



# PRESCHOOL-3 PARENT HANDBOOK

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
2211 E. LAKEVIEW DRIVE  
JOHNSON CITY, TENNESSEE 37601  
[WWW.SCHOOL.STMARYSJC.ORG](http://WWW.SCHOOL.STMARYSJC.ORG)  
REV. 06/01/2024

# Welcome!



## BECKY FRYE

Principal

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our school family! We are so happy to have you and your family here!

Our school is proud of our Preschool program and strive to maintain the high quality of care that families have come to know and expect from our school.

As early education professionals, our educators strive to achieve a bond of trust with you and your child that comes from the daily interaction of caring for them. Each day, we focus on providing a nurturing, safe, and loving environment in which children thrive!

We ask that you read this handbook so that you are informed of all policies and procedures pertaining to the Preschool-3 and PreK-4 program. Please refer to the St. Mary's School Parent-Student Handbook for specific information regarding the general operations and expectations of the school-wide community. Feel free to ask any questions that you may have. We know you have many educational options, and we thank you for choosing us to provide the high-quality care that your family needs and deserves.

God Bless,

Becky Frye  
Principal

# INTRODUCTION

## MISSION STATEMENT

Anchored in love, St. Mary's Catholic School exists to promote Gospel values, academic excellence, and service to others.

## VISION STATEMENT

St. Mary's Catholic School, as a Christian learning community, is led by the love, acceptance, and caring expressed in the life of Jesus Christ. We encourage our students to be life-long learners with compassionate hearts and a deep commitment to serving others.

## BELIEF STATEMENT

The Catholic Christian community of St. Mary's Catholic School believes:

- Each child is a gift from God endowed with unique gifts, talents, and abilities. The home, school, church, and community support the total educational experience of the child, with the parents having the primary role.
- A superior academic curriculum based on the needs of diverse learners stimulates students intellectually, physically, socially, and spiritually.
- Students recognize and respect diverse beliefs, abilities, and the cultures of others, becoming global citizens well prepared for our ever-changing world.
- Daily prayer and weekly liturgy are essential to our school climate.
- The school community models a safe, tolerant, and peaceful atmosphere where self-esteem can flourish.
- We demonstrate our Catholic Christian values by offering our support and service to the community.

## COGNIA

### Accreditation and School Improvement.

St. Mary's School has earned continuing accreditation and certification with COGNIA.

COGNIA provides nationally-recognized accreditation, the purpose of which is continuous school improvement focused on increasing student performance. To earn accreditation, schools must meet COGNIA's high standards, be evaluated by a team of professionals from outside of the school, and implement a continuous process of school improvement.

Accreditation assures that a school is meeting nationally accepted standards of quality and successful professional practice. Schools are accredited for a five-year term. Parents and interested community members can learn more about accreditation at [www.cognia.org](http://www.cognia.org)



# ADMISSION CRITERIA & POLICIES

## Admission Policy

Students will be registered at St. Mary's Catholic School in the following order:

1. Current students
2. Siblings of current students
3. Members of St. Mary's Church
4. Catholic non-parishioners
5. Non-Catholic students



## Criteria

St. Mary's Catholic School admits students after evaluation of the following criteria: Class size, admission priorities, operating budget, age requirement, class make-up, pre-existing concerns, and proper documentation.

## Non-Discriminatory Policy

St. Mary's Catholic School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

## DIOCESE OF KNOXVILLE POLICY #1060

Diocese of Knoxville Policy  
#1060

No Catholic child shall be denied admission to a Catholic school because of the parent's inability to pay tuition.



# STAFF & *Curriculum*

## PHILOSOPHY

Children deserve a fun and memorable childhood and we pride ourselves on having a home-like atmosphere in our Preschool classrooms to make that happen. Our experienced and degreed teachers are specifically chosen for their caring attitudes, knowledge of child development, and their enthusiasm for teaching young children. Professional development, including training in First Aid and CPR as well as age-specific training on child development is a continuous process for all our staff. In addition, we make it a priority to remain informed about current child development, education research and trends in order to most effectively serve your child's needs. Each teacher undergoes a criminal background check to ensure your child's safety.

## CURRICULUM

Our program uses the Diocese of Knoxville curriculum standards as its educational foundation. We also abide by state requirements. These rules and regulations guide our practices and processes. Our teachers then expand upon this curriculum with additional projects, activities, and games designed to enrich your child's educational experience. Our teachers are trained to recognize the unique strengths and talents of each child to provide individualized activities to foster each child's development. Our educational program is designed to be creative and fun for your child, with hands-on learning experiences and many opportunities to learn through play. Furthermore, our staff members participate in additional training hours each year for continued professional development.

## ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

We know that it is important for children to learn from the experts! St. Mary's School provides enrichment classes in Art, Music, Technology and Physical Education. Preschool students attend each enrichment class twice a week for 30 minutes. In addition, students attend Religion classes five days a week for 30 minutes. All of these are a part of your child's regular school program.



# PRESCHOOL



## Accidents & Emergency Procedures

Safety is an important part of our jobs. We believe it to be our top priority to keep your children safe each day. Although we have many procedures in place to prevent accidents, sometimes accidents are inevitable. In the event your child has a minor injury such as a bump, scrape, bite, etc., we reserve the right to treat your child with the proper First Aid Care and will contact you immediately to inform you of any serious injuries. We will also fill out an accident/incident report.

