

ST. MARY'S
PRESCHOOL
PARENT HANDBOOK

815-895-5215

Sycamore, Illinois

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

We, the family of St. Mary's School, commit to providing a distinctly Catholic environment that promotes lifelong spiritual growth and academic excellence.

ST. MARY'S SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

St. Mary's School is an integral part of St. Mary's Parish, Sycamore, within the Diocese of Rockford. It strives to serve as an example of Christian living and learning to the entire community of Sycamore.

Guided by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit, our philosophy aims to provide teachers, students, and parents with the experiences of Christian community at worship, work and play as an introduction to a complete life-style which takes its meaning from the gospels.

We are committed to assisting parents in their role as educators of nurturing the continual growth and development of their children.

We are a child centered environment which stimulates the growth of the total child: spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, physically and culturally. Recognizing individual talents and abilities, it provides an educational program that allows children to develop to their fullest extent as responsible persons prepared to meet the challenges of an ever-changing community, church and world.

We strive to spread the message of Christ in a way that will blossom into a community of love and care, characterized by prayer, peace, justice and service.

ST. MARY'S PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

St. Mary's Preschool Program will provide all children with a rich and varied preschool experience. Children will be part of a carefully planned environment that allows individuals to learn through active exploration and discovery. There will be an emphasis on learning at one's own pace, and an appreciation for developmentally appropriate activities. Children will be given opportunities to think and do through hands-on manipulations. Art, music, science, literature, reading, and math activities, as well as indoor/outdoor play will be provided in a stimulating and nurturing environment. Learning about God and Jesus will be an integral part of the program.

ST. MARY'S PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of St. Mary's Catholic Preschool is to provide a loving, Christian environment for children to grow intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. We want our children to build a positive self-image; explore their natural sense of wonder, discover their creative spirit; learn problem solving skills; develop self-control and consideration for others; increase coordination, balance, and body image; and know that learning is fun!

Our Preschool believes that children learn through guided play. Children construct their knowledge by touching, tasting, smelling, watching, listening, thinking and doing. Our child-centered curriculum encourages choice-making, autonomy, and social competence. The exploration of music and movement, science and nature, families and culture, art and drama, and language and numbers are integrated into the Preschool day. Indoor and outdoor activities are planned with the concern for individual needs and developmental differences.

ADMISSION AND DISCHARGE POLICIES

St. Mary's School shall admit preschool students without regard to their race, gender, color, religion, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students.

St. Mary's School will not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, color, religion, national or ethnic origin in the administration of their educational and admissions policies, scholarship and loan program, and other programs.

The Preschool will admit children who reach age 3 on or before September 1st to the three-year-old class. Children who are age 4 on or before September 1st may be enrolled in the four-year-old class.

The state of Illinois requires every student enrolled in a licensed preschool to have a physical examination not more than six months prior to admission. The doctor's report must be on forms prescribed by the state. All immunizations must be current.

A child will be discharged from the program:

- at the parent's request. Two weeks notice or two weeks tuition must be paid. No refunds will be made of fees.
- at the request of the teacher/administrator, if
 - the program does not meet the child's individual needs.
 - the presence of the child is detrimental to the group.
 - tuition is not paid on time.

In the event that we find it is in the best interest of the child to end enrollment, the child's and parents' needs shall be considered by planning with the parent(s) to meet the child's needs when he/she leaves the facility, including referrals to other agencies or facilities.

ABSENCES

Parents are asked to notify St. Mary's School (815-895-5215) prior to 8:30 a.m. on any day their child will not be in attendance for illness or any other reason. If the school does not hear from the home, the secretary will call to inquire about the absence. This is a safety measure. A student who has been absent five (5) days or more may be asked to present a physician's statement before returning to class.

****Students must be fever free (without Tylenol, Motrin, etc) for a full 24 hours before returning to school.**

****24 hours must pass since last vomiting occurrence before returning to school.**

****24 hours must pass before last bout of diarrhea before returning to school.**

AUTHORIZATION OF RELEASE

No child will be released to anyone, but the parent(s)/guardian(s). Anyone other than the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be authorized by the parent or guardian in writing. Photo identification will be required of anyone not known to the Preschool staff.

CHANGES

Our records must include a completed and up-to-date Emergency Form. Please notify the teacher immediately, in writing, if any changes are made.

CHILD ABUSE

Our staff is required by law to report to the Department of Children and Family Services any suspected victims of child abuse or child neglect.

CONFERENCES

Conferences are held in the spring. Conferences are also available upon request by the teacher and/or parent. These conferences are aimed at maintaining continuous communication and discuss preparation for kindergarten.

DISCIPLINE

We at St. Mary's School expect the students of our school to model Christian behavior in school, at home and throughout the community. Preschool students are expected to be cooperative in school, and all school activities, and show respect for themselves, for one another, and for all the members of the school and parish community.

Everyday classroom behavior will be under the direction of the Preschool staff that will guide, correct or discipline as needed. The Preschool staff will use disciplinary techniques designed to help individual children develop self-control and to assume responsibility for their own acts. Behavior progress will be communicated daily at preschool pick-up.

DRILLS

Fire and tornado and lock-down drills are held regularly, as required by state law.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

In case of emergencies requiring treatment, St. Mary's School will contact you immediately. If you cannot be reached, your child will be taken to the hospital you have requested on the pink Emergency Form.

