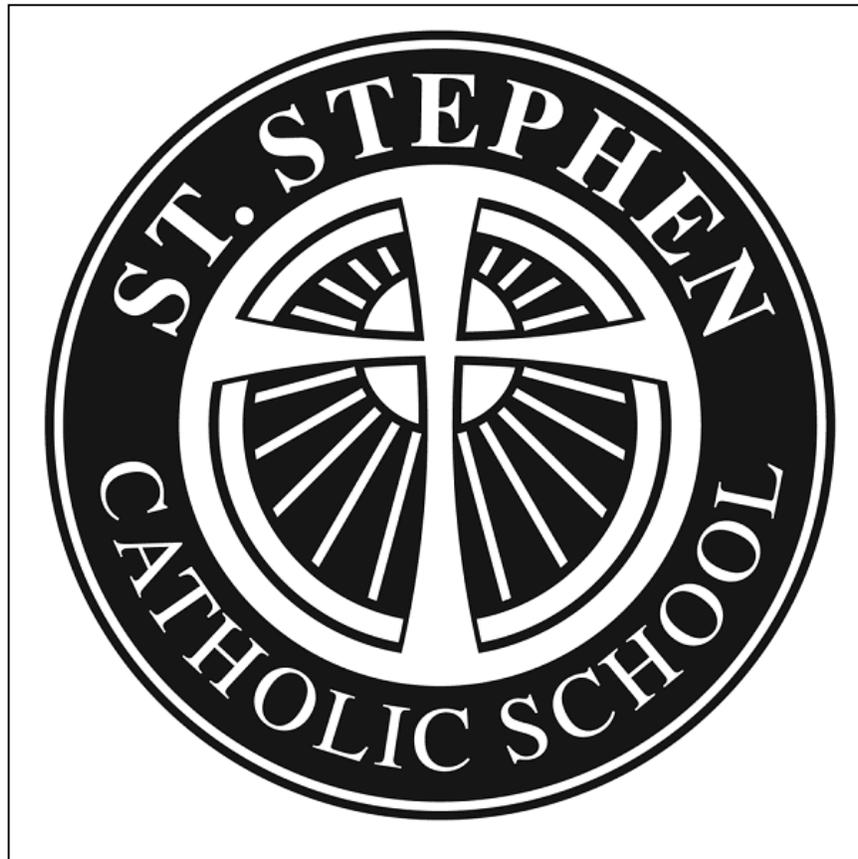


St. Stephen Preschool Parent Handbook



St. Stephen Catholic School
740 Gladstone Dr. SE
East Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Phone: (616) 243-8998

MISSION STATEMENT

Jesus Christ is the heart of St. Stephen Catholic School, which welcomes and includes students of diverse backgrounds and needs. By our words, actions, and attitudes we educate students to be active in their Catholic faith, thirsty for knowledge, and engaged in service.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

St. Stephen Preschool is a developmental program serving children ages 3-5. We think of each child as a unique individual and base our curriculum on the developmental level of the children in each particular session. We teach through themes to expose the children to many concrete experiences and learning activities related to their growing awareness of the world around them.

Our main goal is to build each child's self-concept and self-esteem. We do this by creating a positive environment and building upon successful experiences. A Christ-centered environment promotes love, cooperation, trust and respect.

The curriculum includes both individual and group activities to teach social skills such as problem-solving, decision making and deductive reasoning. Through music, art, cooking, creative dramatics, stories, large and small motor activities, field trips, games and finger plays the children grow and learn in many ways.

ADMISSION

Three-Year Olds: Students must be three by September 1st

Tuesday through Thursday from 8:00 -11:00am

Four-Year-Olds: Students must be four by September 1st

Monday through Thursday from 8:00 - 11:00pm and 12:00- 3:00

During the school year, the program will follow the calendar of St. Stephen School. A copy of the annual school calendar is provided to each parent. Also, we send home a calendar of preschool activities and a weekly newsletter.

Classes are filled on a "first-come, first serve" basis.

Parents may enroll children at any time during the school year if there is room available in the requested session. A registration fee of \$150.00 per family is required.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT

- 1) Written parental permission to seek emergency medical care for the child when parent cannot be reached (Child Information Card), due in school office by first session attended.
- 2) A signed record of the minimum immunizations required by law due in school office by the first session attended.
- 3) Green health form signed by a physician (within the past year) due in the school office within 30 days from first session attended.
- 4) Signed Child Placement Contract

MEET THE STAFF

PROGRAM DIRECTOR: Robin Hunter

*Bachelor of Science, Child Development and Teaching, Michigan State University

*Teacher, Kindergarten and Young Fives, Holy Spirit School, 1992-1998

*Parent Educator, Bright Beginnings- East Grand Rapids, 2002-2004

*Early Childhood Consultant, Kent Intermediate School District, 2006- 2007

*Preschool Teacher, St. Anthony of Padua School, 2009-2010

*Teacher Aide, Kindergarten and First Grade, St. Stephen School

PROGRAM AIDE: Rachel Kaiserlian

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Children must be escorted by an adult to our room. We open our door at the time specified for your child's session. Before that time the teachers are preparing for class or the room may be unattended. At dismissal time the child is only allowed to leave with an adult listed on the registration card as authorized. If the child is not picked up, she/he will be taken to the school office, and the parent will be called. Please pick up your child on time after school so your child does not worry.

