

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to a new year! We are ready to go! There is so much information, so many routines, rules and procedures and so much to remember. We are sending this handbook home with the intention of making life a little easier. Please keep it in a safe place.

Our Philosophy:

As Catholic early childhood educators, we minister to the whole Child; MIND, HEART, and HANDS, in a trusting, warm, gentle, safe and nurturing, Christian environment. We enable the children to develop spiritually, emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually. Understanding their uniqueness, we provide various opportunities for them to discover, explore, question and share. We facilitate an atmosphere that nurtures a child's special relationship with God, develops self-confidence, a love for learning and a respect for self and others.

Goals:

FACILITATE opportunities in spiritual, physical, social, cognitive and language development.

INITIATE an atmosphere where children begin a friendship with God.

GENERATE in the early learner the value of life.

NURTURE a warm, caring environment that develops self-esteem and a positive attitude toward learning.

Content of Program:

Development:

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT:

Experience God through prayer, music, art and literature.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:

Develop body through large motor activities, small motor activities, creative movement, block building, art activities, table, sand and water activities.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT:

Develop language through monthly units, listening and speaking, sharing time, role-playing, finger plays and poems, stories, and songs.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

Learn to play with others through free play, organized games, sharing experiences, and community awareness.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT:

Love to learn through story time, manipulative math experiences, problem solving, science discovery and cooking. Pre-K 4's begin to develop language and math readiness skills for Kindergarten (i.e. naming, writing, letter/number recognition, etc.)

PRE KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL HOURS Half Day 7:55 – 11:30 Full Day 7:55 – 2:30

Number of Days Attending
2 Half Days
2 Full Days
3 Half Days
3 Full Days
4 Half Days
4 Full Days
5 Half Days
5 Full Days

WEDNESDAYS ONLY - DISMISSAL - 2:05 P.M.

12:30 DISMISSAL

PRE-K 3 Half Day AM Session 7:55 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.
Full Day Session

PRE-K 4_ Half Day AM Session 7:55 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.
Full Day Session

11:30 DISMISSAL

PRE-K 3 Half Day AM Session 7:55 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.
Full Day Session

PRE-K 4_ Half Day AM Session 7:55 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.
Full Day Session

2 HOUR DELAY ONLY 9:55 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. - for ALL students -Pre-K to 8th Grade. Half day students have regular dismissal time.

Remember to listen to WTIC 1080 AM or watch Channel 30, WVIT, for no school, delayed opening or early closing announcements for the **BRISTOL PUBLIC SCHOOLS. A Parent Alert will also be sent by phone.**

Times are subject to change.

Children may **be dropped off at 7:30 AM.** Children are required to be in school by 7:55 for PreK 4 and 8:00 for Pre-K 3. For the **first month** of school, please feel free to bring your child into the cubby room and assist with hanging jackets, emptying backpacks, etc. By the end of the first month, unless there is still a situation with separation and we have discussed it, most will be relatively comfortable with leaving you at the door. Please try to encourage this as much as possible. The sooner we get your child in and busy, the faster the situation will be resolved and all will settle down. We will make every effort to call you and let you know how your child is doing, if you left him/her in a tearful state.

Routines are an integral part of a child's day. Consistency in the routine gives the children a sense of security. Sticking to a schedule helps the children learn what is expected, what is coming next and gives him/her a sense of belonging. They become very in-tuned to details. How they will be going home is very important to them. Be sure to tell your child and teacher if transportation arrangements are going to be changed. Sometimes details and changes in routine become confusing and can potentially cause unnecessary stress and worry. We will not release your child to anyone that we have not previously seen a photo of or met personally. We have no problem asking to see a **driver's license** or another form of photo ID. It is important that we receive a **signed note** from you stating the date, name of the person picking up your child, a description of the person (preferably a photo) and type of car they will be driving. We are sure you understand that this caution is for your child's protection and safety.

It is essential that you are punctual for drop-off and pick-up. Again, for picking up, being late could cause anxiety in the children. We understand there could be extenuating circumstances. If this happens, please call the main school office at 583-5214, if you are going to be more than 5 or 10 minutes late.

