

St. Francis of Assisi Preschool



"Over 30 yrs of Curiosity, Faith, and Compassion"



Parent Handbook 2023-2024

(updated 7/20/23)

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR....

Dear Families,

Welcome to St. Francis of Assisi Preschool!

We recognize that you, as parents, are the first and best teachers of your children, and as such, we aim to form a strong partnership with you. We firmly believe that collaboration between home and school creates a caring community that encourages all young students to reach their full potential.

As Catholic preschool educators, our goal is also to help prepare, support and accompany you and your child on a lifelong path to learning success. This handbook is designed to help you better understand our program. Please take the time to read it carefully. Together with your family, we can work to provide a nurturing, stimulating, and secure environment where we all grow in God's love.

St. Francis of Assisi Preschool has over 30 years of curiosity, faith and compassion. Our program uses a play-based model as young children learn best through hands-on activities which nurture curiosity, expand imaginations, and encourage exploration. Our goal is to provide a caring and enriching atmosphere to encourage the continuous developmental growth of each child while embracing his/her uniqueness and special gifts. Through group experiences and individualized instruction, children are challenged and supported in fostering relationships, strengthening their sense of self and progressing in all areas of development. All domains are important to nurturing the whole child and, therefore, integrated into our learning standards. Our educational standards are outlined by the Diocese of Raleigh. They are based on NC Foundations, the early childhood standards for our state. They include building skills in language and pre-literacy, early math, science, creative expression, social emotional understanding, physical development, health and safety, and, most importantly, faith development. Our Catholic identity is infused into our daily activities as we help children put their faith into action with intention and purpose.

We at St. Francis of Assisi Preschool are committed to planning a variety of learning opportunities that enable children to develop independence, self-confidence, and respect for others so that they are ready and eager to learn in the next level of their formal education. As the year progresses, you will see your child experience the joy of success and develop lasting relationships while growing spiritually, physically, socially, and intellectually. It is our sincere hope that this positive preschool experience fosters a love and excitement for learning as well as a lifelong relationship with God.

It is an honor to be cooperating and ministering to your family as your child begins his/her educational journey with us! Our pledge to you is to make every effort to help the children entrusted into our care reach their full potential. We joyfully welcome you to St. Francis of Assisi Preschool!

*Warmly,
Heidi Hobler*

While every effort has been made in this handbook to accurately communicate and reflect St. Francis Preschool's policies and procedures currently in place and in effect, the school reserves the right to alter, amend, eliminate, or add to these policies to better serve the preschool community and its students or as necessary to respond in a timely way to changing student and community needs during the school year in progress.

Any such changes will be communicated via email, in the weekly Mini Bits, and in the director's newsletter, and reflected in the next edition of the community handbook.

While this handbook is intended to be comprehensive, it is not exhaustive. It is meant to provide clear guidelines and be a reference to all in our community, including new and returning families and faculty and staff, as we make thoughtful decisions in the best interest of our students and community.

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OUR FAMILY OF STAFF & EDUCATORS

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MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by our patron Francis of Assisi, we seek to proclaim the reign of God by growing in **Holiness** through our experience of Christ in word, sacrament and one another, offering **Hope** to those who hunger for human dignity, and extending **Hospitality** to all.

VISION STATEMENT

As a ministry of the Catholic Community of St. Francis of Assisi, our preschool strives to create an environment where our children and families feel safe, welcomed and loved. We nurture the whole child through developmentally appropriate practices and intentional play. Grounded in community, we foster individualized social-emotional, intellectual, spiritual, physical, and creative growth. Our child-centered program is rooted in a rich faith tradition, which emphasizes serving the needs of the community, care for creation, and respect for all. We send forth children excited about learning, aware of self, compassionate of heart, and bursting with God's love.