In the event that your child requires emergency medical treatment, we will call 911 immediately. If your child requires emergency ambulance transportation, the ambulance drivers will transport your child to the closest local hospital at their discretion and depending on the speed with which your child must be treated. Decisions as to the necessity of emergency medical treatment will be made by the Principal or another staff member standing in their position. Parents or legal guardians of the child will be notified as soon as possible and will be responsible for any and all medical expenses related to the child's injury including any medical transportation. It is the parent or legal guardian's responsibility to provide insurance information to medical personnel. We are not responsible in any form for medical or transportation expenses.

## Age Requirement

Children registering for the Preschool-3 program must be 3 years of age by August 15th of the school year they are entering. Children registering for the PreK-4 program must be 4 years of age by August 15th of the school year they are entering.

## Arrival & Dismissal

Teachers are ready to accept your child beginning at 7:30 a.m.; school begins at 8:00 a.m. Please do not enter the classroom early. Due to lunch and nap schedules, Preschool children may not arrive and/or be checked into school after 10:30 a.m.

Children must be picked up by 3:15 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and 2:15 p.m. on Wednesday. Any child(ren) remaining after dismissal ends will be escorted to the school's AfterCare Program. Refer to the St. Mary's School AfterCare Program Handbook for pricing and billing policies.

All parents are expected to act in a responsible manner while on campus. Please help to assure the safety of all our children by following our campus one-way traffic pattern, securing doors behind you as you leave and holding your child's hand at all times while in the parking lots.

Students will not be permitted to leave St. Mary's School with anyone other than a parent or person listed on their Pick-Up Authorization form. In the event an emergency requires someone not listed on the form to pick-up your child, please call 423.282.3397 AND email to: [melody.berry@stmarysjc.org](mailto:melody.berry@stmarysjc.org) to make arrangements. Students will not be released to anyone appearing to be impaired and/or unsuitable to drive.

Please remember, drop-off and pick-up times are considered transition times for a classroom and may seem busy. These transition times are not the best time to address your child's growth or development. Please email your child's teacher to schedule a conference at a mutually convenient time.

## **Assessments & Annual Parent-Teacher Conferences**

In continuing to provide the best educational experience for your child, we offer developmental assessments each year. Students will be assessed formally using the Developmental Indicators for Assessment of Learning 4 (DIAL-4) at the end of each school year. The staff will make formal and informal observations on a regular basis that will be recorded for use during the assessment and conference process. Parent-Teachers conferences are held in October to discuss student progress. In the event that an in-person conference isn't available, or if a parent declines to have an in-person conference with a child's teacher, a phone conference may be scheduled. Conferences may be held at any time throughout the year, at either the request of the parent or the teacher.

## **Assessing Needs & Referral Programs to Address Needs**

Occasionally teachers have concerns regarding a student's development or behavior. Educators will encourage parents to reach out to their child's pediatrician. To further facilitate addressing a child's needs, the preschool may request that the parent refer to the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) for their developmental age. The ASQ will be used to further assess a child's development. The preschool may refer a parent to professionals to include, but not limited to: speech pathologists, school districts, vision screening, hearing screening, physicians.

## Behavior Modification

On occasion when a child is experiencing difficulties, teachers use the following steps to help children make better choices.

- Open-ended questions to help the child discover the rule
- Redirecting the child with an open-ended choice
- Redirecting the child with a limited choice
- Excluding the child from the group with an age-appropriate time out

If the child continues to have difficulties, the teacher or Principal will speak with the parents to work on a plan to make the situation better. Parents may be asked to find a more appropriate setting for their child if the above steps are unsuccessful.

## Birthdays & Special Events

We love to celebrate! If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday with the class, you may bring in party food (cupcakes, cookies, etc.) and/or party favors. We ask that you consider healthy options. Please remember we are a peanut and nut free classroom. You may stay for the party or have the teacher host the party. Please discuss plans for the party with your child's teacher, including date and time, class allergies, developmentally appropriate food choices and favors. If you are handing out favors or invitations to parties outside the school, PLEASE bring enough for each child in the classroom. Parents having a party for their child to which the entire class is not invited must extend invitations outside the classroom and not distribute them at school.

Special birthday arrangements should not take place on school grounds (i.e., limousines, costumed characters, etc.). If there are any questions, please speak with your child's teacher. Students will receive a birthday sticker on their birthday and teachers will acknowledge birthdays in an age-appropriate manner.

We also celebrate holidays and special events. You will be given an opportunity to sign up to bring food, goodies, or paper goods for these parties.

## Biting Policy

Biting is an age-appropriate stage of development for infants, toddlers, and on occasion, preschoolers. In a group setting, most children will attempt biting at least once. Although normative, it can be troubling to parents and caregivers. Each child is different and bites for different reasons. When biting occurs, our focus will be on determining why the biting occurred and what we can do to help. Communication between teachers and parents will be a key aspect in reducing this behavior.

The following steps will be taken:

1. Provide first aid for the hurt child.
2. Communicate the details of the incident to each family.
3. Maintain confidentiality of all children involved.
4. Document event in the child's file (the one who did the biting).
5. If there is a second occurrence of the same child biting someone, the child's parents will be called to come pick up their child for the remainder of the day.
6. After a third occurrence, the parents will be called to come pick up the child and they will have to remain out of school for one week.
7. Teachers will notify administration of the incident immediately.



## Checkouts

A note is required to be sent to the school office in the event a child needs to check out of school at a time other than the normal dismissal time. The note may be sent in writing, by fax, or email.

A child will be released from school only to his/her parents or to persons authorized by parents on the Authorization/Pick-Up form, which is kept in the school office. Parents must send a handwritten note to school if someone other than those listed on the form is to pick-up their child. St. Mary's Catholic School reserves the right to request a picture ID before releasing the child from school.