CLOTHING

Please dress your child in comfortable clothes for play. We provide paint shirts for our hands-on projects. We encourage parents to dress their children in comfortable clothes for indoor and outdoor activities. Please choose clothing that your child can manage themselves when using the bathroom. Also if you would like to keep an extra change of clothes at school for your child in case of accidents please put them in a plastic bag and label with her/his name.

COMMUNICATION

The school office is open every day from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. The preschool welcomes all verbal or written messages. If you need to speak with the director, call the school office and they can connect you.

Parents are welcome to visit a session at any time. As a courtesy to the director and children, parents are requested to stop at the school office first.

A newsletter is sent home every week with important dates, information and explanation of the themes to be discussed that month. Notes concerning updates, permission slips and reminders are sent home frequently in between. A bi-weekly newsletter is also sent home from the school office with the youngest child in the school.

If a difference of opinion occurs between a parent and the director, a conference should be held between the parent and director. If further action is necessary, the principal will meet with all concerned persons.

Each child is asked to carry a book bag or backpack for important papers and projects. Please check the bag daily for important communications from the school.

CONFERENCES

We encourage on-going communication between home and school. Therefore, we welcome calls throughout the year as the need arises or problems develop. Problems with preschoolers must be attended to immediately and not be put off until a formal conference time. Conferences are held in the Fall and Spring for both preschool groups. Please call the director at any time with questions and concerns.

CULTURAL COMPETANCE PLAN

By our words, actions, and attitudes we educate students to be active in their Catholic faith, thirsty for knowledge, and engaged in service. The goal of St. Stephen Preschool is to wholly engage all of our students and families enrolled in our program. We are blessed to have a diverse population at St. Stephen School and celebrate the variety of race, culture and socio-economic backgrounds of our students.

Some of the ways we support this diversity include:

We encourage families to share talents, interests, hobbies, and traditions throughout the year.

Include books, music, materials, instruments, pretend play materials, family photographs, etc. in our preschool classroom.

Opportunities are created for the preschoolers to demonstrate their knowledge of concepts. These activities are concrete and hands on experiences that occur in the familiar classroom environment.

Staff members attend conferences and consult the bilingual teacher at St. Stephen School for information to support our bilingual learners.

Families are offered the option of school communications sent home in printed format instead of emailed. We also encourage bilingual families to bring a support person to conferences or school events to help with language barriers.

DISCIPLINE

St. Stephen School staff will use positive methods of discipline, which encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem and cooperation. Our objective is to help the child learn rather than forcing her/him to conform to adult standards. Our preschool is a unique educational institution in which the spirit of Christ-like charity, respect for authority and mutual cooperation are essential to the learning situation. Each child will have freedom and encouragement to express individuality as long as her/his conduct does not intrude upon and endanger the freedom of others, especially upon the freedom of her/his peers to receive instruction.

EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES

On days when it becomes necessary to cancel our preschool sessions, announcements will generally be broadcast on radio and/or television.

Tornado Watch: In case of a tornado watch during a session, children will remain in school. A parent/guardian may pick up the child during a tornado watch if she/he so wishes.

Tornado Warning: If a tornado warning is issued, children will take shelter in the lower level of the school immediately.

We have regular fire drills and explain this procedure to the children. The drills follow our school policy.

We also practice for a tornado warning implementing school procedure.

A major emergency evacuation drill is held which is similar to the fire drill.

FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION RULES- 4 Year old class only

School Requirements:

- 1) The preschool shall obtain and keep on file written permission from the parent prior to the child's participation in field trips.
- 2) The preschool shall provide notification to each parent prior to each field trip. This information will be part of the weekly newsletter.
- 3) Field trips for the preschool will be at a minimum and used as an extension to classroom learning

HEALTH

A green health appraisal form from the Health Department must be completed and returned to the school office prior to the beginning of the school year. Immunizations must be current and recorded. A physical examination is required each year that your child is in preschool.

