



Prekindergarten and Preschool Handbook

2019-2020 PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

St. Cecilia School
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I. Mission, Vision, Philosophy

Mission Statement of the Educational Apostolate-Archdiocese of Dubuque

The mission of the Educational Apostolate of the Archdiocese of Dubuque is to guide individuals to:

- respond to God's continuous call for conversion to Jesus Christ
- form and be formed in Christian community life
- grow in knowledge of faith
- participate in liturgical celebrations and prayer
- collaborate in the Church's mission of evangelization

Mission Statement of St. Cecilia School

St. Cecilia School, an educational ministry of St. Cecilia Church, is a Christ centered educational environment. We offer students opportunities to develop self-discipline, individual academic excellence, cultural awareness, and a commitment to lifelong service.

Philosophy

With Christ as our model, we believe in daily celebration of our Catholic Christian faith through liturgy and classroom prayer, responsiveness to one another's needs, and service to others.

We believe that each person is unique and lovable, possessing individual strengths. We believe that education is a continuous process and that the learning program should meet the needs and abilities of each child. We recognize the importance of developing in each student a wholesome self-concept.

With the cooperation of teachers, parents, and the parish community, we strive to achieve the religious and academic development of each child in a Christ-centered environment.

Through mutual communication, respect, and support, we endeavor to enhance the development of the full potential of each child. By infusing Gospel-values into the curriculum, we seek to instill lifelong decision-making skills into each child, encouraging them to be responsible for their own decisions and behavior.

II. Admission Policies/Notice of Non-Discrimination

Admission

The Archdiocesan Educational System maintains a policy of open enrollment in all educational programs.

Equal Opportunity

St. Cecilia preschool/prekindergarten is an equal opportunity educational program.

It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, or religion.

No child shall, on the grounds of race, color, age, gender, national origin, or physical disability, be excluded or denied the benefits of any program or activity sponsored by this preschool/prekindergarten.

Enrollment

The preschool/prekindergarten calendar is somewhat different from the K-5 school program. Our preschool/prekindergarten classes begin 2-5 days after the first day of school and will conclude 2-5 days before the final day of school. School days lost due to weather are typically not rescheduled.

The preschool/prekindergarten Program shall allow for an enrollment of three year-olds in the Tuesday and Thursday morning program. The Prekindergarten Program will allow four and five year-olds in the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning program and M-T-R the afternoon program, each with one teacher and one associate, if needed to maintain proper student/adult ratio.

Birth date restrictions shall be compatible with those required for elementary age children; three-year-olds must be three before or on September 15, and four-year-olds must be four before or on September 15. A child must be toilet-trained prior to admission.

To enroll a child, a registration packet, which includes tuition rates and forms, to be completed may be picked up at the school office.

Sessions

Morning Classes:

- T/TH – Preschool Curriculum
8:15 - 11:00 a.m.
- M/W/F – Prekindergarten Curriculum
8:15 - 11:00 a.m.

Afternoon Class

- M/T/R – Prekindergarten Curriculum
12:30 - 3:15 p.m.

Students may not be dropped off until five (5) minutes before classes begin, as no supervision will be available until then.

Noon lunches and busing services are not available.

Withdrawal

To withdraw a child from the preschool/prekindergarten, a written notice must be submitted to the school office or preschool/prekindergarten teacher with a minimum of two week's notice of the last day of attendance. Therefore, the tuition fee will be charged until the written notice is received.

Statement of Health

Each preschool/prekindergarten child is required to have a physical examination report for admission. This report must include an immunization record that is in compliance with the Iowa State Health Department regulations.

Admittance

Students will be admitted in accord with Archdiocesan policy and local considerations. Additional names will be placed on a waiting list after class enrollment is met.

