



St. Joseph School
Preschool Student/Parent
Handbook



Bulldog Pups
2023-2024

St. Joseph Preschool is a nonprofit, nondiscriminatory program that is under the direction of St. Joseph School and licensed by the Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education.

St. Joseph School
Preschool Campus
818 4th Street/ Conway, AR 72032
501.336.9548

Director of Preschool - Carrie Simon
Preschool Administrative Assistant - Tina Flake
Registrar - Amy Heathscott
Nurse - Kim Nutt

Lead Teacher
Amy Covington
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Charlotte Paladino
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The St. Joseph Preschool ("SJP" or the "Preschool") Student/Parent Handbook ("Handbook") is published and distributed to the families of the St. Joseph School community for the purpose of providing information on aspects of student and campus life so that students/parents may gain as much as possible from their experience at the Preschool. Students, parent(s) and/or guardian(s), faculty, administration, and staff should all read and be familiar with the contents of the Handbook, so that each member of the community knows and understands the expectations of students within our community. While policies in this Handbook will generally apply, the Preschool may take actions that it determines to be in the best interests of St. Joseph Preschool, its faculty, and its students.

This Handbook does not limit the authority of the Preschool to alter, interpret and implement its rules, policies, and procedures, before, during, and after the Preschool year. This Handbook is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to create, nor does it create, a contract or part of a contract in any way, including, but not limited to, between St. Joseph Preschool and any parent(s) and/or guardian(s), or student affiliated with or attending the Preschool. St. Joseph Preschool, in its sole discretion, may add, revise, and/or delete Preschool policies before, during, and after the school year.

PURPOSE AND OPERATIONAL POLICIES

The purpose of the St. Joseph Preschool program is to help children express ideas and feelings freely, acquire reasonable patterns of behavior, learn to cooperate with other children in socially acceptable ways, become familiar with the Catholic faith and to build important foundations for future learning skills in all academic areas.

- The following academics will be worked on throughout the year: colors, shapes, number recognition, counting, same or different, the alphabet, name writing, phonics, science, math, computer, and several other academic skills (Heggerty).
- Religious education is one of the most important subjects taught at St. Joseph Preschool. The children will be taught different Catholic prayers such as The Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, and the Guardian Angel. The rosary will be said each week. The religious curriculum follows the church calendar. Preschool students will attend Mass once during the Advent season and on Ash Wednesday.

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The arts and crafts projects are geared towards the children's capabilities and skills rather than on appearances or a finished project. We have found that most children feel much more excited about projects they have completed themselves.

- Many of our learning activities are hands-on and therefore children may not have any papers to take home on those days.

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PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parent involvement is a major component of the St. Joseph Preschool Program. We encourage participation to ensure the best possible educational experiences for your child. Parent involvement will be offered throughout the school year. A Kindergarten Readiness Indicator Checklist for Families can be found at the following link:

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/wp-content/uploads/KRIC-for-Families-2021.pdf>

VISITORS

Visitors are always welcome to any of the school buildings on the St. Joseph Elementary Campus, but must check in at the St. Joseph Preschool Office or St. Joseph Elementary Office. During instructional time, visitors are not to be in any classrooms or hallway without permission.

ENROLLMENT

Enrollment will be open to members of St. Joseph Catholic Church first, then to any child in the community providing the school can meet the needs of the child.

Please provide the following items with you when you submit your completed application to St. Joseph Preschool.

1. Child's shot records and health screening from doctor (Well Child Check-up)
2. Birth certificate or official hospital record with date of birth listed verifying your child meets the following requirement:
 - a. School enrollment shall be granted to children who are either 3 or 4 years of age by September 30th and **FULLY** potty-trained.
Fully Potty Trained - He/She can verbally express the need to use the bathroom. They can go in the restroom by themselves and take care of their needs, including wiping. We do understand that accidents will happen from time to time and that assistance is sometimes needed. Pull-ups and diapers are not to be worn at school.

TUITION

St. Joseph Preschool, although a part of St. Joseph School is not subsidized by the school and works solely on incoming tuition and fees.

Tuition is calculated for the number of school days divided by 10 months. Tuition will be automatic bank draft only (unless discussed by the Director). The dates of the draft will be either 1st or 20th. Please note if you choose the 1st then the first tuition draft will be on the August 20th (due to school start date). However, September-May will draft on the 1st.

There is a \$125.00 fee per child. This will cover supplies, party items, and anything else that might come up throughout the year. This will be scheduled to withdraw within the first week of September.

St. Joseph Preschool students are not eligible for financial assistance.