GOALS

- To give each child the opportunity to discover, explore, and engage in meaningful experiences ensuring a solid foundation for each child to develop to his/her potential throughout their educational journey.
- To develop and strengthen each child's sense of identity and worth, cultivating an environment in which children celebrate the value of sharing their unique and diverse traits to build up others around them.
- To implement a Catholic education program that will introduce each child to the Gospel teachings and Catholic Christian Values central to our Faith and provide opportunities to apply them to real life situations.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Standards—Early childhood education is a distinct period of learning. Preschoolers acquire a great deal of their knowledge and abilities as they participate in hands-on activities that engage all their senses. We are a play-based program and follow the Diocese Raleigh's standards for Preschool/Early Learning Centers. The standards were revised in 2021 and, as previously noted, are largely based on NC Foundations, the standards developed and used by the state of North Carolina for early childhood programs. Throughout the day, our teachers offer lessons and activities focused on the fundamental areas of development including: social-emotional, approaches to play & learning, cognitive, and physical/health. Lessons to introduce and expand upon spiritual growth are continually interwoven throughout the day. The goals and learning objectives within each of these areas are crafted to appeal to the children's abilities and interests, which helps to ensure the development of self-confidence and success in a fun and safe Catholic community. Our classroom environments are intentionally designed to foster optimal learning. The learning centers in each classroom are equipped so children can explore and discover art, blocks, manipulatives, building, imaginative play, pre-literacy, sensory, pre-math and science materials.

- **Enrichment**—St. Francis offers weekly Special classes in Music & Movement for all students and Spanish for our 3's, 4's and 5's. Additionally, enrichment activities are implemented throughout the

year focused on service projects, Exploration Station (our natural outdoor play area), and lessons of faith in collaboration with our parish staff and The Franciscan School.

- **Professional**—Our staff is well-tenured and puts the needs of your child first each and every day. All Lead Teachers have their Early Childhood Education Credential, an associate's degree in Early Childhood Education or a bachelor's degree in Elementary or Early Childhood Education. Staff members receive first aid and CPR training and are expected to take continuing education classes each year. They are skilled at developing age-appropriate activities that are engaging as well as educational.
- **Partnership**—Parent and caregiver participation is welcome at our preschool. St. Francis of Assisi preschool staff and parents work together to support a child's success.

Class Offerings-

- **Toddler-18 months old by 8/31**--This program is designed similarly to our Cross Step program and follows a 'mom's morning out' model. It is, therefore, separate from the educational standards outlined by the Diocese of Raleigh. It is intended to help our youngest learners begin to experience play and exploration opportunities in a loving environment outside of home. It will provide activities to develop both gross & fine motor skills through such things as outdoor time and music & movement. It will encourage the development of simple communication, foster independence, and lay the groundwork for early social-emotion skills through activities such as stories, snack time, and exploration of new materials.
- **2-year-old by 8/31**—In this program, classroom teachers work to provide play experiences and implement developmentally appropriate activities for building preschool readiness skills including language development, expressing emotions, and sharing.
Lunch Program: St. Francis of Assisi Preschool offers a lunch program for children in our 2-year-old classes later in the school year. Children have the opportunity to stay from 12-1pm for an additional fee. Students will bring their own lunch. The schedule to sign up and pay for the lunch bunch opportunity will be emailed in the late fall, shortly before the lunch program is scheduled to begin. Your child's teacher will provide insight into your child's readiness to stay for lunch and how to increase readiness skills.
- **3-year-old by 8/31**—There is a significant emphasis in this program on expanding socialization. The teachers strive to help the children build self-confidence and self-esteem while they learn through play. We encourage and promote interest in forming friendships, imaginative play, and group activities. These activities are enriched with such things as special sharing opportunities, stories, and songs.
- **4-year-old by 8/31**—Both the four-year-old and Transitional Kindergarten programs encourage children to expand upon peer relationships, to play cooperatively with others, to share, contribute and interact with others in a group and to explore and create. Continued focus is on developing social skills and strengthening the child's confidence while introducing kindergarten readiness activities in a fun, exciting, and developmentally appropriate way.
- **5-year-old by 8/31**—This program offers the gift of an extra year for children to grow and strengthen in kindergarten readiness skills and self-esteem before entering full day kindergarten. It is intended for children who have completed a 4-year-old preschool program. While some beginning Kindergarten math and literacy concepts may be introduced, the classroom day remains focused on creative play and opportunities to expand curiosity and further enhance those social-emotional skills which will lead to future academic success.

**The director reserves the right to adjust the cut-off date for enrollment in all programs.*

Stepping Stones: Stepping Stones is a consistent, caring, and faith-based before and/or after-school program for enrolled 3,4, and 5-year-old preschool families only. Students generally register at the beginning of the school year and are billed through FACTS. Morning care is available from 8am to 9am. After-school care is available from 1pm to 2:30pm. The safety and well-being of the children is our priority; therefore, space is limited. Stepping Stones may only be utilized for days when the child is enrolled in school.