Parents, or the person authorized on the appropriate form or note, must sign a child out. A parent coming to school to sign-out a child must report to the office; the staff will call the child from the classroom.

To maintain a smooth school dismissal, children should not be checked out after 2:40 p.m. on regular dismissal days or 1:45 p.m. on 2:00 p.m. dismissal days.

## Child Custody

Divorced or separated parents must file a court-certified copy of the custody section of the divorce or separation decree with the principal's office. For the safety of your child, this will be shared with the faculty and staff and kept in strict confidence. The school will not be held responsible for failing to honor arrangements that have not been made known.

## Classroom Schedules

Schedules are designed to be appropriate for the age and developmental level of a Preschool classroom. Classroom schedules are visually posted each day in the classroom and are shared electronically on Bloomz.



## CMG Connect Training

St. Mary's Catholic School teachers, staff, substitute teachers and volunteers (including volunteers chaperoning overnight trips) must complete the CMG Connect Safe Environment Compliance training. Please go online to register for the training session you would like to attend. Individuals may not volunteer in any capacity at St. Mary's School until they have completed and passed this training.

## Communication

In an effort to keep open and current communications between home and school, we utilize a variety of communication tools. Bloomz is the preferred classroom communication app. Announcements, event calendars, student classroom photos, and important documents are posted weekly. This is a secure, private app. Text messaging and email are also utilized. RenWeb is the schoolwide management system. Families can find lunch menus, attendance records, reports cards, and have access to classroom gradebooks via RenWeb.

A school-wide Family Bulletin is emailed at the beginning of each week. Please take the time to read this valuable communication! It contains important dates, information about upcoming events, special events, etc.

Weather related school schedule changes are sent via the ParentAlert app. Access information for all these apps is provided to families at the beginning of each new school year.




## KEEPING KIDS SAFE.

The Diocese of Knoxville and St. Mary's School are committed to providing a safe environment for all who worship, work, or participate in education and formation opportunities at our parishes and schools.

In addition, each child will have a “Take Home” folder for you to check each day. Here you will find artwork and activities from your child’s day. Please check these every day! Parent-Teacher conferences will be offered as well to discuss your child’s progress and development. Please provide us with any special instructions to help us serve your child better.

## **Conscious Discipline**



Our classroom management style is based on the Conscious Discipline model which focuses on helping children achieve success by increasing safety, connection, and problem-solving. It is proven to improve the quality of student-teacher interactions and the social and emotional behavior of students. Conscious Discipline holds that change and self-control are possible and have a profound impact on others. It advocates that behavior is governed by connectedness, and views conflict as an opportunity to teach. Visit [ConsciousDiscipline.com](http://ConsciousDiscipline.com) or talk to your child’s teacher for more information on this unique classroom management philosophy. Positive teacher attitudes, appropriate expectations, balanced activity schedules and creative room set up will encourage cooperation and prevent most behavior problems. We incorporate clearly understood rules. Boundaries are set and enforced for the safety and well-being of all children.

## **Curriculum**

Our unique multi-sensory, brain-based teaching curriculum is chosen to stimulate a child’s individual curiosity and broaden their understanding of the world around them. The curriculum contains an age-appropriate academic component including numbers, letters, colors, and shapes as well as instruction in Math, ELA, Pre-Reading, Social Studies, Science, and STEM. No homework is given in Preschool. The classroom is equipped with materials and furnishings which both entertain and challenge children fostering a sense of accomplishment. Daily activities are chosen to enhance development and encourage social maturation. Our curriculum meets or exceeds developmental standards as set by the Tennessee Department of Education. We are committed to excellence in early childhood programming. For this reason, we offer a language rich classroom environment which incorporates visual scheduling, sensory activities such as mid-line awareness and stress the singing-reading connection. We incorporate strategies recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children including a balance between teacher directed and student directed activities. During student directed activities, teachers encourage high-level play supporting language development and literacy skills.

The primary focus of the Preschool curriculum is to foster a child's movement from egocentric and parallel play into a world of community within the preschool classroom. Daily content allows for a balance between student directed experiences and teacher directed guidance. Children will be exposed to more in-depth teacher activities including experiences with written print, problem-solving, and organizational skills. This year is characterized by a great amount of large motor refinement as well as opportunities to practice fine motor skills and increase eye-hand coordination. We teach to the following Tennessee Early Childhood Development Standards:



### **LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT**

- Follow 3 step directions
- Understand size comparatives
- Respond to "if, "then" or "because" sentences
- Identify basic colors
- Know names of self and family members as well as gender
- Retell familiar story in sequence with visual cues
- Begin to use tense and plurals correctly

### **EARLY LITERACY**

- Scribble and draw with intentionality
- Begin to recite from memory familiar books
- Use more complex sentence structure
- Use adjectives and adverbs
- Repeat rhymes and enjoy songs, poems, and finger plays
- Demonstrate interest in books and how they are handled
- Show awareness that print conveys a message
- Discriminate likenesses/differences in real and pictured objects
- Begin to recognize beginning letter/sound

### **MATH AND SCIENCE**

- Explore sorting and classifying objects
- Introduce time, length, weight, and capacity
- Build simple structures with blocks
- Understand and predict the sequence of daily events
- Expand knowledge of and respect for their body and the environment
- Make use of one-to-one correspondence in counting objects

### **CREATIVE ARTS**

- Participate in group music experiences
- Explore vocal pitch sounds
- Use art medium to produce drawings and models with increasing detail
- Imitate and pretend to be different characters
- Enjoy the process of destruction and recreation