III. Program Description

Early Childhood Outcomes-Archdiocese of Dubuque Catholic School System

Children will:

- demonstrate a loving relationship with God and all of creation
- demonstrate a positive self-concept, appropriate self-control, and a sense of belonging
- demonstrate curiosity about the world, confidence as a learner, creativity, imagination, and personal initiative
- demonstrate relationships of mutual trust and respect with adults and peers, understand perspectives of others, and negotiate and apply rules of group living
- demonstrate respect for social and cultural diversity, for community and social roles
- use language to effectively communicate and gain satisfaction through reading, writing, listening, and speaking
- represent ideas and feelings through creative play, drama, dance, movement, music, and art
- think critically, reason, and solve problems
- develop understanding of relationships among objects, people, and events such as classifying, ordering, number, space, and time
- explore their physical world by manipulating real objects to learn cause and effect relationships
- demonstrate appreciation for the fine arts, humanities, and sciences.
- become competent in management of their bodies using both gross and fine motor skills
- demonstrate knowledge about the care of their bodies and maintain a desirable level of health and fitness

Program Expectations

The content offered is age and developmentally appropriate and reflects the purpose of the preschool/prekindergarten.

Each program is based on the following foundational premises:

- Each child is a unique and special child of God
- The St. Cecilia Early Childhood program provides unique opportunities to enhance the development of the whole child in a setting which models Christian values and beliefs
- Child-centered and developmentally appropriate experiences enable each child to foster feelings of self-worth, self-respect, and love for others
- A cooperative and supportive teaching partnership between family and school is essential in providing a positive and enriching early childhood experience
- The teacher's role is to facilitate the child's experiential learning process by providing an integrated and multi-sensory environment which uses a variety of materials and modes
- The young child needs a flexible environment, which offers the security of definite limits while providing freedom and flexibility so that each child can grow in self-expression and non-competitiveness.

Each program offered provides appropriate developmental Christian Faith Formation experiences, which enable the child to:

- Learn about God by discovering his/her own giftedness
- Learn about God by cultivating a sense of wonder and of ritual through celebrating
- Learn about God by developing an attitude of love and respect for self and others
- Learn about God by developing an understanding of what makes a peaceful and just society
- Learn about God by developing an awareness of the presence of God in the world
- Learn about God through his/her relationship with Jesus.

Each program offered provides appropriate developmental aesthetic and artistic experiences, which enable the child to:

- Develop enthusiasm for the arts
- Imagine and visualize through the arts
- Respond, interpret, and create through the arts
- Appreciate the arts

Each program offered provides appropriate developmental intellectual experiences, which enable the child to:

- Sustain and extend natural curiosity
- Develop thinking through meaningful learning experiences
- Use language to facilitate thinking and learning
- Use language to communicate effectively
- Develop and integrate the attitudes, skills, and knowledge of the fine arts, humanities, practical arts, and sciences
- Become an independent lifelong learner

Each program offered provides appropriate developmental experiences in the development of responsibility, which enable the child to:

- Value and respect individual contributions
- Value, respect, and appreciate cultural identity and heritage
- Accept and demonstrate empathy
- Establish a collaborative environment and acquire cooperative and independent social skills
- Respect and care for the environment
- Adapt to a changing world

Each program offered provides appropriate developmental emotional and social experiences, which enable the child to:

- Develop a positive, realistic self-concept
- Develop interdependence
- Set appropriate goals and feel satisfaction in accomplishments and efforts
- Cope with change
- Share and cooperate
- Develop friendships
- Learn from others
- Enjoy living and learning

Each program offered provides appropriate developmental physical development experiences, which enable the child to:

- Learn and practice safety procedures
- Take care of and respect his/her body
- Develop awareness of good nutrition
- Develop motor skills while maintaining physical fitness
- Develop an appreciation and enjoyment of human movement
- Learn social skills in a physical activity setting.

Our Schedule

A balance between free choice, teacher-directed activities, group and individual activities, and active and inactive experiences is the goal of the daily schedule. Although the schedule is flexible, following a daily routine provides the child with a sense of security and develops order to the program.

Organized Play: Through games the child develops habits of fair play and good sportsmanship, develops large and small motor coordination, poise, posture, and good health, establishes confidence and self control, cooperates and becomes an important part of the group, and enjoys self.

