

Parent Information Handbook 2011-2012

Pre-school



St. Stephen's
Catholic School

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Table of Contents

| | | | |
|--|---|--------------------------------|---|
| ADMISSIONS POLICY | 4 | PETS | 6 |
| BEHAVIOR/GUIDANCE | 9 | PRIORITY FOR ACCEPTANCE..... | 4 |
| CURRICULUM..... | 8 | RELIGIOUS FORMATION | 3 |
| FIELD TRIPS | 6 | SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT | 3 |
| HEALTH REGULATIONS | 7 | SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY | 3 |
| HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD PREPARE FOR PRE-SCHOOL | 9 | SNACKS..... | 6 |
| NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY | 3 | VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS | 6 |
| PARENT ORIENTATION AND CONFERENCES | 6 | | |



School Mission Statement

St. Stephen's Catholic School is a caring Christian community that nourishes spiritual development and academic excellence.

School Philosophy

St. Stephen's Catholic School integrates faith with academics to prepare students to make solid Christian choices. It is an accredited, private school, comprised of Pre-school, elementary, and middle school levels.

Faith: As a vital part of the parish community, we educate students in a Catholic atmosphere enriched by the Gospel messages of peace, and justice. The spiritual development of students is the primary goal. The school recognizes that a person's faith is formed by living out that faith in community through prayer, worship, service and study; and grounded in our Catholic tradition.

Academics: In partnership with their family, each student is encouraged and directed to reach his or her potential. Our academic program emphasizes mastery of the basics, academic excellence, and a variety of extracurricular activities. The school prepares students to be fully equipped for their next level of academic achievement.

Community: The school seeks to provide a safe and trusting learning environment where each student is valued and challenged to grow spiritually, academically, emotionally, socially, and physically.

Religious Formation

St. Stephen's School regards the spiritual development of their students as a primary goal. It fully recognizes that a person's faith is formed by living out that faith in community with others, by making moral decisions through prayer and worship, and in service to others. Thus, it fosters an atmosphere in which students' faith can become living, conscious, and active. At St. Stephen's School each student and staff member is invited to develop a personal relationship with God, to participate in a community of faith, and to be of service to others.

The Religious Formation program provides a highly coordinated school-wide effort to integrate the Gospel values, the beliefs, and practices of the Catholic Church into the daily lives of its members.

Nondiscrimination Policy

It is the policy of St. Stephen's School of Anoka, Minnesota to comply with federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and all requirements imposed by or pursuant to regulations issued thereto, to the end that no person in St. Stephen's School shall on the grounds of race, color, national and ethnic origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, age, sexual orientation, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any educational program, employment, or activity operated by the school.

St. Stephen's Catholic Pre-School is licensed for children ages 3-5 years old and complies with the standards of the Department of Human Services in the State of Minnesota. We are licensed for up to 20 children in each class, with a student teacher ration of 10-1. Parents may contact the staff at the Department of Human services at 651-296-3971.

Admission Policies

The 3 year old Pre-school Program admits children who are three by September 1st. Students may not advance into the 4-5 year old program during the school year.

The 4-5 year old Pre-school Program admits children who are four by September 1st.

Children in our Pre-school programs must be completely toilet trained. Pull ups are not acceptable.



If your child has special needs, please contact the school principal prior to the first day of school in order to determine if the Pre-school program can adequately meet the needs of the child.

Requirements for Admission

- *Birth date requirement-birth certificate provided
- *Application for enrollment
- *Application fee paid
- *Up to date immunization record
- *Health Care Summary Form
- *Signed statement of understanding the purpose, philosophy, and policies of St. Stephen's Catholic School



Priority for Acceptance

During the registration period, students will be prioritized in the following order:



- Siblings of students presently enrolled in the Church of St. Stephen's School will have top priority for registration each year.
- Children of faculty members are given the next openings.
- Alumni parishioners are given the next priority.
- The next level of priority will be for new students whose parents are registered parishioners at the Church of St. Stephen.
- If space is available, student applications of non-parishioners will be accepted in the order received during this stage.
- If a class level is full, a waiting list will be formed, based on the priority stated above. This waiting list is not carried over from year to year.

