



St. Mary
Catholic Schools
— *Grades P3-12* —

Preschool-3 Handbook
St. Gabriel Campus

2016-2017

Dear Families,

Welcome to St. Gabriel Preschool! We looking forward to sharing a fun and exciting year with you and your child. This is the very beginning of your child's education and it will bring an opportunity for your child to meet new friends, get acquainted with our school environment, and spark a lifelong interest in learning.

Your child is a special and unique gift from God. At St. Gabriel's we strive to share God's love and the gifts we have been given. Our early childhood program goals are to:

- Nurture a child's faith by modeling Catholic values;
- Develop self-esteem through encouragement;
- Encourage social development as children interact in both small group and large group activities;
- Prepare children for kindergarten;
- Provide respectful, loving guidance that will enable the child to develop self-control;
- Foster creativity and caring through imaginative play, problem solving activities, music activities and art projects.

This handbook will provide you with some important information about our program's policies and procedures. Please review this information carefully and keep it handy for future reference. Attached is a sheet stating that you have read and understand the information in this packet.

With good wishes for a wonderful school year,

The St. Gabriel Early Childhood Staff
725-4161 (main office)

STUDENT OF THE DAY

We will assign one helper for each day in each class. You will know when your child is the student of the day by looking at the monthly calendar posted online at the SMCS website at the beginning of each month. There will be a child's name on each day on the calendar. When your child is the student of the day, it will be his/her turn to bring the snack for the day, help with the day's calendar, and be line leader. Your child will also bring in the Mystery Bag. Children will have several chances throughout the year to be the student of the day, and we will try to assign them the role on or near their birthdays (or half-birthdays, if in the summer).

MYSTERY BAG

The purpose of the Mystery Bag is to develop children's language skills and self-confidence in front of a group. Your child will bring home the Mystery Bag when it is his/her turn to be the student of the day. Please help your child choose one item (only one, please!) to bring to school in the Mystery Bag. The item should fit in the bag and should be kept a secret. Your child will give the class three clues, and the class will guess what is in the bag. Please help your child come up with clues to share with the class. (We will also help as necessary.) We ask that children do not bring things into the classroom from home unless it is their turn to be the student of the day. "Violent" toys and play (such as using weapons and pretend fighting) are inappropriate in the school setting and will not be allowed.

SNACKS AND BIRTHDAY TREATS

A snack will be served shortly after 9 A.M. When your child is the student of the day, it will be his/her turn to bring in the snack for that day. Snacks could be crackers, pretzels, graham crackers, cheese sticks or slices, cut fruit or vegetables, etc. Please try to keep snacks as healthy as possible. Water will be served with the snack, and every child will be served the snack that was brought in for the day. If your child has any food allergies, please let us know as soon as possible. You may send a supply of non-allergenic snacks to be stored in the classroom in case your child is unable to eat the snack of the day.

As stated in the SMCS parent handbook, "Students may bring a treat for their birthdays. The school encourages nonedible treats (e.g. stickers, pencils, etc.). However, if bringing an edible treat, please consider the nutritional value of the snack and food allergies of other children in the classroom. All families are asked not to distribute birthday party invitations at school unless the entire class of all boys/all girls is included."

TOILETING

When a child needs to use the restroom, a teacher or an aide will take him/her to one of the two restrooms near our classroom. Before snack time each day, we will take the whole class to the “big bathrooms” near the office. Please work with your child to develop independent dressing and toileting skills.

The official policy of our school is that children must be toilet-trained to enroll in preschool. Children at this age will sometimes have accidents, which are best handled matter-of-factly, without shame or embarrassment. When a child has an accident, we will simply have him/her clean up and change clothes (as independently as possible) and offer encouragement for the future. If you have any concerns, please talk with us.

CLOTHING

Because of the wide range of our activities, we strongly recommend that children dress in washable, comfortable play clothes and athletic footwear. **For safety reasons, socks are required at all times.**

Since we will go outside when the weather permits, please be sure your child has an appropriate jacket and a hat and gloves for cooler autumn and spring days. Due to weather and time constraints, there may be winter days that we do not go outside. On these days, we will visit the large motor room or the gym. Children who stay for Extended Learning will need to bring snow clothes daily for outdoor play time in the winter.