Story Time: The children learn to respect and appreciate children's literature. A good listening vocabulary gives a student a strong foundation for kindergarten and lifelong enjoyment in reading.

Work Period: This helps the child learn to work with others, to share, to follow directions, and to find satisfaction in achievement.

Snack: The children will have a drink of milk or water and a nutritious snack or treat.

Center Time: During this time, the child may choose his/her own activity and enjoy the fun of spontaneous play. This also provides an opportunity for the adults to study and interact with each child. The centers are changes frequently to provide optimal learning opportunities.

Music Period: Children enjoy music and finger plays. They learn not only songs and body rhythms, but also to listen to and enjoy good music. Music is also used in the teaching of colors, numbers, alphabet concepts, and following directions.

Field Trips: Field trips are a valuable part of the curriculum offered at the preschool/prekindergarten. Permission slips will be required in advance of any field trip.

IV. Communication

Absences

If a child will not be attending class for any reason, parents are asked to contact the school office at #232-5290 in advance, if possible or at least by 8:45 a.m. on the day that the student is absent. No refunds or credits will be given for absences. In the event of a long-term absence due to illness, possible adjustments to tuition/fees must be discussed with the principal. If the child has an illness listed below, he/she should not attend class. Should a child become ill while at preschool/prekindergarten, the parent will be notified.

The preschool/prekindergarten staff needs to be informed of any changes in a child's health status and/or eating habits (i.e., a child who develops an allergy).

Colds: If in respiratory distress or if the child has an elevated temperature (unless temperature elevation is due to recent immunization), the child shall not be brought to the preschool/prekindergarten. This shall also be the case if the child makes high-pitched croupy or whooping sound when he/she coughs.

Diarrhea and Vomiting: If there is any diarrhea or vomiting, the child should not be brought to the preschool/prekindergarten. If the child has any loose stools or if the child vomits at the preschool/prekindergarten, he/she will be sent home. The child may return to the preschool/prekindergarten if he/she has been free from diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours. If there is diarrhea for several days, a physician should be notified.

Eye Infection: If a child has eyes that are mattering or draining, the child shall not be brought to the preschool/prekindergarten. The child may return after he/she is on antibiotic ointment for 24 hours or the eyes have shown marked improvement.

Impetigo: A child with impetigo shall be excluded from the preschool/prekindergarten for 24 hours after treatment has begun. The return shall depend upon the location of the infected area and if the area is dried and healing well.

Ear Infection: If purulent drainage, the child shall not be at the preschool/prekindergarten. (Exception: If the child has tubes and has been on an antibiotic for 24 hours.) A child with a diagnosed ear infection with no drainage must be on medication or a release must be obtained from a physician stating that the child is free of communicable disease.

Lice: A child will not be excluded from school or a particular setting on the day head lice are detected, but must be treated before returning the next day.

Pinworms: When pinworms are diagnosed in a child, the child shall be restricted from the preschool/prekindergarten. All clothing worn by the child prior to treatment should be laundered. It is advisable that family members also be treated.

Scabies and/or Pediculosis: When scabies or pediculosis is suspected in a child, the child shall be restricted from the preschool/prekindergarten until after initial

treatment with appropriate medication. It is advisable that family members also be treated.

Sore Throat: A child with a sore throat may be restricted from the preschool/prekindergarten. If strep is suspected, a physician should see the child.

Fever: If a child has a temperature of 100 degrees F. and/or exhibits any of the above conditions, the child will be sent home.

Accidents/Emergencies

Incidents or accidents resulting in injury to a child will be reported on the day of the accident. The written report will be prepared by the staff person who observed the incident or accident and shall include a general description of the incident and of the action taken, if any, by the staff at the preschool/prekindergarten. If a child is hurt more severely, the staff will transport the child as quickly as possible to the Emergency Room and contact the parents.

Change of address

Parents are asked to change your address and other contact information under PowerSchool or notify the preschool/prekindergarten personnel and school office at #232-5290 immediately if there is a change of address or telephone number or emergency contacts. This information must be kept up to date, particularly in the case of an emergency.