Three year old Pre-school Program

Ten pupils per teacher:

Tuesday and Thursday

7:45 – 10:15 a.m.

11:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Four and Five year old Pre-school Program

Ten pupils per teacher:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday

7:45 – 10:15 a.m.

11:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Doors open 15 minutes prior to class time. Please be on time for pick up!

Parent Drop Off and Pick Up

Pre-school parents are required to bring their children to the classroom for drop off and pick up. Please park on **Jackson Street** or in the **church parking lot**.

The K-8th grade students will be in their classrooms and engaged in their instruction during pick up and drop off time. We ask that you monitor your child closely in order to avoid disrupting the students in their classroom.

Financial Obligations

TUITION

The ACTUAL COST of providing your child a Catholic education at St. Stephen's is more than the tuition charged to you. The parish invests a large percentage of the total cost to help provide this education for your child(ren). It is important to the future of our school that you, (1) continue your stewardship gifts to the parish and, (2) consider paying the actual cost, or a percentage of the actual cost, of your child's tuition if you are financially able to do so.

ANNUAL SUBSIDIZED TUITION INVESTMENT:

| | Pre-School 2 Day | Pre-School 3 Day |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| First Child | \$825.00 | \$1,125.00 |
| Add'l Children | \$763.12 | \$1,040.63 |

DISCOUNTS

Each family may receive only one type of discount; i.e. a family can receive a multi-student discount, or a single pre-payment discount. Any family receiving financial aid from the Church of St. Stephen's will not be eligible to receive a further discounted tuition.

- 5% discount is given for paying your tuition in full before school starts.
- 7.50% multiple student discount is given for each additional student in the same family.

PAYMENT PLAN

You will then receive a letter or an email with a contract and tuition payment options. You will be able to select your payment plan and submit the agreement to TADS. If you need their support, please contact them directly: Support Hours: M-F 9:00 AM - 6:00 PM, or e-mail: support@tads.com. Phone: (612) 238-3554, Fax: (612) 548-3326, Toll-free: 1-800-477-8237.

PAST DUE TUITION

In the event that payments are not received according to the payment plan per the tuition agreement, the following conditions apply:

1. The responsible party is liable for a bank service charge, not to exceed \$30 to be imposed immediately on any dishonored check.
2. The responsible part is responsible for any late fees assessed by TADS. Fees are stated in in section E of the tuition agreement.
3. Finance charges will be assessed at rate of .66% per month (8.0) annually) on balances 30 or more days past due.

TERMINATION

In the event of non-payment in accordance with the terms of the tuition agreement, St. Stephen's school reserves the right to terminate the tuition agreement for default. In the event of termination, the student(s) will not be permitted to continue attendance at St. Stephen's Catholic School.

FINANCIAL AID

Families will be required to apply for financial aid by a given deadline as the school and church have limited resources.

Families who receive financial aid will be required to uphold the timescale for tuition payments. Those who fail to uphold the timescale will not be eligible for future financial aid awards.

St. Stephen's School uses TADS to determine the amount of Financial Aid. There are two ways to apply:

1. On-line at www.tads.com, click on the Family Log-in button to begin. Use School Code SP234120000;
2. Call TADS at 1-800-477-8237 to request an application. TADS Worksheets are available in our school office, however, this is not an application.

FUNDRAISER EXPECTATION

All families are expected to raise at least \$50 for each Pre-school student for the School Marathon for Non-Public Education.

Additional optional fundraisers are listed in the School Handbook.

ACTIVITY FEE

All Pre-school families are expected to pay a **one time- \$25.00** - non-refundable activity fee per child. These funds will be used for miscellaneous student needs, such as field trip fees, classroom project and performance fees, This fee will not cover fundraisers and charitable donations.

Parent Orientation and Conferences

There will be an open house to orient you to our Pre-school program and to answer any questions you may have. Parents will receive a Parent/Student Handbook to acquaint them with the policies of the school.



Individual parent conferences are planned and offered to all parents in fall and spring. During these times, parents will be informed of the child's spiritual, intellectual, physical, social and emotional development and progress within the context of normal growth stages, in positive ways.

Conferences may be requested at any time there is a need by either staff or parents, and an appointment will be made.

