

St. Joseph
Catholic School
Nursery-Toddler Program



Parent & Student Handbook
2023-2024

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Welcome to St. Joseph Catholic School! In choosing St. Joseph Catholic School, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education.

This handbook presents the philosophy, policies, and programs of St. Joseph Catholic School. The intent is to strengthen the covenant between home and school. The education of a child in this institution is wholeheartedly dedicated to this covenant we hold with parent and child. Parents are the primary educators of their children, and the cooperation of home and school is essential if a child is to reach his/her full potential. Parents and family share a very important part in our school's mission. It is the intent of St. Joseph Catholic School that the parents take a primary role in the education process. Personal and frequent contact between the family, teachers, principal, and staff is not only possible but also encouraged.

It is intended that parents keep and use this handbook for reference as needed. Efforts have been made to include all facets of our school in this handbook. The handbook will be periodically updated when more efficient processes are realized.

The faculty and staff of St. Joseph Catholic school look forward to working with you to promote academic excellence and spiritual development in the context of the teachings of the Catholic Church and Jesus Christ.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of St. Joseph Catholic School is to provide an opportunity for all students to develop a sense of God's loving presence through academic excellence, Christian awareness and spiritual growth.

"Today in St. Joseph Catholic School, let us be aware of the presence of God in all that we do. God loves each of us! We have been given many gifts for the good of others. Today let us be ready to learn and grow in mind, heart and spirit."

No child shall be denied admission to St. Joseph Catholic School in the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston, based upon race, color or nationality.

PARENTAL COVENANT

- 1. Sign child(ren) in and out of the building using the school's 'Drop Off and Pick-Up' signing procedure. Parents must print and sign daily along with the sign in/out procedures through Tadpoles. This is a West Virginia State requirement and MUST be fulfilled for each visit. There will be no exceptions to this policy.**
2. All students enrolled in SJCS must have a state birth certificate, a recent (within one year) health screening and up to date immunization records that must comply with the CDC recommended Immunization Schedule. A copy of these records MUST be given to the office prior to the first day of attendance NO EXCEPTIONS!
3. Keep the child home when ill. **Per DHHR and West Virginia State Licensing regulations a child that has a fever, vomiting, or has diarrhea must be kept home until 24 hours after the fever breaks or the last incident occurs. If a child is sent home with any of these symptoms, the child is not to return to school the next day.**

***During the time of our critical care license, any student that does not meet visual and medical questionnaire questions, or with a fever of more than 100, will not be permitted to enter the building. Students with a fever must remain out of school for 72 hours after the fever has broken without fever-reducing medications. We will not allow a doctor's note for returning before 72 hours if a child becomes sick during the day.**

4. Notify the school of any serious illness (asthma, allergies, etc.) and ensure all information is completed on the enrollment application. The child's medical forms accompanied with an official letter from the doctor indicating diagnoses. Notify the school along with a doctor's note if the child is not to take part in physical activity or outside play.
5. Parental Concerns
 - a. If the concern results from some problem or misunderstanding in the classroom, the parent should speak directly with the child's teacher.
 - b. After consultation with the teacher, if the parent believes the issue has not been resolved, the next step is to request an appointment with the principal.
6. Notify the school of any change of address, telephone number or emergency information in a timely fashion. Please ensure information is changed in the office as well.
7. Provide and maintain all legal documentation ordered by the court with regards to custody and visitation rights of each parent. Documents must contain the court's stamp.
8. Support the school in its activities and when possible offer your gift of time and talent in support of the teachers and school.
9. Monitor regularly the school website for forms, calendar information and upcoming events etc.
10. Ensure prompt weekly payment. Failure to do so may result in not only a fee, but also the loss of child/ren's place in the school. Weekly payment is not prorated for partial weeks.
11. Ensure registration process is complete prior to the first day of attendance. This includes online registration, financial contract signed, and state birth certificate and current immunizations turned into the office.
12. Photographs of students and school events shall not be posted on individual social network sites. The use of the school logo and school name is strictly prohibited.
13. Acknowledge that social network sites are not the correct forum for discussing school issues, faculty, staff or students. **Any forms of inappropriate postings on social websites will result in immediate termination of child/ren's placement at St. Joseph Catholic School.**

