



*Raise Your Sails
God Provides the Wind*

**Preschool Family Handbook
2019-2020**

Welcome to St. Louis School Preschool!

We are so happy that you have chosen St. Louis School Preschool as one of your child's earliest school experiences. It is an honor we do not take lightly. Your children are God's most precious gift and we will love and teach your little ones with that thought always in our hearts and minds.

This handbook contains important information about our policies and procedures. Please take time to read it carefully so that we can work together to make this a wonderful preschool experience for you and your child.

Please also read the entire K-5 handbook located on our website (<https://www.slspittsford.org>) ; it contains important information about the policies and procedures of our school in general.

Whenever you have questions or concerns, please reference this handbook, but always know that you can contact us with any of your questions.

Thank you for letting us love and teach your little ones.

Mrs. Fran Barr
Principal
fran.barr@dor.org

PHILOSOPHY

We believe that children are unique and special beings that develop in their own time and at their own pace. Our developmentally appropriate program is designed to provide experiences that will focus on the growth of the whole child. Our program encourages children's natural curiosity and fosters problem solving and decision making in authentic social environments. Children and adults in our classrooms share in learning about the world around them and their special relationship with God. Our program ensures that children are ready for Kindergarten and beyond through developmentally appropriate activities that are embedded in everything we do.

GOALS

In the St. Louis Preschool classroom, children and their families will be part of a program that:

- Ensures that teachers and teacher-assistants in each classroom are highly qualified, and informed in the latest early childhood research-based strategies
- Provides curriculum and activities that engage children in learning in meaningful ways every day which value children's play and participation in a wide variety of educational experiences
- Actively promotes ties with the wider St. Louis School and St. Louis Parish community, including special activities with upper grade level buddies, as well as joining the school community for Masses, prayer services, assemblies and other special events throughout the year
- Strengthens and empowers families to learn together, joining home and school learning communities
- Assesses and supports the special needs of children to promote physical, social, and academic growth in partnership with families
- Provides a comprehensive Kindergarten transition plan for preschool children and their families

Children entering Preschool must have reached their 3rd or 4th birthday by December 1st and be fully toilet trained.

Preschool Hours

PK 3: Mrs. Louth:

- Morning Preschool Hours: 8:55 am-11:25 am
- Drop Off: 8:50-9:00am on Rand Place Driveway
- Pick Up: 11:25 am in courtyard/main parking lot; enter from S. Main St. and line up facing RAND PL (back driveway)
- Afternoon Preschool Hours: 12:15pm-2:45pm
- Drop Off: 12:10-12:20 on Rand Place Driveway
- Pick Up: 2:45pm in courtyard/main parking lot; enter from S. Main St. and line up facing RAND PL (back driveway)

PK 4: Mrs. DeLaurentiis:

- Preschool Hours: 8:45am to 2:45pm
- Drop Off: 8:40am-8:55am at west door of Reddington; enter rectory driveway from S. Main St.
- Pick Up: 2:45pm in courtyard/main parking lot; enter from S. Main St.
The driveway will be open from 2:40pm – 2:50pm

PK 4: Ms. Basile:

- Preschool Hours: 8:45am to 2:45pm
- Drop Off: 8:40am-8:55am AND 12:15 pm at west door of Reddington; enter rectory driveway from S. Main St.
- Pick Up: 11:15am or 2:45pm at west door of Reddington; enter rectory driveway from S. Main St.

The driveway will be open from 2:40pm – 2:50pm

Early Pick-Up/Late Drop Off

If for any reason you find that your child is late arriving to school, please proceed directly to the school office and sign your child in. The office staff will then call the preschool room to alert the teachers that you will be escorting your child to the main door of Reddington Hall or to the PK3 classroom. A staff member will meet you at the door and will escort your child to the classroom. This procedure will keep your child safe and will minimize disruption to instructional time in the classroom.

If you need to pick your child up from school early, please use the same procedure. Go directly to the main school office first to sign your child out. The office staff will then call the preschool classroom to alert the teachers that your child will be getting picked up by you and a staff member will bring your child to meet you at the office.

Please do your best to minimize late arrivals and early pick-ups – they not only interrupt the teacher but cause the children in the classroom to be unduly distracted.

Curriculum

St. Louis Preschool Program uses the **ScienceStart!/LiteraSci** Curriculum Program which was developed with grants from the National Science Foundation. **LiteraSci** is a comprehensive, research-based and standards-based early childhood program that uses hands-on inquiry to provide a meaningful context for mastering language, literacy, science process skills, and mathematics and to develop a rich knowledge base about the everyday world.