Every child needs a set of clothes (shirt, pants, socks, and underwear) in a labeled bag that will stay in the classroom. This will handle any accidents without a lot of embarrassment to your child. If your child uses a change of clothes, please send in another set the next school day. We will periodically check the clothing supplies and ask for size and/or seasonal replacements as needed.

ARRIVAL

You may bring your child to the classroom using the preschool entrance between 7:50 and 8:00. Please help to remove his/her coat and use the bathroom if needed. Each child will have two hooks with his/her name outside the classroom for coats and backpacks. Bring your child's cold lunch, if applicable, and any important papers that need to be turned into me into the classroom. It is an Early Childhood policy not to check backpacks.

If necessary, you may drop your child off as early as 7:30, using the main school entrance. Please hang up your child's things, let us know your lunch plans, and walk your child to the gym. S/he will be supervised for a healthy walk around the gym, and an older student will bring her/him to our classroom at 7:50.

If your child will be late or absent, please notify the administrative assistant in the main office (725-4161) as soon as you can.

DISMISSAL

At 11:00, children can be picked up at the classroom door. The preschool doors will not be opened prior to 11:00. Your child will be dismissed to you in the hallway. Please wait in the hallway until we bring your child to you. If someone other than you will be picking up your child, please send a signed and dated note stating that you are giving permission for that person to pick up your child. It is helpful if the note is sent before the day begins. For a last minute change of plans, please call the office. If someone who is unfamiliar to the staff is picking up your child, we will ask him/her to show an ID.

Please also be aware that classes are going on in the library, art, computer, and learning resource rooms in our hallway when we dismiss. Try to keep voices down and prevent children from running up and down the hallways. Thanks for your cooperation.

EXTENDED LEARNING

Our Extended Learning program runs from 11:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Students who stay for Extended Learning may also stay for After School Care (3:00-5:30). In order for your child to stay for Extended or After School Care, you must maintain a balance in a prepaid account. You will need to purchase a plastic sleep mat (no sleeping bags, please) even if your child is only staying occasionally. This mat will be used every day and kept at school. You may also bring a stuffed animal and/or blanket for your child to snuggle with during rest time. We ask that these items go home daily with you and your child. If your child will be staying for Extended Learning, please bring in a box of snacks that can be shared for the snack in the afternoon. We'll let you know when more is needed.

If your child is staying for the afternoon, please let us know what your child will be doing for lunch daily. Inside our classroom will be a lunch display with four cups. Each child will start the day with a wooden stick bearing his/her name in the "Not Staying" cup. If your child is not staying for lunch that day, do nothing. If your child is staying for lunch, please put the stick in the cup that describes his/her lunch:

- **Hot Lunch** (main entree for the day),
- **Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich** (an alternative to our hot lunch entree, but still purchased through the hot lunch program),
- **Cold Lunch with Milk** (your child needs milk),
- **Cold Lunch/No Milk** (your child has brought something to drink).

This will need to be done daily by you, the parent, in order to get a correct lunch count. We also ask that you tell us an approximate pick-up time for your child, so that the Extended Learning staff can plan appropriately for the afternoon. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

Directions for Daily Lunch Count

Take your child's stick from



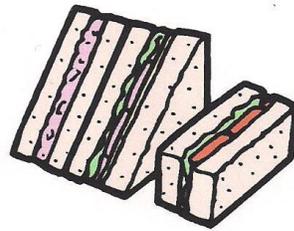
Not Staying Today

and put it into the appropriate cup:



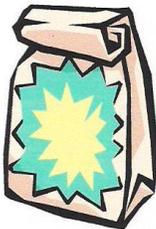
Hot Lunch

(main entree for the day)



Sandwich

(alternative to hot lunch)



Cold Lunch with Milk
(your child needs milk)



Cold Lunch/No Milk

(your child does not need milk)

Please do this daily for your child!

Thank you!!