“Drop-In” childcare is primarily meant to occur on an occasional basis (ie. When a caregiver has a medical appointment, a pick-up person has changed). We require a 2-day prior notification to the main office. Requests will be granted if space permits. The cost for this service is \$10/per hour and will be invoiced through FACTs or email depending on desired payment method. A change fee is instituted for schedule alterations within the Stepping Stones program throughout the school year.

If the preschool has a delayed opening due to weather concerns, AM Stepping Stones will open one hour prior to the opening of the preschool day. If the preschool is closed or releases early, there will be no Stepping Stones.

Out of respect for staff & church room reservations, please be aware that there is a late fee of \$10 beginning at 2:31 PM per child as well as an additional \$10 for every 5-minute increment after the mandatory 2:30 PM pick up time. Fees will be charged following the first occurrence.

Admission: St. Francis of Assisi Preschool is committed to providing equal access to educational opportunities for all students regardless of race, color, religion, national, or ethnic origin. The program makes every attempt to serve all children, regardless of physical or mental disability, and will work closely with you to ensure that the needs of your child(ren) are met. The Preschool will include educational approaches to ensure that differences among students are recognized, respected and celebrated.

Health-Immunizations Requirements: A certificate of immunization signed by the physician should be presented on or before the first day of school. If it is not presented, a written notice will be given to the parent. The parent has **30 calendar days** from the child’s first day of attendance to show proof of the required immunizations. (If additional time is needed a written statement from a physician will be required.) Upon termination of 30 calendar days or the extended period, the child will not be permitted to attend school until he/she has been immunized.

Registration: Priority for enrolling children in our programs is given to children of St. Francis staff, children who are currently enrolled, as well as their siblings, if registration is completed during the priority enrollment period. After priority enrollment is complete, we open enrollment as follows: Alumni/Franciscan School siblings, parishioners, and then to the general public.

Tuition/Fees: A registration fee equivalent to one month’s tuition is due at the time of application. **This fee is not refundable regardless of extenuating or personal circumstances such as reducing class days. Please note that the registration fee is not the same as tuition payments.** Placement in a class is not final until all paperwork and payments are received and in order. Registration payments can be made by check payable to St. Francis Preschool, or our online system (credit card fee will apply).

No refunds will be made on tuition already paid. In case of withdrawal/dismissal from the program, thirty days’ written notice is required. Children are accepted in good faith. Occasionally, however, it is necessary to remove a child from the program or deny enrollment if we feel that we cannot best meet the needs of a child. In this case, we are happy to refund the registration fee. Please also note that we are unable to refund/adjust tuition in the event that distance learning is required.

Tuition is based on an annual fee but is divided into monthly payments, which begin in August and end in April/May and are made using FACTS (tuition management system). They will be drafted on the 20th of each month. A link will be sent to register for FACTS. If you wish to pay your annual tuition in full, a 1% discount will be applied.

Note: Limited amounts of tuition assistance funds are available each year for families with financial hardship. Please contact the office for additional information on financial aid.

2023-2024 YEARLY TUITION RATES

Class	St. Francis Steward	Nonsteward
Toddler Class	\$1,161	\$1,413
2 year old 2 day	\$2,394	\$2,817
2 year old 3 day	\$3,582	\$4,212
2 year old 5 day	\$5,967	\$7,020
3 year old 3 day	\$3,717	\$4,455
3 year old 4 day	\$4,536	\$5,436
3 year old 5 day	\$5,652	\$6,786
4 year old 4 day (9-1)	\$4,248	\$5,103
4 year old 5 day (9-1)	\$5,310	\$6,372
4 year old 5 day (9-2)	\$6,156	\$7,389
Transitional Class 5 day (9-2)	\$6,156	\$7,389

2023-2024 STEPPING STONES YEARLY TUITION RATE

Hours	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days	5 Days
Morning (8-9)	\$468	\$720	\$936	\$1,188
Afternoon (1-2)	\$468	\$720	\$936	\$1,188
Late Afternoon (2-2:30)	\$252	\$351	\$504	\$603

Stewardship: When you attend St. Francis Preschool, you are not just attending school, you are joining our preschool and parish family too! All programs and learning experiences are here to support our students and our families grow to reach their full potential. Families that commit to being stewards of St. Francis through their generous sharing of time, talent and treasure express and embrace our call of discipleship. One way we honor our families who embrace Stewardship and share their gifts and blessings is by offering an adjusted tuition rate. Please see the [Parish Stewardship Tuition Information](#) page.