The **LiteraSci** Curriculum capitalizes on preschool children’s innate desire to learn about the world around them. Learning about the everyday world is as fundamental to the early childhood years as learning to walk, talk, and interact with others. “Doing science” fits the ways children learn: by exploring, repeating and communicating in hands-on, multisensory activities. Teachers will engage children in a wide variety of developmentally appropriate activities to promote cognitive, social-emotional, language, and physical development. Choice, challenge, creativity, and caring guide our daily curriculum focus.

Typical Full Day Daily Schedule

| Time period | Activity |
|---------------|--|
| 8:45 – 9:15 | Greeting, Attendance, Table toys |
| 9:15 – 9:45 | Morning Meeting Circle Time Introduce science topic, read story, discussion Introduce center activities |
| 9:45 – 10:05 | Snack |
| 10:05 – 11:10 | Centers |
| 11:10 – 11:15 | Clean Up |
| 11:15 – 11:40 | Large Motor Play |
| 11:40 – 12:00 | Lunch Prep / Story Time |
| 12:00 – 12:30 | Lunch |
| 12:30 – 1:00 | Quiet time – nap, quiet activities to enrich morning science activity |
| 1:00 – 2:00 | Afternoon Centers |
| 2:00 – 2:20 | Snack |
| 2:20 – 2:45 | Pack Up / Large Motor Play |

Morning or afternoon half-day schedule:

| Time period | Activity |
|------------------------------|---|
| 8:45 – 9:05 12:15 – 12:35 | Greeting, Attendance, Table toys |
| 9:05 – 9:30 12:35 – 1:00 | Morning large group meeting Music activity Introduce science topic, read story Introduce center activities |
| 9:30 – 10:30 1:00 – 2:00 | Small group science activity Choice time |
| 10:30 – 10:50 2:00 – 2:20 | Clean up Snack time Review morning science activity |
| 10:50 – 11:15 2:20 – 2:45 | Large motor activity – indoors or outdoors Get ready to go home |

Center-based play options for all groups:

Art
 Blocks
 Books; quiet reading area; listening centers
 Dramatic play
 Manipulatives – small toys, puzzles
 Math Centers
 Sensory/water table
 Small group science activity
 Writing center

Child Assessment and Conferences

At the preschool level our staff will conduct on-going assessments using a variety of methods and materials. Assessments will include the following:

- Observations and annotated notes
- Checklists of developmentally appropriate skills
- Child's portfolio (collection of samples of art, writing, etc.)
- Photographs of important moments

We will be inviting parents to attend parent-teacher conferences to be held in November/March. At these conferences, we will share your child's progress report and work with you to set goals and make plans for your child. Of course, you are welcome to request a conference at any time during the year and your child's teacher may do this, also.

Report cards will be sent home in January and June. These report cards are standards-based, focusing on the New York State Prekindergarten Foundations for the Common Core. More information about these report cards will be communicated with parents prior to their being sent home.

Communication and Newsletters

As a member of the St. Louis School community, your child will be a part of the parent communication system that is set up for the whole school. The School Newsletter and school website are the main means of communication between school and families. Each family will receive the School Newsletter both hardcopy and electronically. It is also available on our website.

In addition to the parent communication envelope, St. Louis School has a website (<http://www.slspittsford.org>) where you can find information about upcoming events and activities. Each teacher maintains a website that focuses on her/his classroom and activities. These web pages will provide you with many different types of information including classroom newsletters, curriculum topics being explored, book recommendations, and photographs of daily activities. We encourage you to visit your child's classroom website on a regular basis.

What to Bring to School

- A FULL size backpack. Please no small backpacks – it is too difficult to fit materials into! Please label it with your child's name.
- A labeled lunchbox and drink if your child is staying for a full day
- A complete change of clothes, including socks and underwear, in a labeled plastic bag
- Supplies as requested by the teacher
- A smile!

What NOT to Bring to School

- Gum (please remove gum if it is supplied in a pre-packaged lunch)
- Toys from Home
- Pacifiers
- Breakfast – Please make sure your child has finished his/her breakfast before entering the school building.

Clothing

Safe and comfortable clothing is a must for preschoolers!! Your child should be able to manage his/her clothing independently without the aid of a teacher. Keeping this in mind, elastic waists are ideal. Zippers, belts, and snaps are difficult for a child to manage. Clothing should be suitable for outdoor play and messy activities. Please remember that we play and sit on the floor a lot, so be sure that your daughter has on tights or shorts under her dress. Best advice - dress your child in play clothes with pants!