### **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL**

- Show increasing comfort with independence
- Gain control over impulses
- Relate rules verbally
- Engage in cooperative play

### **FINE MOTOR AND GROSS MOTOR**

- Maintain balance on a beam
- Develop ability to pump a swing
- Grasp hold of writing tools such as pencils, crayons, paint brushes
- Shape play-doh into more intricate/representational creations
- Increase scissor control

### **RELATED ARTS / SPECIALS**

- In addition to the core curriculum, Preschool-3 students attend the following Related Arts / Specials classes for 30 minutes twice a week. Students attend Religion class 30 minutes five days a week:
  1. Religion
  2. Phys Ed
  3. Music
  4. Art
  5. Technology

### **Custody Issues**

St. Mary's School Preschool understand that families may live apart in a variety of circumstances. We are sensitive to the needs of children and will do our best to support them. It is also important that the teachers and St. Mary's School maintain positive relationships with parents. We feel strongly that teachers and staff should not be involved in any family controversy. St. Mary's School requires that families living apart work out mutually agreed upon, or have legally provided, plans for the child's care and that they present these plans to the school. If a written legal resolution is needed, the school requires a document that clearly defines who is authorized to make decisions regarding the child's care and education. St. Mary's School will then require a written plan and

reasonable procedure to follow from the authorized person before we accept responsibility to care for that child. Any parent who desires to restrict access to their child's other parent must provide legal documentation establishing the lack of custody. Otherwise, a child will be able to be checked out by either parent. The legal custodial parent has the responsibility to keep the teaching staff and principal informed of any changes or pertinent information in writing and with a copy of proper court documents in the child's school file. St. Mary's School cannot be used for child visitation. Our contract is with the parent who registers the child for school at St. Mary's School and creates/maintains the pickup list.



## **Educational Trips & Outings**

Educational trips serve as an important aspect and privilege of our school curriculum. The trip usually has direct application to a unit of work studied by the students in Preschool during the school year. Adequate preparation for the trip is made with the class to indicate the nature of the trip, its purpose, things to be observed and/or recorded, and any special plans or requirements for the trip. Extra stops on field trips, when transporting students on a field trip are not permitted. No siblings not in grade participating can attend the field trip per Diocesan policy. The parent of each child who participates in any field trip must sign the Diocesan Field Trip form (Diocesan Policy #1182). Verbal permission by telephone will not suffice for any field trip. If a child lacks this permission, he/she will not be permitted to leave the school grounds. Students taking prescribed medication, either at home or during school hours, must also take this medication when participating in off-campus trips. Please communicate with the trip coordinator, in writing, and include directions on how the medication is to be dispensed. All medications must be provided in the original prescription container(s). Trips are considered a privilege rather than a right; the administration — with faculty consultation — reserves the right to deny a student a particular trip for disciplinary reasons or for the common good or safety of the group. Any field trip fees will be posted to the family FACTS account. Families are encouraged to pay via their FACTS account. Any parent serving as a chaperone for an educational trip / outing must have a signed Liability Waiver on file with the teacher (Diocesan Policy #1185).



## Emergency Planning

Evacuation routes are posted in all classrooms. A weather radio or app is maintained in the school office at all times for updates on threatening conditions. Flashlights, first aid kits, and other necessary items are maintained in all classrooms. We also follow a schedule of safety drills, such as fire and tornado drills, throughout the school year to maintain preparedness for any emergency. If a threat to the children's safety is present in the outside community, the preschool will institute a lockdown until the situation is resolved. Doors to the preschool classrooms will be locked at all times for safety purposes each preschool day. We have a detailed building plan in place with the Johnson City Police Department in case of emergency.

## Gold Sneaker Initiative

In 2008, the Tennessee Department of Health's (TDH) developed the "Gold Sneaker Initiative" to enhance policy related to health and wellness within licensed childcare facilities across Tennessee. We strongly embrace the "whole child" approach to the health and happiness of the children in our care. As such, we have adopted the philosophy and policies of this initiative. The standards include:

- Children ages 12 months or older attending a full day program shall be offered at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day, either indoors or outdoors. For children ages three and older, this physical activity must be a balance of free play, teacher-directed




## BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR PRESCHOOLERS.

Along with academic achievement and physical milestones, exercise in early childhood plays a crucial role in the development of social and emotional skills.

- Children who exercise tend to have longer attention spans in class, greater confidence, better social skills and fewer behavioral problems.
- Physical activity promotes creativity and positive self-esteem.
- Unstructured free play helps children learn important social skills like cooperation and sharing.

activities, and music & movement. This is documented in the daily schedule and in lesson plans.

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- Viewing of television, videos, and other visual recordings shall be limited to no more than 60 minutes per day of educational programs or programs that actively engage child movement.
  - Children shall not be allowed to remain sedentary or to sit passively for more than 60 minutes continuously, except for scheduled rest or naptime.
  - Physical activity is a positive experience for children and is never used negatively or to control behavior.
  - Ensure appropriate child feeding patterns, including adequate time for meal consumption. Adequate time for meals and snacks will be allowed for all children, and is included in classroom schedules.
  - School campus shall be tobacco free.

## Hours & Holidays


Preschool operates August thru May, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday from 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.; Wednesday 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. The tardy bell rings at 8:00 a.m. Prayer service in the gymnasium begins at 7:50 a.m. Students may arrive at 7:30 a.m. and report to their classroom. All students not in school when the 8:00 a.m. bell rings will be marked tardy. We are also closed in observance of certain holidays and Teacher In-Service. A school calendar is published and distributed at the beginning of each new school year.