Arrival/Dismissal

Arrival for all Pre-Kindergarten students, enter by way of **back door** of the Pre-School, **only.**

Dismissal for all Pre-Kindergarten students, exit by way of **back door** of the Pre-School, **only.**

Parking for Pre K: Parents may park on Welch Drive, but please do not block the bus line or parents may enter the school yard for parking. If entering the school yard, please enter from Welch Drive, but parents must exit through the parking lot behind the school and turn onto Anderson Drive. Parents are to park and walk to the **back door** of the Convent, in order to drop-off or pickup their child. Please **do not** use the front door of Convent.

Older siblings of Pre-Kindergarten students will be brought to the Pre-Kindergarten dismissal line, by a teacher, for dismissal to the parent. Parents are asked to write a note to the older sibling's teacher to insure that your child is added to this special dismissal line.

Health

All students are required to have physical examination by their pediatrician before entrance into school. Children cannot begin class unless this physical has been submitted. This is a state law and will be strictly enforced.

Illness and Injuries

Please do not send your child to class if you suspect he/she is ill. A child who is ill will be tended to in a quiet area of the room away from the rest of the students, and a parent will be contacted to come and take the child home as soon as possible. Please let the school health aide and us know if you believe your child has contracted a contagious disease (i.e., chicken pox, pink eye, etc.).

In case of a serious injury, the school health aide will be notified, and she will administer first aid. You will be either contacted by phone or note, depending on the seriousness of the accident. Minor injuries will be taken care of in our classroom.

When a child is absent from school, parents are requested to call the school office in the morning. Any student, who has been absent, is required to return to school with a note stating the reason for his/her absence. This note should have the dates of absence as well. The note must be signed by you, the parent, and given to the teacher.

Progress

It is your privilege, as a parent, to remain totally informed of your child's progress. You are free to contact us at any time for an appointment to discuss your child's performance. When requesting a meeting, you can either put it in writing or speak to one of the teachers at drop off or pick up time to set a convenient time.

Dress Code

Pre-Kindergarten students do not have a formal uniform. However, there are some guidelines that we need to abide by. Children should come to school each day in clean and neat attire. Girls may wear earring posts that fit close to the earlobes. Boys may not wear earrings. Haircuts and hairstyles should be in keeping with our Catholic school students. Boys' hair must be evenly cut, may not touch the collar, and may not include shaved lines. Girls' hair should be neat and combed out of the face. **No clogs, jellies, flip-flops, or sandals are to be worn as they make it very difficult for the children to run and play if we should go out on the playscape. Please keep this in mind on nice days. We try to go out as much as possible. Sneakers and appropriate gym attire are to be worn on designated gym days.**

Please always have a spare set of clothes in a plastic ziplock bag to be kept in the bottom of the student's bookbag for emergency use.

Snack/Lunch

Pre-Kindergarten students are asked to bring their own snacks. Please provide a 100% juice box or a thermos with a drink that your child likes. Please keep the snack simple and nutritional. One food item and a small drink seem to be sufficient, in most cases. Try to avoid snacks that are high in sugar, i.e., soda. **Please do not send in to school, snacks or lunches that contain nuts or peanut butter. Please, no glass containers.**

Today, children have all kinds of allergies, food allergies being one of our greatest concerns. Since children are easily persuaded by friends to exchange foods, we encourage you to talk with your child at home about allergies, and how important it is not to share their snacks brought from home. Sometimes it is right not to share if it means you remain safer.

Please alert the school to any **allergies**, by way of a doctor's note, before the start of school.

Celebrations

Both classrooms celebrate special occasions (Halloween, Thanksgiving etc.) together with healthy treats. Prior to any celebration, ample notification will be given both on the monthly classroom calendar and via Bloomz a communication App used by the school faculty. Birthdays will be celebrated individually with the family providing a special snack for the class that day. Please refrain from bringing in any classroom treat that contains nuts. We are a nut-free community.

Art Time

Art projects are a daily occurrence. There is no need for you to send in a paint smock at this time. We have a good supply of plastic full cover smocks in our classroom. We found that t-shirts are not a very good substitute for long-sleeved vinyl. Also, please dress your child in play clothes as much as possible. Children at this age love to really get into their work. We know how difficult it is to keep things nice when they are worn in an early childhood classroom. We can get messy!!