It is important that shoes are safe. **Sneakers are the best choice**. Boots, clogs, flip-flops, crocs, and sandals prohibit safe running and climbing and **should not** be worn to school.

Layering clothing is a good idea during seasons when the temperature can change greatly during the day. Layering a t-shirt, sweater or sweatshirt, and a coat will allow your child to peel off layers as the day grows warmer.

Please remember to label every jacket, sweatshirt, sweater, boots, sneakers, etc with your child's name.

Snow pants, hat and mittens are required during the winter months. If you can, it is a good idea to leave a pair of boots and snow pants at school throughout the winter. That way your child is always ready for a snowy day!

Large Motor Play

Physical activity is extremely important for young children. Numerous studies confirm that regular physical activity helps children to build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints, control weight, build lean muscles, reduce feelings of depression and anxiety, and increase capacity for learning. Children use movement to express feelings, manipulate objects and learn about their world. Active play in early childhood builds the habit of life-long enjoyment of physical activity to stay healthy for a lifetime.

Outside play is a regular part of the daily schedule unless the weather is rainy or extremely cold or windy.

We do not take the children outside if the temperature is extremely cold or when previous weather has left our playgrounds muddy and wet. In these cases, we will enjoy our large motor room that is equipped with climbing tunnels, balance beams, bean-bag toss and many other active toys to play with.

Birthdays and Parties

Your child's birthday will be a very special day in school. They will receive special privileges and recognition from their teachers and classmates. Children with summer birthdays will have their "special day" near the end of the school year. We invite you to bring in a special book to read to the class. If you would like, you can donate the book to the school or class library in your child's name.

We will have other celebrations on special days during the school year. Please read your school calendar and visit the classroom website to find out more about these days. We would love to have a "room parent" for each classroom. If you would like to volunteer for this position, please sign up at the August Parent Orientation. As with any other volunteer in our program, our room parents must complete the CASE training offered by the Diocese.

Snack Policy

Because of the issues with allergies, you are required to pack a snack for your child each day.

Field Trips and Special Events

Our preschool rooms enjoy “at school” field trips throughout the year, in addition to one walking field trip each year (PK 4 ONLY). All special events will be announced in advance. If you can recommend a special visitor or guest who could provide interesting and age-appropriate events for the children, please let your child’s teacher know.

Other special events during the school year will include Science Celebrations – times when family members (parents, grandparents, and others) are invited to come and participate in science activities with your child. These will be scheduled during the school day, and we will be sure to notify you of the dates well in advance of the event.

Positive Discipline and Guidance

One of the most important goals of preschool is to teach your child good social-emotional skills – skills that he or she will use throughout life. There are many things that adults can do ahead of time to help support children’s appropriate behaviors – setting up a safe environment in the classroom, establishing routines, building relationships between the child and teacher, and setting a good example are some of these things. Still, it takes lots of practice for preschoolers to learn how to get along with others and follow the rules.

Here are some of the steps we will take to assist your child in learning these skills:

- Explain the rules and why they are important
- Consistently expect the rules to be followed
- Actively listen to children when there is a problem and assist in providing problem solving ideas
- Redirection – providing an alternate way to do something
- Provide natural or logical consequences when misbehavior occurs; for example, not being able to play with a toy if it is being used in a dangerous manner.

Usually problems can be solved by the adults in the classroom. If a serious problem occurs, parents and the teacher may need to set up a conference time for discussion of that problem.

Security

For safety purposes, all visitors to St Louis School and Preschool must first report to the Office. The office will alert the preschool teacher that you are in route to the classroom. Once there, you must press the security bell for entrance. Even if you are coming in to read a story, or be a helper in a classroom, you must first report to the office.

If there is a change in the person who will be picking up your child from preschool, please send a note to your child's teacher stating the date and name of the person. The person picking up your child will be required to show picture identification to an office staff member.

Verbal messages from the children cannot be accepted by the staff. Please write or email your child's teacher. In emergencies, call the school office at 586-5200.

CASE TRAINING (CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT)

All volunteers who are in the classroom with children for any reason are required to

- participate in an on-line training workshop,
- sign a Volunteer Code of Conduct,
- complete a Criminal Record Check.

Please note that unless the authorization forms are on file in the office, you will not be allowed to enter a classroom.