SCHOOL DAY PROCEDURES

Drop-off and Pick Up: For the safety and security of the children and staff; the following procedures have been established.

- *Be Prompt:* Children need to know that someone will bring them to school on time and be waiting when school is over. It is important to establish a routine for the child as well as to respect the teacher's time.
- *Parking:* For safety and logistical reasons, we are not permitted to park in the Community Center lot during drop-off or pick-up. This lot is reserved for those attending daily mass at the Chapel and those using the Community Center. We understand that this may be inconvenient, and we do apologize, but your child's safety is of utmost importance to us. We thank you in advance for your respectful compliance.

Arrival: The school day begins at 9:00a.m. It is beneficial for children to arrive on time in order to avoid confusion once classroom activities have begun. In order for us to have personal contact with you each morning and afternoon as well as to foster fellowship amongst our families, parents are to park in the main church lot and accompany children to their classrooms.

Dismissal: In order to create a smooth dismissal, parents/siblings are not allowed to enter the classroom. Since teachers need to give their full attention to students at this hectic time of day, dismissal is not the time for conferencing with the teacher. Please write a note or ask the teacher to call you, if needed.

Late: Please be aware that there is a late fee of \$10 beginning at the dismissal time of your child's class (per child) as well as an additional \$10 for every 5-minute increment.

Visiting: Diocesan policy requires that parents or other individuals visiting or volunteering on-site sign "in" when they arrive and sign "out" when they leave. This helps us monitor visitors for our students' protection and in the event of an emergency. You can complete this process in the lobby.

Other:

- If you need to sign your child out before normal dismissal time, please notify the preschool office in advance to make arrangements for your child to be brought to you. Please come to the office and sign out your child at the designated time. In an emergency, please contact the office directly at (919) 534.4849.
- If you need to change your child's pick-up arrangements for the day, please notify your child's teacher in writing upon arrival. For last-minute changes, please email or call the office. If we do not know the person picking up your child, picture identification will be required.

COMMUNICATION

Preschool Website, Social Media, and Remind Alert System: Parents are encouraged to check the preschool's website for important information posted there, including calendars, forms, and the latest news. Our website also includes a link to our official Facebook page, which is updated often with photos of class activities. Our Preschool Advisory Council (PAC) also manages a separate preschool family Facebook page. On occasion, the Preschool will send out alerts and reminders in case of inclement weather or to provide awareness to necessary changes in parking options or pickup times due to campus events and/or emergencies. You will automatically be enrolled in the REMIND system. For updates/concerns related to a health situation, we will use email and/or the REMIND system. Our Preschool Advisory Council (PAC) also manages a preschool family Facebook page.

Mini Bits: This weekly school newsletter will be made available every Sunday via email. It is extremely important that it be read carefully as items may require immediate attention.

Director Letter: The Director will provide the community with monthly information occurring throughout the school such as service projects, weekend events, and guest presenters that enrich our school wide activities.

Calendar: A list of upcoming events can always be found in Mini Bits. Additionally, a list of important dates is posted on the preschool's website. Monthly calendars will also be available on the website and via teacher communications. We are aware that many of our families have children who are also enrolled in The Franciscan School. Please know that while every effort is made to align our calendars, due to the inherent differences between preschool and K-8 schools, this is not always possible. We appreciate your understanding.

Teacher Communications: Teachers will regularly provide parents with information specific to their child's activities in the classroom through a variety of ways including emails, postings on their bulletin board located outside of their classrooms, as well as with their private class share site. For privacy reasons, teachers will only send communications to parents and legal guardians. It is beneficial to adhere to the teachers' preferred hours of contact. If there is an emergency, call the main office at 919.534.4849.