Please watch your child closely and keep them home if they seem ill or very tired. School presents a change in activity level for your child so try to see that they get enough sleep.

A child who is well enough to be in school is well enough to take part in all activities, including playing outside." (Kent County Health Department)

Communicable Diseases: Occasionally it may be necessary for your child to be sent home from school if there is a possibility that (s)he has a communicable disease. The child will be permitted to return to school when the condition has cleared and your child is no longer contagious, or if (s)he is under a physician's care and the doctor authorizes the return to school.

In the case of communicable disease, a letter will be sent home informing the parents of symptoms to watch for. Due to the contagious nature of these conditions, it is important that the caregiver notify the school when the child is diagnosed with a communicable disease.

*The Kent County Health Department must have a record of all diseases.

Absence: Please notify the school office if your child will be absent the day of her/his class. Let us know if the child will be absent longer than one session no matter what the reason.

Illness: If your child becomes ill at school, we will keep the child as comfortable as possible away from the group and will call you or your designated emergency number. That is why filling out each part of the Child Information Card is so important.

Please keep your child home if (s)he has:

- Fever above 100.5
- Vomiting- more than 2 times in 24 hours
- Unexplained rash, blisters or sores on skin with pus/liquid drainage
- Cough that disturbs normal activity
- Diarrhea-greater than 2 stools in 24 hours
- Unexplained shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Yellow or greenish discharge from nose
- Chills
- Unexplained stiffness in neck or back

Medical Problems: It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the teacher(s) and principal if a student has a medical problem that may need attention while at school. The medical procedure to be used should be in writing and signed by a

parent/guardian. If it is necessary for a student to take medication during the school day, a parent should notify the office in writing, giving explicit instructions for administering medication and releasing the school from any liability. A special form should be filled out by the parent when the office is asked to administer medication during the entire school year.

Serious illness, accident or injury: The director will call 911 immediately, followed by calling the child's parents or the emergency contact person if the child's parents are unavailable. One staff member will remain with the child, providing medical assistance to the child as needed until the emergency medical staff arrives and takes over the child's care. Our teacher is trained in CPR and First Aid. These certifications are kept current.

Strategies to Protect Children from Infection:

Part of preschool is helping your child become more independent. With this goal in mind, please help us by encouraging your child to use these healthy habits.

We teach the children to use the following steps when washing their hands:

- Turn on warm water to a comfortable temperature.
- Wet hands and apply liquid soap.
- Rub hands together vigorously for no less than 15 seconds, covering all the areas of hands and wrists.
- Rinse hands under warm water until soap and dirt are rinsed away. Leave the water running while you dry your hands.
- Dry hands with a disposable paper towel.
- Turn water off using a paper towel.

To safeguard the health of the children, all staff follow these hand washing guidelines:

- Upon arrival to the center
- Before and after snack time and before handling any food
- Before giving medication to a child
- After using the toilet or assisting a child.
- After handling body fluids from sneezing, coughing, wiping or blowing noses, or from open sores.
- After handling garbage

Children must wash their hands:

- Before snack time
- After sneezing or coughing into hands
- After playing outside
- After using the restroom

We teach the children proper use of a tissue to blow their noses and to cough into the inside of their upper arm. With this simple change of habit, children and caregivers lessen the chance of infecting others with their germs.

Our staff receives education about blood borne pathogens training in universal precautions when attending to an injured child or where blood, urine, vomit or stool is present.

When spills of blood or bodily fluids occur, the procedure to clean the area effectively is as follows:

- The staff person handling the situation must first put on gloves.
- Use disposable paper towels to wipe up as much of the visible material as possible, and then place the soiled towels and any other soiled materials in a plastic bag that has been securely tied or sealed. If the spill occurs on a hard surface, the entire area must be disinfected immediately with a solution of ¼ C. bleach to 1 gallon water solution.
- If the spill occurs on carpeting, blot the area with paper towel immediately and spot clean the area with a detergent-disinfectant. Additional cleaning with a steam cleaner may be necessary. When the cleaning of the area is completed, put contaminated gloves into a plastic bag and securely tie and discard.

Cleaning and sanitizing of equipment, toys and other surfaces

Tables are cleaned after each use using a 3-step process:

- First clean the tables with soap and water
- Rinse with clear water
- Follow with a bleach solution and allow to air dry

Toys and equipment are kept clean and in good repair. Cloth toys and dress up clothes are washed by machine. Others are put through the dishwasher. Some are cleaned and sanitized using a bleach solution. This is done yearly and needed with use.