ADMISSION

1. The order of acceptance in this program is as follows: siblings of current students, parishioner, out of Parish Catholic, and Non-Catholic.
2. **Placement: Room placement is at the discretion of the administration. Children will be placed according to development and sometimes transitioned to an older classroom when deemed appropriate. Children remain in the Nursery/Toddler program until the age of two. If a child turns two prior to July 1st they will be placed in the Pre K2 program.**
3. A parent enrolling their children in any grade must have an interview with the principal and complete an application, present appropriate documents (i.e. state sealed birth certificate, baptismal certificate, health and immunization records, and custodial papers).
4. Items to bring: diapers, bottles, formula/breast milk, pacifiers, mobiles for cribs, individual snacks.

ALL PROGRAMS

The Nursery/Toddler program's underlying philosophy draws from Jean Piaget's work on cognitive development, Erik Erikson's stages of socio-emotional development, and accepted theories of how children learn best. The approach is practical, easy-to-understand, and immediately applicable to a variety of settings. This excellent program is also based upon a framework of six different aspects including; how children develop and learn, the learning environment, what children learn, the teacher's role, the family's role, and research theory.

During the Nursery/Toddler program hours from 7:30 to 5:00 the children participate in a variety of daily activities including but not limited to:

1. Developmentally appropriate physical activity
2. Outdoor play/walk
3. Music/ Dance
3. Art and Crafts
4. Story time
5. Nap
6. Lunch/Snack

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications from parents are required for the following:

1. Feeding
2. Illness
3. Special requests for child
4. Development

Parents MUST communicate with teachers via the school cell phone (304-730-2117) OR through the school office (304-522-2644). Do not text or contact teachers via their personal cell phones!! Please be aware that during the day the child's teachers are busy taking care of the little ones. Limit your calls, and in the case of an emergency please contact the school office.

The school's website posts pertinent information daily and weekly. Information will also be sent via RenWeb as voice, email or text messages.

Alterations to the school's calendar year may occur throughout the school year. Parents will be notified in advance of any important changes.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

There will be a supply fee charged per student made payable to St. Joseph Catholic School at the beginning of each school year. Nursery through Preschool staff members will ensure that each student receives appropriate and adequate supplies throughout the school year.

Parents are asked to always have an extra change of clothes in case the unexpected occurs. A changing facility will be provided for students participating in the Nursery through 2 Year-Old program. Parents are asked to keep their child's diapers, wipes, 'potty-training' materials and resources fully stocked in

their child's cubby box at all times. A fee of \$35 monthly will be assessed to tuition if diapers or wipes for any month that the parent's do not supply them in a timely manner to the student's classroom.

DISMISSAL

All students MUST be signed in and out each day using the 'Drop off and Pick-up' from outside each classroom door. This West Virginia licensing requirement must be fulfilled by each parent responsible for the collection of their child(ren). There will be no exceptions to this policy.

Students **must** be picked up no later than 5:25 p.m. from the building. There will be a \$25 charge for late pick-ups from 5:30 p.m. – 5:35 p.m. and an additional \$1 charge for every minute incurred after 5:35 p.m. The child/parent must have exited the building by 5:30 in order to avoid the late charge.

Between 2:15-3:30 P.M., please do not park in the alley due to dismissal and congested traffic.

ACCESS CODE

Parents of students in the Nursery and Toddler Programs will be issued a school access key code to the gate in the alley and to the playground gate. Parents must not share the code with any other individuals for security reasons. The safety and security of our students and employees is of the utmost importance.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT

St. Joseph Catholic School has a Crisis Management Plan which is updated each year. Drills are conducted monthly to prepare students for various emergencies. In cases of inclement weather, fire, bomb threats, or chemical or biological catastrophes, announcements will be made via constant contact and television stations of impending school closures.