## Inclement Weather

On days of inclement weather, please listen for school closing information on the following television stations: WJHL-TV, WCYB-TV, and WKPT-TV. Parents who provide their cell number will receive text alerts for closings, schedule changes, and emergencies. The decision to return to school or have a delayed opening is made by the principal. Please always determine the safety of your own travel. Do not bring your child to school if your own neighborhood or driveway makes it unsafe. Please contact the school office if you have made this determination.

## Lunch & Snack

Preschool eats lunch and snack in the classroom. We are a nut free environment. Food brought from home cannot contain peanuts or nuts of any kind nor can it be labeled with any alert about contact with nuts. Please alert the teacher concerning any special dietary needs or food allergies.



Lunch Menus for the month are sent home at the beginning of each month. They are also available for viewing on ParentsWeb and Bloomz. Lunches are ordered in the classroom each day for children purchasing a hot lunch from our school cafeteria. Low-fat milk or low-fat chocolate milk are included with all hot lunch purchases. These are also available for purchase separately to accompany a packed lunch or as a second drink. The teacher will send a lunch count to the school office. All students must pack a lunch or eat a school lunch. A hot lunch will automatically be ordered and charged to the family's FACTS account for any child that does not have a packed lunch. Parents may not bring lunches from carry-out restaurants. Lunch accounts are updated on a daily basis. A cafeteria statement will go home at the beginning of each month, along with the tuition and AfterCare statements.

Snacks and lunches brought from home should be nutritious and food with a high content of sugar is strongly discouraged. We request that parents refrain from sending caffeinated drinks or sugar added drinks.

Families are asked to send a healthy snack for their child each day. Candy is not considered a nutritious snack and is not permitted. Morning snack is served at 9:30 a.m.

## **Medical & Health Policies**

Emergency information must be maintained in the school office for each student. Any changes in emergency contacts or telephone numbers should be promptly reported to the school office.

If a child becomes ill during school hours and needs special attention, the school office will notify the parent/guardian. If unable to locate the parent, the name and number noted on the emergency form will be called. In the event that there is still no response, an attempt will be made to call a relative or friend. No child will be sent home without parental permission or a person previously designated to take the place of the parent. In the event of an emergency occurring at school when neither parents nor emergency contacts can be reached, the school will seek appropriate medical attention for the injured child, as authorized annually on the St. Mary's Catholic School Medical Release form. Efforts to reach parents will continue.

If a child has been ill with fever, fresh cold, sore throat, skin rash, skin eruption, or vomits, he/she should not be in school. A child should be free of contagion and/or fever for twenty-four hours before returning to school.

Children diagnosed with lice must have proof of treatment and be free of nits and lice prior to readmission. A scalp check will be performed prior to readmission.

When a child has confirmed strep throat, he/ she should remain out of school for at least 36 hours after treatment of either oral antibiotics or injection (weekend days would count as time away from school). When the student returns, he/she should have a written and signed note from the physician stating that the child should no longer be infectious. These notes should be turned into the office. Please do not send your child to school while waiting for the results of his/her strep throat test because of the risk of exposing other students. The school office should be notified immediately when a communicable disease is diagnosed.



The Tennessee Department of Health requires you to pick up your child for the following symptoms:

- 1.Diarrhea. More than one (1) abnormally loose stool.
- 2.Severe coughing. Red or blue in the face or makes a high-pitched croupy or whooping sound after coughing
- 3.Discolored mucus
- 4.Unusual rashes or spots
- 5.Difficult or rapid breathing
- 6.Yellowish skin or eyes
- 7.Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- 8.Fever. Temperature of 101 degrees or higher
- 9.Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- 10.Stiff neck and headache
- 11.Sore throat
- 12.Vomiting
- 13.Lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation
- 14.Headache
- 15.Unexplained listlessness, sluggishness, or other behavior suggestive of illness

## Medications

Only medications prescribed by a doctor and provided by the parent can be dispensed to students. A designated staff member, either the child's teacher or office personnel, must always dispense this medicine. Students taking prescribed medication either at home or during school hours must also take this medication when participating in off-campus trips. If a child is on medication (either prescription or non-prescription "over-the-counter" medication) that is administered during school hours or while on off-campus trips, the parent must submit the appropriate Medication Authorization or Non-Prescription Medication Authorization form. Both forms are available in the school office.

These forms must be completed and signed by the parent. Both prescription and non-prescription medications should be brought to the school office in the original packaging or prescription bottle. The pharmacist may be instructed to dispense the medication in two bottles; one for home and one for school. All medicines, including cough drops, must be brought to the school office by the parent. The only exception to this policy is as stated in the school Parent-Student Handbook under “Asthma Medications”.

## Naptime

In compliance with TN State Board of Education Chapter 0520-12-01-.10.(18)(j), all children will have a rest/naptime every day. All children that stay for nap need a nap mat. We recommend an all-in-one mat/blanket/pillow combination nap mat. If you choose to use a traditional nap mat, it needs to be at least 1” thick and fold for storage. Please only send a travel size pillow (14”x20”), child-sized throw blanket (40”x50”) and one SMALL stuffed animal (if needed). We are very limited in our storage space. Although not every child will sleep, it is important that every child rest. Non-nappers must rest quietly so as not to disturb other children who are resting. We request that no pick-ups or drop-offs occur during these two hours of your child’s classroom schedule. Nap items are sent home each Friday for washing. Please return all items every Monday for the new school week.