We have wonderful health resources in Grand Rapids. Some that we rely on are:

- Kent County Health Department (616) 632-7100
- DeVos Children's Hospital (616) 391-9000

Our licensing requires that your child is potty trained. While there are many indicators of readiness for preschool, this is a key factor. We understand that accidents do happen and we have some extra clothing available, but we are not equipped for more than occasional mishaps. Please keep a change of clothing in a plastic bag marked with your child's name in your child's backpack.

OVERVIEW OF SPECIAL PROGRAMS

An Open House will take place early in the school year where parents are encouraged to visit and ask questions about curriculum and policies.

Families will be invited throughout the year to attend events at school. Some of these events include: Nursery Rhyme Olympics, Mother's Day program, Science Fair, and a VIP Breakfast to name a few.

Various field trips are taken according to the theme we are discussing. Parents are always welcome. We will have a sign up for each trip.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are very special, and we encourage you to send a treat for the class on or near your child's birthday. Summer birthdays can be celebrated on the day of your choice during the school year.

SNACK

Children gather in a supportive environment that fosters independence and provides many learning opportunities. We sit family style to foster communication between the students, practice using utensils independently, and try new foods.

Families will take turns providing snack for our classroom. A monthly calendar will be sent home.

If your child has a food allergy, we encourage you to provide your child's daily snack.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SNACKS

Good snack foods for school:

- Are low in sugar and salt
- Can be eaten with hands or fingers
- Need minimal preparation at school
- Can be served in small pieces

Below are some examples of possible snack items. If possible, we would like for 2 items to be brought in. You can select two items from two different categories listed below to bring in for your child's snack day. Families are encouraged to contribute favorite family snacks and snacks from their culture as well.

Water will be served as the drink at snack time unless milk or juice is brought in.

WHOLE GRAINS:

- Graham crackers
- Whole grain dry cereal (with milk)
- Whole wheat bread with butter or other spreads
- Whole grain muffins (bran or whole wheat)
- Muffin with fruit (soft apples, bananas, blueberries)
- Rice cakes with spread (cream cheese & jam)

- Bagels

FRUITS:

- Bananas
- Strawberries
- Blueberries
- Pre-packed applesauce
- Canned fruit (packed in juice or water)
- Oranges
- Apples with different colors (teachers will slice)

(100% fruit juice for drinking can be an option too)

VEGETABLES

- Various vegetables and dip
- Cherry tomatoes (teachers will quarter)
- Broccoli florets
- Carrot sticks
- Cauliflower
- Cucumbers

PROTEIN (meat, beans, and eggs)

- Black beans or any other bean (garbanzo, pinto)
- Hummus and crackers (whole grain or rice)
- String cheese
- Yogurt sticks (check for sugar content)
- Deli meats such as turkey

*All snacks must be store bought, unopened, and in original packaging.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING IN ANY FOODS WITH NUTS, PEANUTS OR PEANUT PRODUCTS (oil, etc.)

SPECIAL ACCOMODATIONS

We offer opportunities for children that receive extra support outside of our classroom to have that support fostered in our classroom as well. There may be times when outside professionals come into our classroom to work with individual students. All support personnel will sign in and be authorized by the school principal.

SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

During the school year, the director may send home a request for various materials for special projects. Usually all supplies will be furnished. We do ask each child to have her/his own backpack or book bag for special papers and notes, clearly labeled with your child's name. Newsletters and other important communication will come home in this bag as well as your child's art work. Small or mini sized bags will not always accommodate our art projects.

TUITION

There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$150.00 per family. Tuition is set in the spring of the previous year. Tuition varies for three-year-olds and four-year-olds because of the number of class sessions. Tuition is due on the fifteenth of each month. If tuition payment is not current, your child will not be able to continue in our program.

WITHDRAWAL

Parents are welcome to withdraw their child from the preschool program at any time. We just request notification in writing to the school office.

Every childcare and/or preschool program is not able to meet the needs of every individual child. Although we will do our best to provide a quality, individualized program for each child enrolled in St. Stephen Preschool, we reserve the right to request placement elsewhere in situations where we believe we are not able to meet a child's individual needs.

Please Note:

You will be asked to withdraw your child from our program for the following reasons:

- 1) Failure to show evidence by the first class attended of an up-to-date immunization record or failure to fill out a waiver form
- 2) Failure to turn in the green health form signed by a physician or health professional within 30 days of the first class attended
- 3) Failure to pay tuition when due
- 4) Inability to meet child's extraordinary special needs

VOLUNTEERS

Parent Volunteers in our classroom are often needed and very much encouraged. All classroom volunteers must have a criminal background clearance. Volunteers will need to have a criminal background clearance and Virtus Training.

VACATIONS

Be sure to read the bulletins that will be sent home from the school office. We follow the same schedule as the school unless we notify you otherwise in our preschool newsletter. School bulletins come home every other Tuesday.