OUTSIDE PLAY

As an extension of our nursery program, students will participate in outside play/explore time on the Nursery playground and on walks in strollers. Playing outdoors is a form of exercise that promotes well-being and wholesome physical development. It allows them to explore their environment, develop muscle strength and coordination, and gain confidence.

A general signed permission slip must be on file before your child may leave the premises.

HEALTH ISSUES/ACCIDENTS-INJURIES

While we attempt to enforce rules to protect the children at all times, accidents do occur. Minor cuts or abrasions will be dealt with in the office. More serious accidents will be handled in the following manner:

- 1) Parents will be notified if and when children bump their head.
- 2) If parents cannot be reached, the office will contact the relative on the emergency card
- 3) For more serious accidents, an ambulance may be called.

When the following common childhood illnesses occur such as: Fifth disease, RSV, pink eye, Rotavirus, etc., a child cannot return without a physician's written authorization. If the school suspects that a child is symptomatic of a childhood illness, the school reserves the right to request

your child be seen by a physician. In these cases the child may not return to the classroom without a written physician authorization.

Per FERPA and HIPAA laws the center and employees will not be permitted to share student specific information pertaining to illness and conditions with other families. If a need to communicate with parents regarding outbreaks of illnesses, the information will be disseminated from the Prek Director and Administration.

***While under the crisis child care license: Do we need?**

- Students will have their temperatures checked daily, upon arrival. Any student with a fever of more than 100 degrees must remain out of school for 72 hours after the fever has broken without fever reducing medications. We will not allow a doctor's note for returning before the 72 hours If a child becomes sick during the day.
- The first teacher will remove the child to a separate room and keep the child comfortable until the family can arrive. The second teacher will immediately call the child's family and request an immediate pick up.
- If a child becomes sick at home with any symptoms, cough, fever, muscle aches, generally not feeling well, we ask that you notify us and keep your child at home. If symptoms are consistent with Covid-19, please phone your child's pediatrician and ask for guidance. Please phone us and share that guidance so that St Joseph Catholic School and summer care Program will know how to proceed with our next steps of notifying the proper and required people, and/or authorities.
- Any student showing any concerning signs of respiratory issues: excessive coughing, tugging in the chest, wheezing, shortness of breath, etc.. Students with a cough and a fever will be required to be seen by a medical professional with-in 24 hours.
- Each child should be given a daily health check at home. Children showing signs of illness should be kept at home. Any child arriving at school showing signs of illness as listed below shall not be admitted. Children developing any of the listed symptoms throughout the day will be sent home and are not permitted to return until they are symptom free or returns with a doctor's note.
 - Rash
 - Sore Throat
 - Ear Ache
 - Fever of 100.0 or higher
 - Diarrhea (Two diarrhea bowel movements within three hours or three diarrhea bowel movements in a day)
 - Chronic Cough
 - Redness, Drainage, or Matting Eye(s)
 - Vomiting
 - Other Contagious Condition

Infant Nutrition

Per DHHR and West Virginia Licensing regulations, all students must provide their own food. Please be familiar with the following regulations pertaining to bottle feeding and snacks:

1. All containers of baby food and formula must be labeled with the child's full name.
2. Bottles are brought in daily for a single use and taken home to be sanitized.
3. Breast milk is to be brought in and taken home daily. It cannot be stored in the freezer at school.
4. Breast milk must be labeled with the date in which it was expressed, the date you are bringing it in, the mother's name, and the child's name. Please place the labeled breast milk in the appropriate labeled container in the refrigerator each day..

MEDICATION

A student requiring medication, of any kind, must have on file a signed medical authorization form and Diocesan medical authorization form from the parent or guardian, and a properly completed physician's statement. The authorization includes the following:

1. Written permission from the parent or guardian.
2. Name of medication, dosage, times or intervals at which it is to be taken, duration, and possible side effects.
3. A statement releasing and holding school personnel harmless from any and all liability for damages or injury resulting directly or indirectly from the presence of the medication in the school or its use by the student.
4. Medication must be in original containers and have an affixed label including the student's name.
5. Accurate records of the medication given must be kept in the student's file.