Dual Parent Reporting

According to Archdiocesan policy 5124, in the case of a child whose parents' marriage has been dissolved or a separation of a parent from the home, the name and address of BOTH parents should be on file.

Unless otherwise decreed by a court order, information commonly made available to parents of any child will be made available to both parents.

Inclement Weather Closing

St. Cecilia School follows the Ames Community School District regarding late starts, early dismissals, or school closings as the result of inclement weather during the winter months. Parents are asked to listen to the area TV and radio stations for announcements. There will be no morning preschool/prekindergarten class if there is a late start and no afternoon preschool/prekindergarten class if there is an early dismissal. Preschool/prekindergarten days are not rescheduled due to these cancellations.

Visiting: It is important that children be given a chance to adjust to their preschool/prekindergarten setting before parents visit the classroom. Therefore, parents are asked not visit during the first two weeks of school.

Meeting: A number of events will be scheduled throughout the year for parents, offering opportunities to become better informed about issues relating to your child's development.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Conferences are scheduled twice a year.

V. Discipline

Discipline

It is important to treat each child as an individual in a manner which is appropriate to the child's development, activity, and general well being. Consistency, positive reinforcement, natural consequences, and positive redirection are used at the Preschool/prekindergarten to shape appropriate behaviors in the children.

When necessary "time out" or a brief isolation from the group is used. If a child is exhibiting a behavior problem, a conference with the parent may be requested. Please discuss with the staff any changes, observation, questions, or suggestions you might have in dealing with your child.

Dismissal Policy:

Occasionally, a child will experience difficulty in adapting to a preschool/prekindergarten environment and/or abiding by certain rules of behavior in the group setting. A conference will be scheduled with parents, the child's teacher, and/or the principal to see if the problem(s) can be resolved. If a child's behavior and attitude continues to be disruptive to the group or to other children's welfare, the preschool/prekindergarten reserves the right to request that the child be withdrawn from the Preschool/prekindergarten program.

VI. Regulations for Participation

Arrival

Arrival: Parents are responsible for bringing their children to the preschool/prekindergarten. Parents must inform the teacher if their children are taken out before the end of the scheduled time.

Calendar

A yearly and monthly calendar and newsletter will be provided to parents.

Departure/Pick-up

Pickup: Classes end at 11:00 and 3:15. If a parent is going to be later, he/she is asked to notify the school as soon as possible. Only persons listed on the pick-up permission form in the registration packet will be allowed to take a child from the preschool/prekindergarten. Should another adult (not listed on original form) be asked to pick up the child, the staff needs to be notified in advance, and that adult should have a picture ID with them upon pick up.

Dress/Clothing/Shoes

Playing outside (weather permitting) is an important aspect of preschool/prekindergarten. Children will need to wear coats, hats, mittens, snow pants, and boots when necessary. Each child should also have one extra set of clothing in their backpack at all times.

VII. Health/Safety/Compliance Issues

Required Immunizations

Applicants enrolled shall have required immunizations for their appropriate age. Please contact your child's physician if you have any questions regarding the needed immunizations for your child's age or if you need an exemption certificate.

Medication Policy

The following medications will be administered by the staff:

Cough drops

Antibiotic ointment for cuts/scratches

Acetaminophen/Ibuprofen if permission has been granted by the parent

All prescription medications require a permission slip signed and dated by the parent before medications can be administered to the child. Each prescription drug shall be in the original container and be accompanied by a physician or pharmacist direction.

Blood Bourne Pathogens

The Archdiocese of Dubuque (Policy 4116.13) and St. Cecilia School have an established exposure control plan. All school employees shall be provided an annual in-service and are required to abide by the plan.

Fire/tornado Drills

Fire drills and tornado drills are practiced, at a minimum, twice per year. The preschool/prekindergarten teacher practices prior to so that the children become familiar with the procedure and are not frightened by the loud alarms.