## Notification of Communicable Diseases

Parents are to notify the school immediately of any of the following illnesses:

- Chickenpox
- Mumps
- Impetigo
- Measles
- Mononucleosis
- Head Lice
- Meningitis
- Poison Ivy
- Pink Eye / Conjunctivitis
- Whooping Cough

All information will be kept confidential except as needed to protect other students. A note explaining treatments must be provided to the Preschool upon the student’s return to school. In the case of head lice, a student may return to school after treatment. The treatment box top or a note from a child’s medical provider stating that the student has been treated must be presented to the principal before being allowed to return to the classroom.



## Nut Free Environment

We are a nut free classroom. Please refrain from bringing lunches, snacks or foods for parties or other celebrations that contain any kind of nut. This would include peanuts (including peanut butter), hazelnuts (including Nutella™ and similar products), almonds, cashews, and coconuts (including almond milk, cashew milk, and coconut milk), pecans, pistachios, walnuts, etc.

Due to continual changes in manufacturer's packaging and processing, please read the ingredient label of your chosen food to ensure that it does not contain any of the following: peanuts/nuts, peanut/nut butter, peanut/nut oil, peanut/nut flour, peanut/nut meal, or "may contain traces of peanuts/nuts", or "may have been manufactured in a facility where a nut product is produced or is manufactured".

We thank you for sharing our commitment to ensuring a safe environment for all of our students and staff.

## Outside Play

Outside play is important for healthy development. You should always assume we will go outside unless weather does not permit. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather. Appropriate jackets or coats as well as mittens/gloves and hats are needed during cold weather. All articles of clothing and other personal belongings should be labeled. We have



## A WORD ABOUT FOOD ALLERGIES.

Eggs, milk, and peanuts are the most common causes of food allergies in children, with wheat, soy, and tree nuts also included. Peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish commonly cause the most severe reactions. Nearly 5% of children under the age of five years have food allergies.

separate, age-appropriate playgrounds. During a day with a normal routine and when weather permits, children will play on the playground at least one time per day. Per DHS regulations, we will go outside when temperatures, after adjusting for wind chill and heat index, are between 32° and 95° Fahrenheit. If weather conditions do not permit outdoor play, other gross motor activities will be substituted indoors.

Children may not be released directly from the playground. Please enter the building to sign your child out before picking your child up during play in this area. A staff member will escort your child from the playground to the school office.



## Parent Engagement

We welcome all parents to serve on our Home & School Board which meets at least six (6) times per year and maintains regular communication with parents and the school staff. The Home & School Association is solely supported by the volunteer efforts of its membership. Please take an active role in your child's education.

We also have several regular opportunities for class participation, such as reading in our class, sharing special family traditions or cultures, assisting with parties and open houses, and being a Room Parent. All volunteers must be CMG Connect Safe Environment Compliance trained and pass a background check. Please read the CMG Connect Safe Environment section in the SMS Parent & Student Handbook for more specific details.

## Parent/Guardian Communication

Parents/guardians are always welcome at St. Mary's Preschool. However, parents will be asked to sign in their attendance at the school office upon arrival indicating the time in/time out. Classroom teachers will provide parents with a list of volunteer opportunities and parents will be asked to assist throughout the school year. The school website is updated frequently and is a good source of general school information. The school website is: [www.school.stmarysjc.org](http://www.school.stmarysjc.org). Information can also be found on the school Facebook page.

Information concerning a child's preschool day will only be communicated to the child's parent/guardian unless written permission is given by the parent. Classroom teachers will provide a copy of the child's typical daily schedule at the beginning of the school year. Notes and class bulletins along with monthly calendars will be sent home in each child's blue Take Home folder to keep parents informed of the day-to-day activities happening

in the preschool classroom. Parents are responsible for checking the child's Take-Home folder regularly. Class photos, lesson plans, schedules, weekly bulletins, monthly lunch menus as well as general classroom updates and sign-up opportunities are posted on the class Bloomz account.

Classroom teachers will hold a conference with the child's parent/guardian once during the school year to discuss the child's development and progress. Additional conferences may be requested at the parent or teacher's request at a convenient time suitable to both parties.

No information from student files will be disclosed pertaining to an individual child or family without written permission from the parent/guardian, except in the course of performance of official duties and to employees or representatives of the Office of Child Care Licensing, Division of Family Services or to the entities with statutory responsibilities for issues relating to the health, safety and protection of children. Under the Tennessee Code, parents are entitled to inspect, at any time, the active record and complaint files of any licensed child care facility. St. Mary's Preschool will provide parents with the necessary contact if they desire to obtain this information.

## **Personal Belongings**

Please refrain from allowing children to bring personal belongings to school other than those we request. For the safety and well-being of all the children in our classroom, we ask that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home. We are not responsible for personal items or toys from home that get lost or broken. Labelling all of your child's items is the best way to ensure they do not get misplaced.

## **Physical Contact**

ANY aggressive physical contact towards a teacher or student or destruction of property (throwing or turning over chairs, knocking items off shelves and throwing on the floor, etc.), the child will be sent home for the day. If it happens two (2) days in a row or three (3) times in the same week, the child will have to stay out of school for a week (5 days).

After two (2) removals from the classroom for disruptive behavior in one day, the child will be sent home. This includes loud screaming and refusal to listen to teacher's directions, running away from teachers or refusal to stay in the classroom.

After the child has been sent home two (2) times, a mandatory conference will be held with the teacher, principal, and school counselor to determine next steps.