Progress reports will be distributed to parents at conference times. A written assessment will give feedback on your child's spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development. We want to be able to work successfully with your child and any help you can provide will help us better understand him or her.

Visitors and Volunteers

Parents of enrolled children are invited to visit the class at any time during the hours of operation.



Volunteers fill an ever-increasing need for staff and student support. All parents/guardians are encouraged to volunteer their time and talents in their child's classroom. Please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher for the list of volunteer opportunities.

Classroom volunteers and chaperones are required to complete the Virtus Training, have a Background Check on file, complete a NET study, sign a Liability Waiver and a Code of Conduct.

Parent Permission Required

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips are an extension of the classroom curriculum. Students must have a permission slip signed by parents and are expected to participate in the field trips as they would their normal classroom activities.

PICTURE APPROVAL

All parents of Pre-school students will be given a Picture Approval Form to sign when their child is enrolled in St. Stephen's Pre-school Program.



RESEARCH

Should we be asked to participate in any research study, experimental procedure or public relations activity involving a child, a separate permission slip will be obtained for each occasion.

Snacks

Nutrition is basic to health. Eating habits and attitudes toward food are formed in the early years. Snack is served daily, and will meet USDA requirements. Children will be asked to bring snacks from home and will share them with their classmates. Each family is assigned snack times throughout the school year. Snacks must be nutritious and store bought.



Pets

Only non allergen producing class pets will be allowed in the classroom on a permanent basis. Student's pets are welcome to visit the classroom after making prior arrangements with the teacher.



Health Regulations

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to us. Upon enrollment you must file with us a health care summary signed by the child's source of medical care. The health care summary must be on file at school within 30 days of enrollment.



Your child's immunization record must be submitted to our school office at the time of enrollment.

If a child becomes ill or is injured at Pre-school, parents will be notified immediately. If parents cannot be reached, the person(s) designated with emergency numbers on the registration form will be contacted. The child will be isolated with the school Health Para while waiting for parents or caregivers to arrive.

For the safety and well being of your child, as well as the other children and staff members, please do not send your child to Pre-school when he/she is not feeling well.

Furthermore, the Pre-school will not knowingly accept a child:

- with a temperature of or exceeding 100 degrees,
- who is displaying symptoms of physical illness (vomiting, diarrhea, etc.),
- with a rash of unknown origin,
- who has contagious conjunctivitis,
- who has unexplained lethargy,
- who has significant respiratory distress (excessive coughing, excessive nasal discharge, etc.),
- who cannot participate in all program activities, including outdoor play, with reasonable comfort.

If your child appears ill upon arrival, a teacher may refuse to accept the child for the day. If the child has symptoms of a possible communicable disease, please notify the school at once. Parents must report within 24 hours to the school when their child is diagnosed by the child's doctor as having a contagious disease or a communicable disease including chicken pox, cough, head lice, impetigo, measles, three day measles, mumps, pink eye (conjunctivitis) or strep infection. The Pre-school will notify parents the

same day it is notified with this information. A parent or guardian must inform the school within 24 hours, exclusive of weekends and holidays, when a child is diagnosed as having a contagious disease (chicken pox, lice, scabies, strep, impetigo, etc.) If there are any communicable diseases in the center, we will post that information on the parent bulletin board and/or send home a notice the same day the center is notified.

If a medical emergency arises, we will first contact the parents, then the emergency numbers. A trained staff person will administer first aid as indicated. A call to 911 will be made if necessary and the child will be sent to Mercy Hospital, 4050 Coon Rapids Blvd, Coon Rapids. 763-236-6000.

No medication shall be given by child care personnel without the signed permission of the parent or legal guardian. All medication must be in the original container with the child's name, name of the physician, medication name, and medication directions written on the label.



Non-prescription medication brought in by the parent or legal guardian can only be dispensed if there is written authorization from the parent or legal guardian to do so.





Curriculum

St. Stephen's Catholic School Pre-school program provides for all areas of a child's development: spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical. Active exploration is encouraged through learning areas and interaction with adults and peers. The difficulty, complexity, and challenge of activities increases as the children develop an understanding of concepts and skills. The program offers a balance of indoor and outdoor activities, restful and active movement activities, and a varied curriculum encompassing faith formation, readiness, art, music, drama, library, computer, Spanish, physical education, math, science, and social awareness.