What will morning drop off look like (PLEASE USE AUTO SIGN)

- The 4th Street side of our building approaching from East only will be the drop off and pick up area.
- If you plan on walking your child into preschool, there are a few parking spaces located by the Fellowship Hall (white building on 4th Street).
- There will be a teacher or aide to assist at the drop off area from 7:30 a.m. until 8:05 a.m.
- Preschool students must hold teachers' hands upon exiting the vehicle.
- If parents choose to park and walk students up, they must deliver directly or to a staff member.
- The preferred drop off time is before 8:05 a.m. At 8:05 a.m. the gates will be locked. If you arrive after 8:05 a.m., use the gate located near the main parking lot on Harkrider Street. Students will have to be walked in and signed in at the office.
- All the doors of the preschool building are always locked. Please come to the Preschool Office door located on the West corner of the building, Room 112. All students must check in through the Preschool Office. Do not go directly to the classroom door.

What will afternoon pick up look like (PLEASE USE AUTO SIGN)

- Enter the pick-up area the same way approaching from the East on 4th Street.
- All students are brought out to the gates.
- The teacher or aide will put each child into their car.
- Parents are asked to remain in their cars.

As soon as your child has been put into the vehicle, each car should pull forward until able to turn onto Harkrider Street. This will help to avoid a traffic build-up on 4th Street. You may right turn Only onto Harkrider Street.

If your child is in the 1/2-day program, please arrive by 11:30 a.m. to pick up your child.

- It is very important that you arrive on time when picking up your child.
- The safety measures require that the gates be locked each day at 11:40 a.m.
- The only time these gates will stay open is for special events.
- Children not picked up by 11:45 a.m. will incur a late pick-up fee of \$1.00 each minute past 11:45 a.m.

All full day students not picked up by 3:30 p.m. (3:00 p.m. on Wednesdays) will be taken to Extended Care and have to pay the fees accrued.

If there is a change in the regular pick-up routine for your child, please call the St. Joseph Preschool Office or send a note to your child's teacher. Any issue that requires attention that day, please call the office. Please do not email teachers because they might not be able to check their emails.

What are classroom procedures like?

- The Preschool will be open from 7:30 AM to 3:30 PM every Monday through Friday with class starting at 8:05 AM and ending at 11:30 AM for 1/2-day students.
- Full day class will dismiss at 3:20 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Wednesday is "Early Day Out" and dismissal is at 2:50 PM.
- Extend Care is available 3:30-5:30 PM for an additional fee (contact Laura Hiegel-Williams lwilliams@sjbulldogs.org for more information).
- The early morning drop-off service is between 7:30 AM and 8:00 AM. It is for working parents' convenience and is offered at no extra charge; therefore, the Preschool is just partially staffed until 8:00 AM.

- The Preschool day *starts at 8:05 a.m.* St. Joseph Preschool will follow St. Joseph Elementary School's schedule. The school days they are out of school, Preschool will be closed also.
- Your child's daily work will be sent home in their backpack as well as important notes from preschool staff. Please remember to check your child's backpack **every day!**

What will meal times look like?

Snack

- A snack list will be provided by the teacher each month and sent to your email.
- Each parent brings snacks approximately one week per semester. Please refer to the Monthly Snack Calendar for the number of students and the day your child is to bring snacks.
- Healthier snacks are encouraged.
- Please provide napkins, cups, and utensils if needed.
- Birthdays are celebrated at snack time. Parents will have the opportunity to bring birthday snacks on or near their child's birthday. Children whose birthdays are in the summer will have an un-birthday party close to the end of the school year.

Lunch (full day students only)

- A menu will be online each week.
- To check for menu listings, click the provided [link](#).
- **Student lunches must be ordered by 8:30 a.m.**
- The cafeteria manager requests that all lunch accounts be paid by one of the following options:
 - Option 1 - Pay entire school year (174 days)
 - Option 2 - Pay by the semester
 - Option 3 - Bank draft (The drafts are taken on the 15th and the last day of each month for only the days your child has a cafeteria tray or milk charge.)
- Preschool students may bring a lunchbox.
- Preschool students may have visitors for lunch provided arrangements have been made by a note to the teacher or a phone call to the office.

What will my child's classroom look like?

- Your child's classroom will be staffed with a licensed early childhood education teacher and a paraprofessional.
- Your child's class will have no more than 20 students.

- Your child's classroom will be sanitized throughout the day.
- Your child's classroom will be divided into classroom learning centers where your child will be given the opportunity to explore, create, sort, and build.