If behaviors continue or appear to escalate after the mandatory conferencing, you will be asked to disenroll your child. If you have to disenroll, you can continue to pay tuition to keep your spot in hopes of returning. However, if you choose not to continue to pay tuition, there will be no guarantee that there will be a spot available when and if your child is ready to return and no refunds will be given for what has already been paid.



## Physical Environment & Safety

As a state-licensed preschool, St. Mary's Preschool must meet all the necessary requirements pertaining to a child's health, safety and well-being. Annual inspections are conducted by the Department of Human Services, the Office of the Fire Marshall as well as the Office of Child Care Licensing. Copies of these reports are available in the School Office. Parents may request to review these reports if they desire. In addition, a copy of the Standards for School Administered Child Care Programs, Chapter 0520-12-01 is available in the preschool classroom for parent review. The preschool classrooms will abide by the sanitation regulations set by the DHS. Tables and surfaces will be disinfected between use. Toys and manipulatives will be cleaned daily. In the event of COVID or pandemic regulations, the preschool will post the proper signage recommended by the DHS. All students are required to have an up-to-date physical on file with proof of immunizations, TB screening/testing and Lead (Pb) screening/testing. Students who do not have the necessary paperwork on file may not be able to attend preschool until the requirement has been met.

## Potty Training

We believe in meeting the child's developmental needs. Potty training is a developmental skill; some children need longer than others to master this skill. There is no magic day when this occurs however, all children who enter Preschool must be toileting independently as well as wiping and washing hands. We do not offer potty training support.

We understand "accidents" do happen and we will contact the parents if an "accident" happens. However, an accident should rarely occur. If a student is assessed as not being potty trained upon entering Preschool, you will be asked to keep the child at home until he/she is trained. Your child's placement will be held if you continue tuition payments.

- If a child has two (2) accidents in one day, a parent will be called to come pick up the child for the rest of the day.
- If this happens two (2) days in a row, you will be asked to keep the child home for ONE WEEK to try to address the issue and work on achieving being "fully potty trained".

If accidents continue more than two (2) days in a row upon returning, you will be asked to disenroll your child until you can guarantee that they are fully potty trained. As a reminder, if you have to disenroll, you can continue to pay tuition to keep your spot in hopes of returning. However, if you choose not to continue to pay tuition, there will be no guarantee that there will be a spot available when and if your child is ready to return and no refunds will be given for what has already been paid.



### **Rates & Late Fee Policy**

Children turning three by August 15 may attend the three-year-old program. To preserve continuity to the school experience, students already enrolled in an existing program will be granted advanced registration privileges to other programs offered. These students will be allowed to register two weeks prior to the public. After those two weeks they will be treated as anyone from the public, being put on a waiting list if necessary. There is a yearly, non-refundable registration fee of \$75 for all students. There is an additional non-refundable Student Fee (Book Fee, Technology Fee, Diocesan Assessment) of \$500 per child.

### **Release Policy**

No child shall be released to anyone other than the authorized adult(s) listed on the St. Mary's School Emergency Authorization form. An authorized adult is defined as the individual(s) listed on the child's emergency form. Parents are responsible for keeping preschool staff updated in regards to any changes concerning authorization. If someone is to pick up your child who is not listed on the emergency form, the parent must provide a signed written note to the classroom teacher/and or administrator giving permission for the child to be released. The St. Mary's School staff has the authority to ask for identification or hold a child if any questions arise concerning the child's safety. If a person is not allowed to pick up your child, please notify the school in advance and provide the school a copy of the paperwork, if appropriate. In the event that a non-custodial parent or unapproved person attempts to pick up a child without permission, the police will be notified and the custodial parent will be contacted immediately. In the event that a parent seems to be intoxicated or impaired to the point that they are unable to bring the child home safely, the police will be contacted and an emergency contact will be called to pick up the child.

### **Smoke-Free Environment**

Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 39-17-1604 (2000) prohibits smoking in all public and private preschool, kindergarten, elementary and secondary schools.



## State Licensed Preschool

St. Mary's Preschool is a state-licensed preschool meeting all standards for children's health, safety and well-being. These standards are set by the TN Department of Education. The license is obtained by the DHS and is renewed yearly. A copy of the license is displayed in the school office. The primary goal of St. Mary's Preschool is to operate as a school for young children; not a daycare center.

## Sunscreen & Bug Spray

During the warmer months, the children are frequently outside exploring and learning. Parents are encouraged to apply sprays before your child arrives each morning. Preschool faculty are not permitted to apply these to students.

## Uniforms & General Attire

Part of creating childhood means FUN! When choosing your child's uniform pieces, bear in mind that sometimes our fun can be very messy! Used Uniforms are sold three times a year through our Home & School Association. The days and times of these sales will be communicated by your child's teacher. Additional things to consider:

- Please dress your child in seasonally appropriate clothes.



## LATE ARRIVAL.

Parents of students who arrive late to school are required to sign the student in at the main office before the student may report to his/her classroom. Parents may not accompany their child(ren) to his/her classroom once they are signed in. In the case of our Preschool students, a school staff member will escort the child to their classroom. Due to lunch and nap schedules, Preschool children may not arrive and/or be checked into school after 10:30 a.m.

- Each child should have at least one change of seasonally appropriate uniform pieces including socks and undergarments at school at all times. Please place all items in a large Ziploc bag labelled with your child's name. Soiled clothing is sent home. Please be sure to replace these articles of clothing that are used from the spare set.
- During the warmer months, we will have water play and spend time in the school gardens. We will notify you of the times for these activities so that you may provide an additional change of clothing as well as a towel, change of shoes, etc. should these items be deemed necessary based on the activity and weather forecast.




