
Block Area	Children will develop the ability to create designs, understand spatial relationships, and foster their imaginations while learning how to share and respect the work of each other.
Family Living Center	Role-playing is an important skill that teaches children to listen to each other, observe behaviors, and resolve conflicts while promoting their language development.
Art Center	Children will explore color, shape, and texture utilizing a variety of mediums. Art projects encourage the freedom to express the beauty in their world and help to develop the child's sense of self-confidence.
Music and Movement	Children will participate in movement activities which will aid in developing language, imagination, listening skills, and sound discrimination. Exposure to a variety of rhythms and beats broadens your child's awareness and appreciation of many cultures.
Circle Time	Circle time allows children to be part of a larger community. They talk about their plans for the day and participate in large group activities. Children will

share information, and take turns while developing language and listening skills.

Computer Center

Children will develop eye hand coordination as they explore a variety of educational software.

A typical day in our classroom:

Arrival:

Take care of personal belongings: backpack, coat, take attendance, and greet friends and free play.

Circle Time :

Prayer, calendar, weather, sharing news, introduce the theme-based activities of the day at each center.

Learning Centers:

The children will meet with the teachers in small groups at the learning centers daily. All centers are open and available. Children also enjoy open-ended free play in the classroom with their choice of manipulatives and open-ended centers like the ones mentioned above.

Clean Up Time:

Community building experience.

Story, Fingerplays, Music and Movement: Large group time.

Grace/Snack:

Say grace and serve snack.

Gross Motor Activity: Outdoor/Indoor:

Children go outside on most days. Children should dress for outdoor activities.

Dismissal:

Pack up students' belongings, dress to go home and say goodbye to friends.

**St. Mary Preschool
Parent / Student / Preschool Agreement**

This St. Mary Preschool Parent / Student Handbook contains policies and information about basic procedures used to operate our school. In order to run a successful program, we feel it is necessary for you to understand these policies and procedures. This handbook should be read carefully and then placed in a convenient location in your home for quick and easy reference. Each family will receive **one** handbook while attending Preschool. The agreement page will be sent home each year to be signed and returned.

After you have read the Preschool handbook, we ask that you sign and return this agreement within one week.

OUR FAMILY HAS READ THE ST. MARY PRESCHOOL PARENT / STUDENT HANDBOOK AND HAVE HAD ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES ANSWERED. WE UNDERSTAND OUR OBLIGATION TO COOPERATE WITH THE ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY, AND STAFF AND TO ABIDE IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF ALL ITS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.

PARENT SIGNATURE: _____ **date**

_____ **date**