The safety of your children is our number one priority at St. Louis School. Directions to complete the on-line course are located on our website under 'News'.

Emergency Procedures

Parents will be contacted in the event of an emergency, illness, or other problem. We must be able to reach you, either at home, work or on your cell. If we are unable to reach you, there must be at least two reliable and available emergency contacts. It is vital that these emergency contacts be updated when necessary.

Fire drills and lock down drills are held regularly during the school year to ensure that the children are as comfortable and secure as possible with the noise from the alarm as well as the procedure.

Child Custody Requirements

In the event that there are custody arrangements involving a court order, one or both of the following conditions must be presented to the school administration office and remain on file:

- Legal court documentation establishing the custodial rights of the parent or guardian.
- Legal court documentation denying custodial rights to a parent. We are unable to deny a parent access to his/her child without the proper legal documentation.

Child Abuse

We are required by law to report any suspected child abuse, neglect, exploitation, or deprivation to the Department of Family and Children's Services.

All staff members have completed background checks and received training within the guidelines of the Diocese of Rochester.

All staff members will complete Diocesan-approved *Safe and Sacred* training in child abuse identification reporting.

Reporting Absences

Please notify the OFFICE (586-5200) of absences due to illness or vacation. It is imperative that we know where your child is on school days. While it may seem inconvenient to call about a single absence, it is necessary for the safety of your child.

Allergy Policy

We cannot insure an allergy free environment for any child. Because the building is shared with all of our church ministries, we cannot make a claim to any allergen-free areas. Families with special needs will need to sit down with the teacher and school nurse to decide if we can provide the best possible environment for your child. If we are unable to do so, fees will be refunded if appropriate.

Medication Policy

We are privileged to have a full-time nurse on our campus. All medications must be taken to the nurse. Emergency medication (i.e. Epi Pens) must be accompanied by written documentation from the child's physician as well as medical permission to administer from the parents who are the legal guardians of the child.

Immunization/Health Record

New York State Education law requires a health appraisal with up to date immunizations on all new student entering, PreK 3 and PreK 4, K, 2nd and 4th graders. The State Health Department requires that these records be in our files before the first day of school.

Communicable Diseases

Parents are asked to notify the school immediately if their child has contracted a communicable disease. We need your help to keep exposure under control. Children should be kept at home when they have any of the following symptoms:

- *If your child has green mucus or excessive drainage due to cold or allergies. Please keep them home until it has subsided. Contagious or not, children share toys and are in constant physical contact with their environment.*
- **Fever** - *Not to return until the child has not had a fever for 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine.*
- **Diarrhea** - *Not to return until stool returns to normal form and frequency*
- **Conjunctivitis** - *Not to return until after 24 hours on medication*
- **Chicken pox** - *Not to return until blisters have become scabs, approximately seven days after onset of the rash.*
- **Lice** - *Not to return until after the first treatment and no nits are evident*
- **Measles** - *Not to return until four days after rash appears*
- **Mumps** - *Not to return until swelling has subsided*
- **Pinworms** - *Not to return until after treatment begins*
- **Rubella** - *Not to return until five days after rash begins*
- **Strep** - *Not to return until fever free and 24 hours after antibiotics have been administered.*

A child must be fever free for a full 24 hours without fever-reducing medicine before coming to school.

Withdrawal From The Program

It is our hope that your family will have a wonderful experience here at St. Louis School Preschool. We will always seek to find a solution to any concern that may arise.

The following situations could occur that would result in a withdrawal:

The child is not ready for school

Children adapt to new experiences at their own pace. It has been our experience that children will adapt to the preschool structure within 3-4 weeks. If your child is having difficulty adjusting within this time period, we will involve you in

conversation, observation and in the decision-making process of determining what is in the best interest of your child.

The child displays socially unacceptable behavior

Children, who exhibit very aggressive or threatening behavior, i.e. biting, punching, or kicking, endanger the safety of other children. In these instances, we will work with both the child and the parents to turn around the negative behavior. If there is no significant progress made as a result of these efforts, we will have to withdraw the child from the program.

Failure to comply with the preschool policies and procedures

In order for our preschool to be successful, it is important for everyone, both parents and children, to observe these policies and guidelines, which have been developed for the common good. Should either the parents or the child demonstrate a consistent difficulty in observing these policies and guidelines, we may choose to withdraw the child from the preschool.

We are very excited to have the opportunity to work with your children as they begin their educational journey. Please feel free to contact us at any time if you should have a concern or issue...or you want to tell us something you like!

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