Parent-Teacher Conferences: For students in our 2-thru 5-year-old classes, formal parent/teacher conferences are scheduled at least once per year and narrative assessments are sent at the beginning and end of the school year. The conferences are used to further the development of a partnership in the educational mission of the children. Both parents and teachers share their insights on the child and together discuss their progress and placement for the following year. Conferences may be scheduled by a teacher or parent at any time during the year should questions or concerns arise. Any questions or concerns about a child's adjustment or progress in the classroom should be first directed to the child's teachers. If further discussion is necessary, parents may request a conference with the Director.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Absence: If you know in advance that your child will be absent because of an appointment, vacation, etc., please notify his/her teacher prior to the absence. If you have an unexpected absence for any reason, please use the *Absent Notification* button (found on the main page of the preschool website), to let us know the nature of the absence and when the child is expected to return to school. The preschool is required to keep accurate records of attendance for each child. You can also use this link - [Absent Notification](#).

Accidents/Illnesses at School: If a child becomes sick during the day, the classroom teacher or administrative staff will contact parents/caregivers to come and pick up their child. Parents will be informed of any accidents or injuries sustained by their child during the school day. You will receive an “Ouch report” if your child gets a minor injury at school. Should a child experience a medical emergency or more serious injury, an attempt will be made to immediately notify parents. Depending upon the severity of the problem, emergency personnel may be contacted, and the child may be transported to the hospital. The Preschool has an Accident Response Team made up of the administrator or designee, all maintenance personnel, and a staff member to administer first aid to a sick or injured individual. The team will receive regular training.

Birthdays: For the safety of everyone, please avoid edible treats. Non-edible, ie (goody bags) are acceptable but they will be handed out at the end of the day to go in a child’s backpack. If your child has a summer birthday, another “special” day will be selected on which to celebrate. Out of consideration for others, please do not hand-deliver party invitations at school.

Biting Policy: For the first offense, the child will be warned, the parent will be told at pick up time, and a written notice sent home. The second time a child bites, the parent will be contacted immediately to come and take the child home. If the child bites again, the same procedure will be followed. If the behavior continues, the child may be dismissed. For the child who is bitten, the parents will be notified that day and the area will be washed with soap and water.

Child Abuse: The Preschool Staff that have cause to suspect child abuse or neglect have a legal responsibility and moral obligation to report such case(s), as directed by North Carolina Statute 110-118, to the Child Protection Services of the Department of Social Services in Wake County. The superintendent of Catholic Schools and the pastor will be informed that the Department of Social Services has been notified regarding a suspected child abuse/neglect situation. If consultation or treatment is required, the Catholic Social Ministries regional office will be contacted.

Clothing: Children should wear loose-fitting and comfortable clothing that allows the child’s full participation in all activities. All removable garments (ex. Sweaters, hats, coats, mittens) should be marked with the child’s name. Assume children will be spending some time outdoors each day and dress them appropriately for the weather. Tennis shoes are best for the playground. Shoes, such as sandals, are likely to get mulch in them and are slippery and dangerous when climbing our playground equipment.

Contact Phone Number: It is essential, particularly in relation to sudden illness, that the office have current phone numbers where parents can be reached during school hours in case of illness or emergency. Please update the Preschool office immediately if there are any changes in your contact number.

Custody Agreements: The safety and well-being of our students and staff is always our priority. To ensure the protection of all our students, staff and teachers, we request a copy of family custody agreements to keep in our records.

Discipline: St. Francis of Assisi Preschool must be a safe place for all children: free of hurtful words and actions. A positive approach to behavior management that respects the dignity of each child will be used at our preschool. We have been trained in a variety of techniques to support children’s development of self-esteem and self-discipline at every stage of development, through positive reinforcement and calm redirection. Class rules, routines, and manners are discussed with the children early in the school year so that behavioral expectations are clear and consistent. Teachers model and reinforce appropriate behavior and encourage positive strategies for resolving conflict. When necessary, teachers may provide the child with a short time away from a group

activity to reflect on his/her behavior and to encourage self-control. Parents will be contacted if a child is experiencing behavioral or social difficulties in the classroom. At no time will corporal punishment be used.

Enrollment Termination: The Preschool has the right to dismiss any child whose needs are not best being served by our program and/or whose behavior seriously affects the welfare of others. Prior to dismissal, parents will have been informed of concerns and efforts to resolve them will have been made.