What will naptime look like?

- A cot will be assigned to your child and they will use the same cot throughout the school year.
- Students' cots will be distanced as much as possible.
- You are to provide your child's cot with a nap roll (3 in 1 mat, blanket, and pillow) can be found on Amazon.
- Sheets and blankets will be sent home weekly to be laundered.
- Your child will not be required to sleep but will be required to remain calm and quiet to allow those children who choose to sleep the opportunity to do so.

Will my child have field trips or school assemblies?

- Your child will have the opportunity to participate in on-site field trips.
- Your child will be able to participate in school assemblies held in the cafeteria randomly throughout the year.

What will outside play time look like?

- Per DHS requirements, your child will play outside for 1 hour each day, weather permitting.
- **If the wind chill is below 40 degrees or a heat index over 90 degrees, we will have gross motor indoor recess.**
- All children must go outside for recess. There are no exceptions.

Can my child bring their own toys to school?

- Your child may not bring personal items from home to school.
- Your child's classroom has many ages and developmentally appropriate toys for your child to play with in the classroom.
- **If your child happens to bring a toy weapon to school, it will result in confiscation of the toy with no return to the student and a parent conference with the supervisor.**

What will office procedures look like?

- Parents must enter the building using the parent entrance facing Harkrider Street.

Parents and visitors will not be given access to the building beyond the office area without scheduling a visit.

What special cleaning and sanitation procedures will take place?

- Disinfecting and sanitizing are continually a high priority on all campuses, with even more attention to high touch surfaces and restrooms.
- Time will be protected for hand washing/sanitizing.
- Students will be asked to sanitize their hands each time they leave and enter a new space.

What will happen if a student comes to school sick?

- The student will be screened by the school nurse in a designated area.
- If the temperature is over the ADH guidance, the student will be sent home and will need to be fever free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.

MEDICAL AND HEALTH ISSUES

Please notify the Preschool office if your child will be absent due to illness. No child or staff shall be admitted who has a contagious or infectious disease. Any child who exhibits any of the following symptoms should not come to school until 24 hours after symptoms disappear or parent provides a doctor's note stating that the child is not contagious:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher
- Have had a temperature of 100.4 degrees or above in the last 24 hours
- Vomiting illness (2 or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours)
- Untreated scabies, head lice or the presence of nits: may return after treatment and removal of nits
- Sudden change in behavior, such as lethargy or lack of responsiveness, unexplained irritability or persistent crying, difficult breathing, or quickly-spreading rash
- Diarrhea, defined as watery/runny stools if frequency exceeds 2 or more stools above normal for that child, and is not related to a change in diet or medication
(Exclusion from child care is required if diarrhea is causing soiled clothing in toilet-trained children.)
- Blood or mucus in stools (unless caused by hard stools)
- Abdominal pain which lasts more than 2 hours
- Mouth sores with drooling
- Rash with fever or behavior change

Conjunctivitis or "pink eye"

The parent or legal guardian shall be notified as soon as possible when a child has any symptom that requires exclusion from the facility. The child shall be separated from other children and closely monitored until the parent arrives to pick the child up.

ALLERGIES

If your child has a medical or food allergy, you need to bring a signed doctor's note with the following information:

- What the child is allergic to
- Symptoms to watch for
- Treatment plan should the child have a reaction

Until the Preschool office has a signed doctor's note on file, your child will be given all food items provided at snack and served at lunch.

MEDICATION

All medication given to a child at the preschool must be authorized by a written statement from a physician and/or parent. All medication must be in the original container, indicating the child's name, type and date of the prescribed medication, and the amount and the time of dosage. When the medication is brought to the Preschool, it must be given to the school nurse at the beginning of the day so that it can be stored properly. This medication will be given by the nurse at the designated time. A medication sheet **MUST** be completed and signed by the parent before any medication can be given.

INJURY

The classroom teachers make every effort to ensure the safety of your child. Unfortunately, minor accidents may occur. As your partner in the care of your child, we realize that you will want to be aware of your child's illnesses or an injury that occurs. In order to keep you informed, your teachers will provide you with an Accident and Illness Record for each occurrence. In case of a serious injury, first aid will be administered, and then we will make every attempt to contact you for your instructions. If we cannot reach you, we will call the person you have indicated in FACTS to make medical emergency decisions about your child. Please keep these numbers updated in FACTS. Your signed medical release will also assist us in getting prompt medical attention. Injuries that require the attention of medical personnel shall be reported to the parent immediately and to the Licensing Unit within one business day.

CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Your child will have many opportunities to experience a variety of activities. Simple clothing that is washable will allow your child to participate comfortably in all activities from playground fun to messy art projects. Because children need regular outdoor physical activity, please be sure to provide your child with proper clothing (sweater, jacket, hats, mittens, etc.). **TENNIS SHOES ONLY** (tie, slip on or velcro). Students will have at least one hour of outside time per day unless the temperature is 90 degrees or above or below 40 degrees. Gross motor activities may be shortened or moved indoors. Shoes shall be athletic shoes only. Each child will also need one complete change of clothing at the Preschool. Please include underwear, pants, shirt, and socks. Please label all clothing. Soiled clothing should be taken home and replaced with a fresh set the next day. Please leave all cosmetic products at home (lip gloss, nail polish, perfume, etc.).

CONDUCT/DISCIPLINE

Physical punishment shall not be administered to children. The method of discipline shall not be humiliating, frightening, or physically harmful to the children.

Discipline shall be consistent and individualized for each child. It shall be appropriate for the child's level of understanding. It shall be directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. Redirecting the child into acceptable behavior is our primary form of discipline. However, if the child will not follow the rules, he/she will be provided a safe place to think or calm down. If measures taken are not effective, then a conference with the parent will be held to discuss appropriate interventions.

In a situation where a child is deemed unsafe to themselves or others, a guardian will be contacted immediately to pick up the child from school. The child can not return until a conference is held with the appropriate staff within 24 hours of when the child was sent home. When a student is removed from school for obstinate conduct, insubordination, infectious disease, or other deemed inappropriate behavior will consult the Division of Childcare Services.

Aggressive play and shooting/fighting with weapons are not allowed. Students will be sent home if aggressive behavior continues after being warned.

EXPULSION

St. Joseph Preschool, with approval from the Diocese of Little Rock Office of Catholic Schools, has the authority to expel a student from preschool if an offense is serious enough to warrant such action. St. Joseph Preschool may expel a student for the remainder of the semester, for the remainder of the school year, or permanently for conduct where the student's continued attendance at school would be unacceptably disruptive to the educational program or a reasonable danger to other students and staff.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Emergency Drills are held monthly to acquaint your child with evacuation and other emergency procedures. This may make quite an impression on your child the first time a drill is held, but your child will soon become accustomed to it and know just what to do.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The announcement for school closings due to inclement weather will be made over local television stations, radio stations, and online. As a general rule, the Preschool will follow St. Joseph School and Conway Public Schools closing due to bad weather or an emergency situation. The preschool staff will email or phone you if St. Joseph Preschool should close early.

In the event of an emergency in our building, all students would be taken by bus to the Spiritan Center. Parents would be called to pick their child up as soon as possible. In the event of a major disaster, the students would be taken to Toad Suck Park or the location designated by the local emergency management officials. Parents would be called and notified where to come for their child.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE/MALTREATMENT

Act 1208 of 1991 defines abuse as any non-accidental physical injury or mental injury; or any injury which is a variance with the history given. This includes welts, bruises, cuts, burns, scratches, and broken bones. Sexual abuse and emotional abuse are also reported and investigated. Neglect is defined as abandonment, lack of food, utilities, shelter, or lack of supervision. The St. Joseph Preschool teachers are mandated reporters of child abuse/maltreatment. If a mandated reporter does not report abuse, she can be found guilty of a Class C misdemeanor.

Licensing Central Office phone number is 1-800-445-3316. Child Maltreatment Hotline phone number is 1-800-482-5964.

INTERVIEWING OF STAFF/STUDENTS BY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

St. Joseph Preschool staff and children are subject to be interviewed by Child Care Licensing, DCFS Special Investigators and/or law enforcement for investigative purposes and/or for determining compliance with Licensing Requirements. Child interviews do not require parental notice or consent.

GRIEVANCES

Grievances should be taken to the classroom teacher first if the problem relates to the classroom. Grievances relating to policy, etc., or those remaining after talking with the teacher, should be taken to the St. Joseph Preschool Director. From there, grievances should be taken to the St. Joseph School Principal, and after that to the St. Joseph Catholic Church Pastor.

Service Project

St. Joseph Preschool offers students the opportunity to participate in our yearly service project. The primary objective of our "November Blessings Baskets" is to serve our community as well as developing good sharing and citizenship practices. Parents of only Preschool students **DO NOT** have to work service hours for the school. However, we do have volunteer opportunities and events throughout the year we encourage parents to attend or volunteer.