Please label ALL items (including clothing, coats, hats, gloves, etc.) that your child brings to school with their first and last name.

- **Shirts & Blouses:** No oversized or tight blouses or shirts are permitted, unless fitted uniform blouse is chosen. Shirts and blouses are to be tucked in at all times. No logos are permitted on shirts and blouses other than the knit shirt with the St. Mary's Catholic School logo.
- **Shoes:** Shoes must be safe and practical for active play. Flip-flops, sandals, boots of any kind, heeled-footwear, clogs, and wheeled shoes are not acceptable for gross motor play. Velcro sneakers are recommended unless your child can independently tie shoes.
- **Skirts & Skorts Length:** Skirts and skorts are considered appropriate in length if the hem is no more than 2" above the knee. Shorter skirts and skorts are not uniform and will not be permitted. Rolled up skirts are not permitted.
- **Sweaters:** Students may wear solid navy blue or St. Mary's Catholic School sweaters in class, church, or halls. Sweaters must fit properly at the wrist.
- **Sweatshirts & Fleece Jackets:** Girls or boys may wear a solid navy blue sweatshirt or fleece jacket or a St. Mary's Catholic School sweatshirt or fleece jacket. Sweatshirts and fleece jackets must be worn over the prescribed shirts or blouses. Sweatshirts must fit properly at the wrist.
- **Walking Shorts:** Cargo-style shorts (shorts with pockets on the outside) are not permitted. Both boys and girls may wear shorts. Preschool shorts are considered appropriate in length if the hem is no more than 2" above the knee. Shorter shorts are not uniform and will not be permitted.

### UNIFORM CODE

**Girls:** Full Dress uniform is to be worn every Wednesday during the school year unless otherwise notified by the principal. The St. Mary's Catholic School logo patch is required on all girls' jumpers in Preschool. A belt is not required in Preschool-3 thru 1st grades.

The St. Mary's Catholic School logo patch is optional on polo shirts. Turtleneck shirts are not permitted. Girls may wear blue, black, or white leggings (ankle length) under dresses or skirts. Preschool children must wear tennis shoes or sneakers. No boots.



**Boys:** Full Dress uniform is to be worn every Wednesday during the school year unless otherwise notified by the principal. Full Dress uniform for boys in Preschool includes the navy blue sweater vest. The St. Mary's Catholic School logo patch is required on all boys' sweater vests. Boys in Preschool must wear a white button-up oxford shirt (short or long sleeve) with their navy blue sweater vest on Wednesdays. The St. Mary's Catholic School logo patch on polo shirts is optional. A belt is not required in Preschool-3 thru 1st grades. Turtleneck shirts are not permitted. Cargo-style pants and/or cargo-style shorts are not permitted. Students may wear tennis shoes or appropriate school shoes. Plain white t-shirts are okay ONLY under uniform shirt. Preschool children must wear tennis shoes.

**Please consult the St. Mary's School Parent-Student Handbook for specific information on the school Uniform Code.**

## **Volunteers & Visitors**

All volunteers/visitors must report to the school office upon arrival at the school (Diocesan Policy #1650). You will be given a name tag to wear and you will be asked to sign a Volunteer/Visitor Log in the school office. The office is notified when anyone who is not an employee is seen in the building without a name tag. This is necessary to maintain the safety of the children, building security, and an orderly operation of the school.

## **Water Bottles**

Children should bring a leak-proof, refillable water bottle every day. Our school is equipped with three no-touch water bottle refilling stations that the children may use throughout the day. Studies show that children are more susceptible to dehydration than adults. They have a higher requirement of water in relation to their bodies than adults and are less tolerant of heat which leaves them vulnerable to dehydration in hot weather and/or when exercising.

# PRESCHOOL

## Notes

## CHILDREN'S PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Tennessee children protection laws require any individual or organization having knowledge of suspected child abuse or neglect to report it to a juvenile judge, the Department of Children's Services, or a local law enforcement official. St. Mary's School will abide by Child Protective Services laws and will report any suspected incidents of child abuse or neglect to the Department of Children's Services.



## CURRICULUM

The Diocese of Knoxville Catholic schools' curriculum goals are illuminated by the light of faith and grounded in the spiritual truths of sacred scripture and Catholic tradition. The framework for our curriculum is defined by the Diocese of Knoxville Grade Level Expectations, [the State of Tennessee Curriculum Standards](#), National Content Standards, and [the Benchmarks for Academic Excellence propagated by the National Catholic Education Association](#). The Diocese follows a schedule for Curriculum Grade Level Standards and Expectations review and revision.



## TN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

We abide by state requirements. These rules and regulations guide our practices and processes. All staff members have a health screening, background check, and reference check before beginning employment. Furthermore, our staff members participate in additional training hours each year for continued professional development.



# ADULT:CHILD RATIO CHART



AGE OF CHILDREN	ADULT:CHILD RATIO	MAXIMUM CLASS SIZE
6 weeks - 15 months	1:4	8
12 months - 30 months	1:6	12
Two (2) years	1:8	14
Three (3) years	1:9	18
Four (4) years	1:13	20

## CLOSING *Thoughts*

In Preschool, we strive to inspire curiosity self-expression, collaboration and a lifelong love of learning. In our classrooms, we recognize that children have 100 languages, 100 hands, 100 thoughts, 100 ways of thinking, of playing, of speaking, and of dreaming. Learning through play and loving what they do ... everything else flows from there.