St. Mary's Preschool teacher is trained in CPR/AED and Basic First-Aid.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips shall be determined by the Preschool teacher. Parents will be notified and must sign a permission slip for their child to be included. Transportation will be provided by the parents.

HEALTH INFORMATION

When a child becomes ill, the teacher will send him/her to the school office. If the child needs to be sent home, the secretary will notify the parent or the person listed on the emergency form. The secretary will also notify the principal and the teacher that the child is being sent home.

In case of accident, minor first aid will be administered by school personnel in accordance with the provisions in the emergency health form. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to contact a doctor or take the child to the hospital.

In the event of serious illness or injury, paramedics will be called immediately and the parent will be notified. Parents are responsible for payment of medical, ambulance, and/or hospital fees.

As an aid to parents in the evaluation of a child's health before going to school, the following should be considered:

It is **required** to keep your child home when these symptoms occur:

- diarrhea
- excessive coughing and sneezing
- fever of 99.8 or higher taken in the morning
- headache or earache
- inflamed, swollen, reddened or watery eyes
- nausea or vomiting
- red or swollen joints
- contagious skin rashes or open sores
- unusual skin pallor

Your child must stay home 24 hours after an elevated temperature has returned to normal, without the use of any fever-reducing medicine. If you send your child to school after an illness, neither aspirin nor Tylenol, etc. is dispensed in school.

INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSING

School closing due to severe weather or other unusual circumstance will be announced between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. on the following local radio stations: WDKB-FM (94.9), WLBK-AM (1360), WSQR-AM (1560). St. Mary School follows the same procedure as the Sycamore School District.

Any school closing will also be posted on the school website www.stmarysycamore.org and at www.emergencyclosings.com as well as WGN television Channel 9.

If a tornado warning is in effect, parents should not send children to school. If the warning comes while school is in session, appropriate measures will be instituted by school personnel.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents are encouraged to become involved with their child's Preschool class. Volunteer help will be appreciated.

All volunteers (over the age of 17) are required to take the "Protecting God's Children" class, have a state criminal background check, and fill out three forms: Mandated Reporter acknowledgement, Code of Pastoral Conduct, and the Sexual Misconduct Norms in order to work with children. All of the above information can be located www.rockforddiocese.org

PRESCHOOL UNIFORM GUIDELINES

- All preschoolers must dress in uniform described below.
- On days when students wear boots to school due to inclement weather, they must bring athletic shoes to wear indoors.
- **Pull-ups/training pants are not permitted.**
- Make-up is not age appropriate for preschoolers.

PRESCHOOL UNIFORM

Gray St. Mary's gym t-shirt, available on the school order form in the office, or at the uniform exchange at back-to-school night.

Navy blue gym shorts or navy blue skort for girls, may be worn from the beginning of the school year until October 15th and from April 15th until the end of the school year (weather permitting), shorts are available on the school order form in the office, or at the uniform exchange at back-to-school night. Skorts for girls may be purchased at any department store.

Navy blue gym St. Mary's sweatshirt and gym sweatpants for cold weather and October 15th through April 15th, available on the school order form in the office, or at the uniform exchange at back-to-school night.

Pair Closed-toe Shoes and socks

SCHOOL CALENDAR

The first day of school for four-year-olds will be Monday, August 22nd, and three-year-olds it will be Tuesday, August 23rd, 2016. School holidays will follow St. Mary's School calendar, which (for the most part) follows the Sycamore School District 427 calendar.

SCHOOL HOURS

The Preschool will be in session on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. for three-year-olds. The Preschool will be in session Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. for four year olds. *There is an extended care opportunity for 4-year olds.* They will eat lunch (provided by the parent) from 12:00-12:30 and then will return to the classroom for enrichment from 12:30 pm – 2:55 pm.. (There is an opportunity to go to after school BASE program until 5:30pm. for an additional fee.)

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Please bring a full change of clothes (socks, underpants, shirt, pants,) in a labeled zip-loc bag to be kept in the child's backpack.

Parents will provide a backpack large enough to hold a folder and extra clothes.

A Classroom School Supply list will be sent home at Back-to-School Night in August. You will be notified of the date later."

SNACKS

Under the Illinois licensing provision, a mid-session snack is required. The children will take turns providing snacks/drinks for the entire class. A monthly calendar will be sent home by the teacher. Snacks must be peanut-free. No homemade snacks are allowed under Illinois licensing.

TUITION AND FEES

All tuition is paid through automatic withdrawals from a personal checking or savings account. These payments are due the first of the month. Each family needs to have the authorization form in the office by May 31st for the following school year, if possible.

Tuition for 3-yr old preschool is \$1150.00/year or \$115.00/month spread over a 10 month period July – April.

Tuition for 4-yr old preschool is \$1580.00/year or \$158.00/month spread over a 10 month period July – April.

*Based on 3 days a week of 104 school days in the preschool year, the cost is about \$15.00/day for four hours of care and instructional enrichment.

*If your child will be enrolled in the Preschool Afternoon Enrichment, the total cost of the program would be \$1450.00/year.

*BASE (after-school enrichment until 5:30 pm.) will be available at additional cost. Contact school office for more information.

I have read the St. Mary's Preschool PARENT HANDBOOK and I agree to support its provisions.

My children are:

NAME

CLASS

Parent Signature

Date