Medications such as benadryl & teething medication that contain benzocaine can not be administered without written instructions from their healthcare provider.

PTO (PARENT TEACHER ORGANIZATION)

As Jesus Christ remains at the center of our actions and the pulse of our school, the PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) is at the heart of our success. Our PTO provides support and assistance at such school-related events as field trips, parties, picnics and special presentations. This parent-sponsored organization provides the occasion for parents and teachers to build a stronger relationship.

Parties

Parents may send in healthy party treats for holidays if requested or agreed to by the teacher and administration. Please do not send homemade or store-bought treats that may contain nuts or peanut butter for the safety of all our students.

Birthday treats are permitted with permission from the student's teacher. Individual birthday parties will not be celebrated at school.

Invitations to parties at students' homes may be sent home through the school only if all students in the class receive one. If only selected students receive them, they should be mailed directly.

SNOW DAYS/ Inclement Weather School Closing

In periods of inclement weather, watch Channel 13 for school closing information. Parents will also be notified via Constant Contact of closings or delays. Early dismissal, due to inclement weather, will be at the discretion of the principal of St. Joseph Catholic School.

Parents have the right to make an informed decision as to whether they deem the roads safe to travel.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure school is in session. Parents are not to drop children off at school without checking to make sure the school is in session and staff/faculty members are present.

Birth -Three

Cabell County offers assistance to young children and parents from birth up until the child turns three. As a helpful tool to provide the teachers and parents with proper development information, teachers will fill out an assessment on each child. Any development questions will be discussed with the parent. Birth to three is an option for parents to utilize one on one attention to help improve specific skills during infant-toddler stages. Teachers or parents may request an evaluation of children for acceptance into this program at any time prior to three years old.

VOLUNTEERS

Parent and grandparent volunteers are a vital part of any Catholic School. These volunteers enable us to offer many advantages to our students that we would not be able to otherwise offer. You are urged to give of your time and talents as a volunteer to the school. All volunteers MUST become VIRTUS trained and abide by all VIRTUS rules and regulations.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

Notice of intent to withdraw your child from school must be made in writing by the parent to the teacher and principal two weeks prior to the withdrawal date. **All outstanding balances and fees must be settled prior to withdrawal.**

Fees

Each family is required to sign a tuition contract prior to the start of the school year. If eligible, families may receive tuition assistance. Families applying for Link are ineligible for tuition assistance through St. Joseph Catholic School. This includes all PreK tuition, aftercare, plus childcare for all grade levels. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide the school with a valid Link provider agreement from the Link office prior to the child's start date. Without proper documentation and notification parents are responsible for all tuition to be paid in full. Any days, hours, and fees outside of the allotted certificate time will be billed as private pay.

Payments are to be made each week or the month prior. Any accounts that are not paid within the month of use of child care will be considered late and may jeopardize your child/children's placement. It is the family's responsibility to make payments in a timely fashion according to the handbook. Any outstanding

balances after one month of non-payment, will be charged a \$25 late fee. An invoice will be sent out to reflect this fee by the first week of the month and payment must be made within 7 days of receiving the invoice.

Any other outside supplements of payments, is the responsibility of the parent. Payments must be paid on time. If a provider pays a month in arrears, it is the parent's responsibility to pay the month in advance and to calculate the payment that is due each month on top of the provider's amount. If the provider fails to pay and/or the parent does not rectify the outstanding amount within 7 days, then a late fee of \$25 will be assessed.

Insufficient funds checks which are returned to the office will incur a \$25 charge for each check returned. Monthly invoices will be sent out if payment has not been received. A late fee of \$30 per invoice will be incurred.

Due to the increased demand for additional school documents such as attendance records, After School Care pick-up documentation and financial records required for court procedures, the following charges will be assessed:

- Copies of personal certificates/documentation-\$5
- Attendance records-\$10
- Financial documents- \$10
- Financial documents-\$10
- Late/non payment invoices- \$25
- All other documentation requests- \$10