

March 31, 2020

Dear Preschool Families-

As we begin another week in the midst of this difficult time, I am able to lighten my worry a bit when I can connect with the students either virtually, through email messages, or by photo. I have been able to share in many of their smiles since preschool has closed and that has made the world a little brighter! The teachers and I continually reflect on how we all miss the heart of our preschool-**the children!** I know ~~that they~~ the teachers/assistants have been reaching out to our families in many ways; they have continued to work hard, often navigating new and unfamiliar territory, in their efforts to connect.

Not only do I extend my appreciation to the staff, but also to you! I am so grateful for your patience and understanding these past couple of weeks as we try to form a plan for the remainder of this preschool year. As I have mentioned in previous correspondence, there have been many considerations to include when trying to navigate the uncertainty of the next several weeks. I have tried to do the best for not only our families but our staff as well. To that end, I have been in constant communication with the Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Raleigh, our parish leaders, and the directors of the other Diocesan preschools. Please carefully read all of the information below.

#### **The Preschool Instructional Calendar:**

Per the directive of Governor Cooper, at this time, our preschool will be closed until May 15<sup>th</sup>. We will continually monitor the guidelines and recommendations made by state and local officials as well as the CDC as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve. With a reopening date of **May 18<sup>th</sup>** in mind, we will plan to not only come to school that week but also the week after Memorial Day. To help offset some of the time that we were not in the classroom, we will extend the school year with students to include **Tuesday, May 26-Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup>**. Additionally, staff will plan to send activities and resources in advance to families to cover the week of Spring Break (April 13<sup>th</sup>- April 17<sup>th</sup>). Although they will not be communicating with families that week, they will offer materials, as if it were another school week.

#### **"Distance" Learning:**

Although it is difficult to duplicate in the virtual world the play learning that occurs in the classroom, the teachers/assistants will continue to provide learning activities for your child to do at home on a weekly basis. They will continue to use a variety of modes including emails, Zoom, recorded videos, etc. In addition, Ms. Karla and Maestra Diana will be participating in some of these platforms to offer a bit of Music & Movement and Spanish. We are also exploring some other opportunities to bring to the children. All of our teachers are working diligently to transfer their passion for being in the classroom with the students to the best in distance learning opportunities!

#### **Tuition:**

We ask that you understand that our entire preschool budget is based on tuition collection. Although all of our discretionary spending for the preschool has been suspended, we are continuing to honor the staffs' contracts by paying their salaries for the remainder of the year.

In addition, to accommodate the adjustments of “distance” learning at the preschool level, we have decided to **not** collect May’s tuition. If according to your payment plan you have already paid tuition for May, then you will be contacted within the next few days on how your account will be credited, if you so desire.

St. Francis of Assisi Preschool has provided a high quality, faith-filled early childhood education for children in our community for almost 30 years. We want to look forward to the next 30 years with hope and confidence. This is an unprecedented national crisis in which there are not any right answers in decision making. We are, however, committed to doing the best we can for our families and staff.

Finally, everyone at our preschool is praying for our students and their families as well as those in our parish and larger community. If you or someone you know is in need of assistance, please reach out to us. The parish has resources on how to give or receive help and we would gladly get you connected! The parish [website](#) also has a great deal of information on this.

Thank you for your continued support and prayers! Please be safe!

Blessings,

*Heidi*

**Director**

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