SPECIFIC CURRICULUM AREAS, including, but not limited to:

Faith Formation

These early years are a wonderful time for our school to support families in developing the Catholic identity of their children. It is a time to celebrate simple rituals and traditions of the church.



Language Arts

We work to develop important pre-reading skills, such as: phonics, sequencing, visual discrimination, storytelling, listening, letter recognition, conversation skills, writing stories, as well as learning appreciation for all kinds of books originating from different cultures. Each student and their parents are expected to read 10 minutes each day. We also have a Spanish teacher who works with students once each week.

3 year old program

- Recognition of basic colors and shapes
- Recognition of numbers 1-10
- Recognition of the child's own first name in print
- Introduction to counting
- Introduction of letters A-Z
- Introduction of letter sounds
- Introduction of calendar skills

4 and 5 year old Program

- Review of basic colors and shapes
- Review of counting
- Review of calendar skills
- Recognition of number 1-20
- Recognition of capital and lower case letters
- Introduction to printing letters of the alphabet
- Introduction of the sounds of each letter

Science

Students are encouraged to explore first hand the world around them. This includes nature walks, experiments, cooking, learning about animals, plants, time, weather, and insects. We will also begin to explore cause and effect, along with the questions that lead to answers in science.

Fine Motor Skills

This includes coloring, handwriting, cutting, pasting, stringing beads, sorting, building, picking up and manipulating small objects.

Gross Motor Skills

This involves hand-eye coordination, kicking, running, jumping, throwing, catching, obstacle courses and playing outside. We also have a sand and water table to allow the children to explore different textures, allowing for a variety of sensory experiences.



Art/ Creative Expression

Children create through many different mediums and learn about color and texture. Student's art is always encouraged to be unique and creative. We learn about and incorporate music, rhythm, instruments, singing and dance/movement into each day.

Mathematical/Logical

We play many math games and different math activities that involve one to one correspondence, counting, number recognition, graphing, sorting, and exploration of shape. We also use math each day during our calendar time where we explore numbers and patterns.

Social/Personal Development

Throughout the year, children will learn more about themselves and what it means to be respectful to themselves and others. We often work both individually and in small groups. Cooperation and sharing are expected along with an overall community of caring. We encourage them to do as much for themselves as possible in managing their own belongings and bathroom responsibilities. Our classroom also includes a dramatic play area where children can role play and experiment using their imaginations. We encourage appropriate choice making, and children acting inappropriately will be redirected from their negative behavior to a positive one. Overall, we strive to build an inner confidence and motivation in learning!



Behavior/Guidance



Our center has developmentally appropriate rules and expectations that are clearly communicated to the children, staff and parents. The staff, through positive, non-threatening teaching techniques and by modeling appropriate behaviors and problem solving techniques will work toward increasing the children's self respect and respect for others. Children will be taught how to use acceptable alternatives to problem behavior in order to reduce conflict.

Removal from the group for a period of time-out is a tactic used for a child who continually demonstrates unacceptable behavior. This time-out is in the classroom and not punishment, but rather a time when the child may calm down, remember what behavior the teacher is asking for, and decide for himself/herself when he/she is ready to rejoin the group with appropriate behavior. A log will be kept on file when this occurs.

In order to have a good classroom environment, some rules are necessary. The staff is consistent in seeing that they are followed so children realize their importance. If inappropriate behavior occurs, we will provide immediate and directly related consequences for that child's behavior. If persistent behavior continues, teacher and parents will write a behavior plan to improve behavior.

No child will be subject to corporal punishment. This includes, but is not limited to, rough handling, shoving, hair pulling, ear pulling, shaking, slapping, kicking, biting, pinching, hitting, or spanking.



How to help your child prepare for Pre-school

1. Talk about school with your child. Discuss happy experiences that are waiting for him or her.
2. Listen to your child. Discuss concerns that he or she expresses. Encourage your child and be reassuring.
3. Establish good routines for eating and sleeping and doing school work. Keep a consistent school bedtime.
4. Establish a communication link with the teacher so that you are always informed about your child's progress.
5. Become an active volunteer and help *all* the children.
6. Help your child learn the proper way to write the letters and numbers below.

How to Print Letters