Emergency Drills: The Preschool has implemented a “crisis plan” to respond to various types of emergencies (ex. Fire drills, severe weather, lockdown). Teachers and staff are aware of and practice procedures that are designed to keep children safe. In the event of a true emergency, parents will be notified through our Remind Alert System and told where/when to pick up their child.

- Fire drills will be held within the first ten days of the school year and monthly thereafter.
- Lockdown drills and procedures will be practiced throughout the year.
- Severe Weather drills are scheduled during the year. They will be signaled by a method different from a fire emergency alert.

Field Trips: The Diocese of Raleigh, NC law, and other safety considerations, prohibit us from taking field trips off campus. When possible special in-house field trips will be planned.

Health Concerns/Medication: If your child must have medication of any type given during school hours, you have the following choices:

1. You may come to the school and give the medication to your child at the appropriate time(s).
2. You may obtain a copy of a medication form from the school office. Take the form to your child’s doctor and have him/her complete the form by listing the medication(s) needed, dosage and number of times per day the medication is to be administered. This form must be completed by the physician for any medication to be given.
3. You may discuss with your doctor an alternative schedule for administering medication (e.g., outside of school hours).
4. This policy applies to over-the-counter products such as suntan lotion, diaper rash cream, etc.

School personnel will not administer any medication (including but not limited to suntan lotion, bug spray, etc.) to students unless they have received a medication form properly completed and signed by the doctor, and the medication has been received in an appropriately labeled container. In fairness to those giving medication and to protect the safety of your child, there will be no exception to this policy.

Sickness: Children are not permitted to attend school if they have had a fever, vomiting or diarrhea 24 hours prior to the beginning of the school day or if they have not had at least 24 hours of antibiotic treatment for contagious illnesses or infestation. (***See Appendix A and B***). If your child is ill, he/she will be sent to the Director or designee, and you will be notified immediately so that you may come and pick him/her up.

Inclement Weather: St. Francis of Assisi Preschool will generally follow the school closing procedures for inclement weather established by The Franciscan School. When The Franciscan School is closed, we will be closed; if they dismiss early, we will dismiss early as well. If they have a one or two-hour delayed opening, we will have a one or two-hour delay. If there is a delay the two-year-old program will dismiss at 1 p.m. instead of 12 noon. Two-year-old parents will need to pack their child’s lunch that day. Since the populations of each school are different (ie. we have several families with strollers, expectant moms), there may be times when the preschool deviates from the plan of The Franciscan School and decides that it is the safest option to close. If

these occasions arise, we will do our best to give as much advance notice as possible. Weather cancellations will be communicated using email, Facebook, and REMIND Alert System.

Lice: Parents will be notified if a confirmed case of lice is present in your child's classroom. If you find that your child has lice, please notify our school so that we can take the necessary steps to prevent it from spreading in the classroom. Parents should contact their physician to seek treatment. Due to the fact that our students are in constant contact with each other in play throughout the day, parents will be asked to come and pick up their child if nits or live lice are noticeably present on their child. Diocesan policy stipulates that a child may not return to school until after the first treatment is completed. We identify treatment as killing live lice, thoroughly combing hair to remove nits, and treating home/family as recommended by a professional. Parents, please understand that lice is treatable and can happen to anyone! Personal hygiene and cleanliness in the home or school has nothing to do with getting head lice.

Lunches: Parents are responsible for providing their child with a nutritious bag lunch and drink that is **peanut/tree nut free and does not contain products processed in a facility that handles nuts**. If a food item is suspected of containing or of being processed with nuts, it will be sent home with a note. We appreciate your help in assisting us with striving to keep our preschool peanut/tree nut free. We also ask that you be particularly mindful of using foods/containers/lunchboxes/drinks which your child can handle with the greatest amount of independence.

Playground: Weather permitting; the children will play outside on the playground every day. Please make sure to send clothing appropriate to the temperature. Families will NOT be allowed to use the playground during school hours. Additionally, we kindly ask that the afternoon Stepping Stones group has priority in using any space. Out of respect and concern for safety, please do not allow your child to climb **on** the Peace Pole (located by the main back parking lot) or run in the Columbarium area where the ashes of our deceased loved ones are. While we want to encourage friendships and socialization among families, please remain vigilant about watching your child during after-school play. We are a large and busy campus with several areas where a child can get hurt, if not properly supervised.