Stationery/School Items

The cost of stationery/school items is included in the tuition amount. These items will be given to the students in school.

Home and School Association

The chief purpose of the **Home and School Association (HSA)** is to promote communication and cooperation between parents and the school staff, as well as provide vital support, both financially and spiritually.

Membership

The Home and School membership will consist of all fathers, mothers and guardians of the pupils of St. Matthew School, and members of the faculty.

Assessment Fee

Each family is charged an assessment amount that is to be earned or paid over the duration of the current school year from May 1 to April 30. **The Assessment Fee for the School Year is \$300 (\$250 for new families).**

This amount is not an optional charge but is required to minimize tuition increases and assist the Home and School Association in meeting its annual budget for fundraising. The assessment is due by April 30 prior to the end of the current school year. Any unpaid amount is added to the following year's assessment amount and families do not receive credit for the new school year's assessment until the prior year's outstanding balance is paid in full.

Ways in which to pay your Assessment:

1. Pay the \$300 in full.
2. Participate in fundraisers throughout the year.
3. Volunteer up to 10 hours which equals up to \$100 towards the assessment and either pay the balance or continue fundraising to pay the remaining balance.
4. The assessment can be earned by participating in the gift card program.

In place of sending out monthly assessment reports, you can access your report at www.shopwithscrip.com and enter your username and password to access "reports" link.

If you do not have access to the internet, please let the scrip coordinator know and we can send you monthly reports. The reports will list what you have earned in scrip and vouchers (other fundraisers). When you have reached \$300, (\$250 for new families) all earnings above this will go towards a chosen incentive program.

Unpaid balances as of April 30 will be billed in May and must be paid by May 31 of the current school year.

Responsibilities

1. To meet the annual assessment through fundraising.
2. To promote communication and cooperation between the school and the home.
3. To influence public opinion and support federal and state legislation for the benefit of nonpublic schools.
4. To foster a better understanding of the goals and spirit of Catholic education in the school and parish.

5. To assist parents in fulfilling their role as primary educators.

Meetings

The HSA meetings are held four times a year. All meetings are held in the school gym at 6:30 p.m. Attendance by the members is crucial to attaining our objectives.

It's All In the Name

As the cold weather approaches, so do scarves, hats, gloves, mittens, boots and coats. One way to assure that your child will return home with his/her correct attire, **please put your child's name on all personal items**, including, but not limited to, backpacks and lunchboxes. One way to keep small items like hats and mittens from getting lost, we try to remind the children to tuck them into the sleeves of their coats. It is helpful if you work on this at home, also. This technique is very effective because your child cannot get his/her arms into the sleeves of a coat or sweater without finding other items that need to go home with him/her.

Pre-Kindergarten is the place to teach socialization. Dr. Mitch Golant and Susan Golant write in Kindergarten It Isn't What It Used to Be:

"We teach our children about rules by setting examples and by creating limits and following through with appropriate consequences. Your guidance is necessary. Otherwise, your child will have a hard time keeping friends and getting along with others in the world. Children who are socially competent have the ability to form and maintain friendships with other children. Your role as parent, paraprofessional, and classroom volunteer is to set the stage for and reinforce social learning that occurs in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten...socialization also means that your child abides by rules and limits created by your family, your school and society. These might include; wait your turn without shoving, express your feelings in words, share, and be polite to adults and peers. In fact, every family and every school in every culture has rules and limits. Otherwise, life would be chaos for all of us."

Communication

The communication envelopes are the big school's means of keeping in touch with all parents. They go home with the oldest child in the family. Any envelopes we will be distributing, will be placed in your child's backpack. **When you return the white communication envelope to school, please make sure you have signed it, and placed it in your child's backpack. Please use this envelope to communicate with the front office.**

Our classrooms will also be using two other forms of communication: Bloomz and the "daily folder" that we will provide. Bloomz is an electronic app that you will be invited to join at the beginning of the year. Bloomz allows the home/school community to be connected. Teachers can send out posts as great things happen and keep you informed if when issues should arise. It also allows parents to communicate with teachers, as well as, sign up to assist in events in the classroom. All children will be given a "daily folder" at the start of

school. This folder is for paper communication (calendars, notes, permission forms, etc.) between the teachers and families. All information regarding the classroom and/or children will be sent home through this folder. Please send it back to school every day.