Mandatory Reporting

As outlined in the Iowa code, all providers of the preschool/prekindergarten are mandated by law to report any suspected cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse, or neglect. Iowa law states that the preschool/prekindergarten may take, at public expense, photographs of the injured area. Any person participating in the making of, or in the investigation of, a report shall have immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be imposed.

Smoking/Smoke Free Campus

St. Cecilia Catholic School has been designated a "Smoke Free Campus". At no time will smoking or the use of any tobacco or all forms of non-FDA approved nicotine be permitted within the building or anywhere on school grounds.

Student Privacy Act

In conformity with the Student Privacy Act, and Archdiocesan policy 5125, St. Cecilia School does not send out student information to any outside organizations without written authorization of the parent/guardian.

VIII. Student Services

Birthday Treats

A child may celebrate his/her birthday by bringing a special treat. You may want to check with your child's teacher to see if any children have any food allergies to be avoided.

Lost and Found

The Lost and Found box is located in the hallway. Articles that can be easily lost should be marked with the child's whole name rather than using initials or first name. If articles are not claimed by year-end, they will be donated to the needy.

Toys

If a child brings something from home to show the other children, it must remain in the child's backpack and the teacher will allow him/her to take it out at the appropriate time. The preschool/prekindergarten cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys.

IX. Staff

Staff Descriptions

The preschool/prekindergarten teacher shall be a licensed teacher with an early childhood endorsement and shall be assisted by a teacher associate, to maintain proper student-adult ratio.

Volunteers/Student Teachers/Practicum Students

Occasionally, volunteers will assist the preschool/prekindergarten staff. Students from the colleges, as well as other community members, will be helping out from time to time. Anyone volunteering an hour or more per week will have a background check completed and complete trainings through Catholic Mutual Group. Please see the school office if you plan to volunteer more than one hour per week. Thank you.

Teaching Children To Pray

We firmly believe that the relationship of little children to God is very deep and important and influences the rest of their lives precisely because it is so simple. It is natural for little children to want to pray; as Paul says, "His Spirit speaks in our spirit." The spirits of little children are very open to contact with the Divine Spirit. All we have to do is to elicit this contact gently and freely.

We would like to present here a few guidelines for teaching preschoolers to pray. We believe these guidelines have implications for teaching prayer to school age children at home and in the classroom.

Be open to recognizing God's presence in your children.

Sometimes you can feel it just by looking into your children's eyes; sometimes you can sense it when you are finally able to look at your children from a distance, as it were, and be amazed at the mystery of their existence; sometimes it could just be the way one of your children looks at a crucifix or reacts when you say the word Jesus.

Pray affectionately and tenderly with your children.

Particularly if you are open to God's presence in your children, then the times you do choose to pray with them can be very special. Parents should not be afraid to hold their children's hands, touch their foreheads, and so on while praying with them or over them. Prayer together should be a spontaneous flow of affection for one another as you rejoice in God's presence, letting God know your concerns and needs, and praying for others you feel close to.

Be aware of the importance of ritual in a child's life.

Once you find the right time and place to pray with your children, stick with it, and you will soon find that your children will remind you, if you ever forget, because prayer can become a healthy part of their emotional security.

Formal prayers should be attempted but not forced.

Variety in prayer is the "spice of life."

Informal prayer, formal prayer, guitar prayer, and Bible story prayer can all have their place within children's framework of ritual.

Children need to be continually encouraged to pray for what is important to them.

Don't use prayer to moralize.

Be open to special events in the family and to peak experiences in daily life as experiences of God for yourself and your children.

When there is an effort on the part of the parents to see in everything a sacrament of God's presence, then this attitude flows out to the children. And it is this attitude that will be more important than all the formal prayers they will ever learn and more important than all the phases they will go through about going or not going to church on Sundays. It is this attitude that more than anything else will encourage our children to "lift up their minds and hearts to God".

Reflection Starters

Have you ever felt you recognized God's presence by looking into the eyes of your children? If so, relive such a time.

If you are unable to pray with your children, reflect on the kind of prayer you would like to have with them.

Recall the most memorable occasion of prayer with your children.

Try to imagine praying with your children in as many ways as possible.