Safe Environment/Volunteers: To ensure the safety of students, background checks are completed on all Preschool staff members. In addition, all Preschool staff and classroom volunteers must complete a diocesan information form annually. All volunteers/parents will be required to complete the Level A Volunteer Service form. This form will be available at the beginning of the year, and it will be the responsibility of the parent(s) to complete it before volunteering. **Volunteers may not bring siblings or other children not enrolled in the Preschool while volunteering.**

Snacks: Please provide a reusable water bottle labeled with your child's name for use during the day. We will return it to you at the end of the day for cleaning and reuse.

Teachers will inform parents about any food allergies in the class. Parents are asked to provide a healthy snack for his/her child each day. The snack must be in a separate bag labeled clearly with the child's name. Parents are reminded to provide snacks in containers that can be handled as independently as possible. Your child's teacher will let you know where to place the snack when you arrive.

- **We strive to keep our school peanut and tree nut free.**
- **When looking at brands other than those listed, please read the labels carefully and make sure that they do not contain peanuts/tree nuts or have been made on equipment/factories that handle peanut/tree nuts.**
- ***Teachers will not be able to serve items that do not meet this requirement. As mentioned previously, they will be sent home.***

Special Needs: A child's successful adjustment in the classroom may be affected by his/her special needs. Teachers will consult with parents in these circumstances, and an opportunity for outside professional consultation can also be made available. The goal of intervention is the child's successful adjustment to the classroom. Classroom modifications may be made as long as the needs of all students can be reasonably met. If modifications and interventions are ineffective in helping a child to successfully assimilate to the classroom, the Preschool staff will be available to work with parents in finding an appropriate and beneficial alternative for the child. With parental permission, specialized consultants offer screenings and may assist with referrals for intervention and support services. Project Enlightenment is an example of this type of service. It is part of the Office of Early Learning within Wake County Public Schools and is a child/parent/teacher advisory service. They specialize in the preschool-age child and can observe and make recommendations at no cost to residents of the county. Their talk line is a service to answer parents' questions and concerns about their children. 919-856-7808.

Additionally, The Diocese of Raleigh's Office of Education (OOE) acknowledges the following: There are students who require special services to meet their full human potential. St. Francis of Assisi Preschool is committed to all students succeeding to the best of their abilities. In the event that a student has a diagnosed special need (documented by licensed medical personnel) accommodations may be offered that can be reasonably made within the normal general education classes and when the school has the resources (academic/staff) available to accommodate the students' needs. However, modifications to academic requirements or alterations in the general course of studies will not be made.

If a student cannot be accommodated within the school program, every effort is made to assist with placement in another school program beyond St. Francis of Assisi Preschool.

Supervision of Children: The Preschool is responsible for the supervision of your child beginning when he/she is dropped off to staff and responsibility ends when your child is dismissed to you or a designated caregiver at the end of the school day. Be diligent in supervising your child whenever on campus. Traffic can be heavy at times and your child's safety is of utmost concern to us.

Toilet Training:

3-year-old classes and up: All children in these classes must be fully toilet trained (including being able to disrobe and wipe themselves) *before* entering the program. Additionally, pull-ups are not encouraged for these age groups. We recognize that an accident can happen so please always make sure that your child has an extra set of clothes in his/her backpack.

2-year-old & Toddler classes: Children in these classes are not expected to be toilet-trained although staff are willing to reasonably support the training efforts being made at home. Parents should send in extra diapers/wipes and/or clothes. Please be open in your communication with staff about your child's abilities in using the toilet and we will do our best to help them become more successfully independent whenever possible.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

As your child's first and most important teacher, you are invited and encouraged to spend time in the Preschool interacting with your child and his/her friends. There are several ways to become involved.

- *Classroom Volunteers:* There will be opportunities provided throughout the year for you to spend time volunteering in different capacities around the school.
- *Office Help* with copying and laminating, filing, etc.
- *Class Helpers* (for science activities, guest readers, provide library books, other special events)

- *Family Engagement Committee:* Our Family Engagement Committee is similar to a home and school association in that it is made up of parents from the Preschool who coordinate activities to further engage young children and their families into the preschool and parish community. All parents are invited to participate in some capacity.
 - Room Parent
 - Social Committee
 - Little Francis CARES program
 - Harvest Moon Committee
 - International Festival Committee
- *Parent Surveys:* Here at St. Francis of Assisi Preschool we take pride in providing a tradition in growing in excellence. To help ensure that our program is meeting the needs of your child, parents will have the opportunity to evaluate our school on an annual basis. We welcome your input and encourage you to complete the survey.