Monthly Calendar and Classroom Routines

Each month we will provide a calendar, separate from the big school calendar, providing specials, activities, classroom themes, and curriculum being "explored". The hope for this calendar is to keep everyone informed of our classroom happenings and allow family members the opportunity to speak with their children about their school day. As you will find, a day in the Pre-K class is always full of surprises. To keep us all on the same learning path, we establish classroom routines at the beginning of the year. Each student will have a job he or she is responsible for each day. **We rotate these jobs each week so that the children become familiar with each job and eventually complete them all without assistance.**

Daily Schedule

Each child that enters our classrooms has his or her own way of learning. They find their own preference as to how they "learn" the best. Having a classroom set up around "center-based" learning allows each child to find his or her preference and/or fine tune an existing one. Providing centers will allow each child to learn at his or her own pace and be guided through repetition to master the skills needed both academically and personally. Our centers offer activities in language arts, math, science and/or social studies, art, stories, and technology. Our schedule also allows the teachers to assist those who may be struggling or need additional assistance.

Below is a sample of our daily schedule excluding "Specials" that change annually. We do, however, adapt accordingly when an unforeseen event occurs (i.e. assembly, fire drill, party, need for a walk outside, etc.).

	PRE-K 3	PRE-K 4
7:30 - 7:55AM	Arrival and directed morning activity Cleanup at 8:10AM	Arrival and directed morning activity Cleanup at 8:10AM
8:10 - 8:30AM	Chapel - prayer, mission, pledge, and daily message.	Chapel - prayer, mission, pledge, and daily message.
8:30 - 9:00AM	Circle Time (Calendar, songs & rhymes) Religion	Circle Time (Calendar, songs & rhymes) Religion
9:00 - 9:40AM	Bathroom, snack, small recess (or directed activity)	Bathroom, snack, small recess (or directed activity)
9:45 - 10:45AM	Centers - students move in groups through language, math, science, and art (15m intervals)	Centers - students move in groups through language & reading groups, math, science, and art (15m intervals)
10:45 - 11:10AM	Outdoor recess if weather permitting Indoor recess - whole group activity (music and movement, games)	Outdoor recess if weather permitting Indoor recess - whole group activity (music and movement, games)
11:15 - 11:25AM	AM Wrap Up - End of morning prayer AM student dismissal	AM Wrap Up - End of morning prayer AM student dismissal
11:30 - 12:15PM	Bathroom, Lunch, Book Buddies	Bathroom, Lunch, Book Buddies
12:15 - 12:30PM	Prep for rest time	Book Buddies
12:30 - 1:30PM	Rest Time	-----
12:30 - 12:45PM	-----	PM Circle Time
12:45 - 1:30PM	-----	PM Centers and Enrichment
1:30 - 1:45PM 1:45 - 2:10PM	If awake, bathroom and visit with PK 4 Outdoor recess weather permitting Indoor whole group activity	Bathroom Outdoor recess weather permitting Indoor whole group activity
2:10 - 2:20PM 2:25PM 2:30PM	PM Wrap Up, pack up, afternoon prayer GAP students leave for GAP Pre-K express and Car rider dismissal	PM Wrap Up, pack up, afternoon prayer GAP students leave for GAP Pre-K express and Car rider dismissal

The schedule is modified for half days, Wednesday 2:05PM dismissal, and to add specials (i.e. gym, library, computers etc.)

Gym Class

They will be having gym once every week for 40 minutes. **Please dress your child in sneakers and shorts or pants on this day.** We may do a short jog, exercises and a group game or large motor activity. **Dress shoes and dresses are not conducive for these types**

of activities. Also, if it is a nice day, these types of clothing are recommended for playtime on the playscape. We try to get outside for at least 10 minutes on nice days.

Finally, we love extra sets of hands, especially at parties and celebrations. However, all helpers: Moms, Dads, Grandparents, etc. must follow and model school/classroom rules and policies, and be Virtus trained.

Thank you for your cooperation, kindness, help and support. We know this year will be a blessing for all of us. We are all looking forward to spending time with you and your beautiful children, watching them grow and bloom. Thank you for allowing us to share in their nurturing.

God Bless you and Welcome