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Classroom rules are very important in making sure that all children are safe and that they are treated in a respectful and courteous way by all. When children do not follow the classroom rules, we will respond by redirecting the child to the appropriate action, and if needed, follow up with consequences, such as removing the child from the group or having the child "take a break" from the problem area. Notes will go home for behavior that continues after reminders.

CURRICULUM

The preschool curriculum has some general areas of focus:

- Faith development is nurtured by modeling Catholic values.
- Self-esteem and feelings of inclusion and self-worth are fostered by building class cooperation and respect.
- Physical coordination and control are developed through large and small motor activities.
- Reading readiness and the related skills of learning, speaking and writing are integrated daily.
- Mathematics readiness and the related skills of geometry are nurtured through observations, discovery activities, concrete experiences and playful creativity.
- Self-awareness, science and observation are explored and nurtured through hands-on learning.
- Social skills, cooperation, manners and respect for others are incorporated into the classroom environment and daily expectations.
- Holidays, traditions and different cultures are taught and celebrated.

More specifically, we will focus mainly on social and interaction skills: sharing; joining in group activities; listening to and following directions; taking turns; sitting quietly in a group; and walking in a group line. We will explore weekly themes (for example, seasons, holidays, animals, occupations, etc.). Integrated into our themes will be some academic topics. We introduce the colors (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, pink, white, black, gray, and brown), shapes (circle, triangle, square, rectangle, oval, and rhombus), the alphabet, and numbers (counting at least to five). Our religion curriculum, *Stories of God's Love*, is based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and uses familiar characters each week to tell the stories of the Bible.

READING TO YOUR CHILD

According to the International Literacy Association, "The single most important activity for building...skills essential for reading success appears to be *reading aloud to children.*" We strongly encourage you to read at least ten minutes a day to your child. More information about our reading incentive program will be sent home in October.

COMMUNICATION

The parent-school relationship is so important in the education of your child. We not only want your child's experience to be a good one, but yours as well. Please know that we are always happy to talk with you about any questions or concerns you may have. Feel free to leave me a phone message in the office or send an email anytime. Drop-off and dismissal times tend to be a little hectic, but we can arrange other times to talk in person. Individual conferences to discuss your child's progress will be scheduled with all families twice during the year.

Most days, your child will bring home something that we completed in class. We hope that you will take the time to go over your child's work and talk with him/her about the school day.

We will be sending home a link to the monthly newsletter and calendar with information needed for that month via email. Please look for your child's name on the calendar in order to know what days he/she is designated as the student of the day. There will also be reminders of special days and events, and our weekly themes will be listed.

You will also receive information from the school office via email. This will include the St. Gabriel School newsletter, lunch menus, school and community events, and other items.

VOLUNTEERING AND VIRTUS TRAINING

We are happy to have parents come to school and volunteer for the various activities that we do. In order to provide a safe environment in our school, the Green Bay Diocese requires all volunteers to go through a program called VIRTUS Training. It is a 3-hour program that emphasizes the safety of our children. A background check is also necessary. Through this program, we can make sure that all the people coming in contact with our children have been screened and are considered safe. If you are interested or have questions, please call the school office for more information.

PRESCHOOL SCHEDULE INCLUDES:

Prayer and Announcements: all school, over the intercom, first thing in the morning

Meeting Time: calendar, weather, Mystery Bag, activities related to weekly theme/letter

Restroom and Snack

Recess/Large Motor Time: free choice and organized large motor play on the playground or in the large motor room

Story Time: related to weekly themes

Work Time: group and individual activities related to weekly theme/letter or religion theme

Play Time: self-chosen activities in classroom centers (Art, Observation Station, Cars and Construction, Dramatic Play, Reading Corner, etc.)

Music Time: developing children's skills with tune and beat, as well as encouraging artful expression through music and movement

Circle Time: finger plays and songs

Clean-up Time: all children are expected to help clean up after activities

**PLEASE PRINT, SIGN AND RETURN THIS PAGE TO YOUR CHILD'S
TEACHER**

I have read and agree to abide by the policies the Preschool Handbook.

Student's Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature_____

Date_____