DISTANT LEARNING

While we **strongly** believe that preschool is meant to be done in-person, we recognize from past experience that there may be a rare occasion, especially during a major health crisis, when we have to change to remote learning for a class or school wide. St. Francis of Assisi Preschool has a plan for transitioning to distance learning strategies. Your teacher will provide instructions, if needed. Please know that any decision to pursue this type of learning will be very carefully considered and only enacted under the advisement of parish and diocesan leadership.



APPENDIX A

In an effort to maintain a safe and healthy school environment, please do not send your child to school if he/she is not feeling well, especially if the following symptoms are present:

- Fever greater than 100 degrees over the past 24 hours ((i.e. your child must be fever free for 24 hours without the administration of Tylenol or Motrin)
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours (i.e. your child must be vomit and diarrhea free for 24 hours prior to the start of the school day)
- Discharge from eyes with or without redness. If eyes are “crusted over” in the morning and child describes his eyes as “itchy”, this could be pinkeye. The child should be on antibiotic eye drops for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
- If your child has been diagnosed with strep throat, they should be on antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to school. If a strep test is pending, the child should remain home until a negative result is obtained or the child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours.
- Your child is taking medication in which the side effects would include diarrhea.
- If you child has symptoms which may be indicative of COVID-19 (see Appendix B)

Colds and viruses are very contagious. The teachers at St. Francis Preschool stress good hand washing in an effort to prevent the spread of germs but we appreciate your help to keep classmates and teachers healthy as well.

If your child has a sibling who is sick, please do not bring them into the preschool building. Please contact the office and one of the staff members will meet you at your car.

Many times, a child may be feeling run-down from a cold (or from medication used to treat an illness). If this is the case, please allow the child to fully rest up at home before returning to school. We want school to be a positive experience for every child!

If any of the above mentioned symptoms occur during the school day, you will be called to pick up your child from school. Please be sure that emergency and mobile numbers are accurate.



APPENDIX B

(updated 7/6/23)

The COVID-19 virus remains present in our local communities. While we have confidence in our health protocols and cleaning procedures to help minimize the risk of spreading germs, we need your continued assistance. To reduce the risk of COVID at preschool, all families/staff are required to adhere to the following:

- Per CDC revised [guidelines](#) for early childhood education programs, a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, he/she needs to quarantine for a minimum of **5 days** (Day 0= day symptoms began or day specimen was collected for testing if no symptoms present). As with any illness, we will not be able to offer a tuition refund for days during the week of quarantine that a child was not able to attend.
- If a student or staff member is exposed to someone who tests positive, he/she is not required to quarantine, but should be tested (PCR) no sooner than Day 5 (Day 0= day symptoms began or day specimen was collected for testing in no symptoms present) following exposure UNLESS symptoms develop. Student or staff should wear a mask for 10 days following the exposure.
- In classrooms where 3 or more confirmed cases of COVID have occurred simultaneously, families within that class will be notified in an email from the director as soon as possible.
- The list of possible COVID symptoms which suggest that testing should be completed, continues to include, but is not limited to, runny/congested nose, sore throat, fever, diarrhea, vomiting/nausea, headache, fatigue, cough, new loss of taste/smell, body aches, & difficulty breathing. If **any** of these symptoms are noted in your child, please keep them **home** and complete a COVID test. If symptoms are present, a PCR test remains the most reliable way to rule out a COVID infection, however, a negative antigen test (at-home version) or an alternative diagnosis from a healthcare provider, is sufficient in order to return. Although the COVID-19 virus has been the main concern these past couple of years, we want to limit the sharing of **any** germs as much as possible. For any signs of illness, it is recommended that you contact your primary healthcare provider.
- We are required to exclude children from school if a student:
 - Has a fever
 - Vomits
 - Has diarrhea
 - Is unable to “participate comfortably” in activities

*These are similar to our “normal” sick policies & will warrant a phone call to come & pick up your child as soon as possible.

You can review additional COVID guidelines & an isolation flow chart from the CDC [here](#) for further information.

