

St. Nicholas Academy 2018-2019 Family/Student Preschool Handbook

INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been prepared to clarify questions parents sometimes have regarding the philosophy and procedures at St. Nicholas Academy.

Parents have the first right and obligation in the education of their children. The teachers, professionally trained in the psychology of learning and techniques of teaching, wish to assist parents in this all-important work. The school is usually one of the first experiences of Christian Community that children have outside of the family.

The respect, communication, and cooperation that parents, teachers, and administrators exhibit among themselves should, therefore, model Christian Community for the children. Equally important is the respect, communication and cooperation shown toward and expected from children as part of that Community. If children perceive this mutual respect as a shared authority of parents and teachers, they will be able to participate fully in their education.

We hope this handbook will help to foster cooperation between home and school. Parents are asked to study this handbook **with their children** and to keep it at hand for reference. **There is a paper to be signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) and returned to school at the end of this handbook.**

MISSION

The mission of St. Nicholas Academy, as a Catholic school, is to work as a community of disciples who think, act, learn, pray, and walk with one another, following in the steps of Jesus.

We believe:

We are called to be disciples who share opportunities for liturgy, prayer, sacramental preparation, and community service.

We are called to assist children entrusted to us in their total formation, following the customs and traditions of the Catholic Church, the engagement of parents and guardians, and the best practices of preschool education.

Each child is unique and can reach their academic potential through a variety of instructional opportunities that support individual learning.

Families are the primary educators of their children. Through cooperation and open communication, we strive to develop self-disciplines and personal responsibility, leading to positive relationships and mutual respect among students, faculty, families, and the greater community.

If you have any questions you may contact:

Aideen Briggs, Principal

686-2727

abriggs@stnacademy.org

The preschool full-day will begin at 8:00 a.m., and end at 2:45 p.m. Parents may drop off their child beginning at 7:30 with no extra charge. The preschool entrance and exit is located across from the gym.

Our preschool program will be fully licensed by the Ohio Department of Education. Students enrolled in our preschool program will take a hands-on approach to learning.

Students will take part in daily prayer experiences. A Catholic preschool program fosters the awakening of the Christian conscience in the children by leading them to appreciate God's goodness, value God's world and the people in it, form good habits and help those in need. Our learning community will engage children in activities that nurture kindness, honesty, forgiveness and concern for others.

The child should:

- Develop a positive self-image and acknowledge his/her self-worth.
- Become aware of the fact that he/she is a child of God and will grow in His love.
- Develop basic social skills.
- Increase independence.
- Develop a trust in adults other than his/her parents/guardians.
- Enjoy being part of a group and accept the need to share and cooperate.
- Respect the rights of others and defend his/her own rights.
- Develop the desire to learn.

GENERAL POLICIES

St. Nicholas Academy Preschool accepts children ages 3, 4 and 5 who are potty-trained.

Admission Priority Acceptance Policy

1. St. Nicholas Academy Preschool current students
2. St. Nicholas Academy families with siblings currently enrolled in the preschool/day school
3. Parishioners from our covenant parishes
4. Community members

St. Nicholas Academy Preschool will admit children of any race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, provided space is available.

St. Nicholas Academy Preschool will be licensed to operate by the Ohio Department of Education.

St. Nicholas Academy Preschool will run concurrently with the day school. Please reference the 2018-2019 preschool calendar for days of operation and holiday breaks.

St. Nicholas Academy Preschool will be closed when the day school is closed for a weather emergency closing.

A child will only be released to those designated on the pick-up list unless other arrangements have been made in writing. St. Nicholas Academy reserves the right to request ID upon pick up.

The discipline policy will be as outlined in the handbook of St. Nicholas Academy School. The form of discipline used will be a "time out" in amounts of time appropriate for the age of the child. No cruel, harsh, physical or unusual punishments shall be permitted. A written report will be sent home if inappropriate behavior persists. Three reports sent home would result in a conference with the principal, teacher and parent and possible suspension of preschool for one week. (Please refer to the back cover for discipline statements required to be posted by the State of Ohio.)

A parent roster will be prepared for each child's class. You have the option of omitting your name and phone number from the list.

Snacks

Parents are asked to provide snack for the class on a weekly rotation. There will be a snack calendar sent home each month.

ABSENCES

When your child is absent from school, the parents/guardians must phone in the absence to the office. If your child will be late to school, please call the office and let them know.

ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURE

Arrival Procedure

Preschool students may be dropped off as early as 7:30 a.m. Each student must be walked into the classroom and signed in by an adult each morning. The entrance across from the gym will be open for preschool arrival and dismissal. Class will begin at 8 a.m.

Dismissal Procedure

Dismissal is at 2:45 pm. Please enter through the entrance across from the gym to pick up preschool students. An adult must sign the student out each day. There is no Extended Day for preschool.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE POLICY

All employees will be aware of the signs and symptoms of illness and hand washing and disinfection procedures. This will be reviewed periodically.

All children will be observed as they enter each day. A parent or guardian will be notified if signs and symptoms of communicable disease are observed.

No employee will attend St. Nicholas Academy Preschool if they show signs or symptoms of communicable disease.

Any child who has been absent because of a communicable disease will be readmitted to the St. Nicholas Academy Preschool when both the parent and school agree the child is well.

The St. Nicholas Academy Preschool will follow all school and Ohio Health Department guidelines in observing, caring for, and readmitting children to the program. A Communicable Disease Chart by the Ohio Department of Health is present in the preschool building for reference. (Please refer to the back cover for statements required to be posted by the State of Ohio.)

COMMUNICATION

Mostly, communication will occur via email or the use of Class Dojo (a website or app used for positive behavior management and communication). Parents will receive a weekly newsletter from the principal about the whole school. Parents will also receive a weekly newsletter and/or communication from the classroom teacher.

Formal progress reports will be sent home twice a year in the fall and in the spring. Scheduled conferences will take place at this time. However, they are welcomed and encouraged at any time throughout the year. Please do not hesitate to contact the teacher at any time with questions or concerns.

St. Nicholas Academy Preschool has an open door policy. We encourage parents and guardians to participate in field trips, special events, parties, etc. When visiting the preschool, please use the school office to sign in.

Parents who wish to participate in volunteering for school activities must be up to date on their VIRTUS training and must have had a background check on Selection.com. A Visitor's badge must be worn at all times when in our school building. More information regarding this policy may be obtained from the SNA Office.

COMPONENTS

Religion is an integral part of the Catholic Preschool program. It is the preparation time for the more formal instruction in the years ahead. Religion is the development of a positive self-image in relationship to a loving God. This basis for a deep love of God comes from the examples set by the family and spiritual life of the parish community. A child's sense of God comes from the warm atmosphere of love and acceptance in the preschool environment where the child learns about God's wonderful world. Classroom prayer prepares him/her to participate in the celebrations of the Church. You will receive more information about this curriculum from your child's teacher.

Language is the development of communication skills that enable a child to share his or her world with others. At the preschool level, these skills include listening, speaking, and thinking. Learning experiences are provided that help a child express his/her thoughts and feelings in a variety of ways. An awareness of the five senses, visual discrimination, memory skills and auditory discrimination are important readiness skills that can be taught through play activities. Listening to and sharing stories, poetry, and finger plays enhance a love of language. A more formal literacy program may also add valuable, developmentally appropriate experiences that will balance out the language component.

Math/Science readiness at the preschool level involves the development of cognitive skills. Math knowledge comes from an understanding of colors and shapes, size differences, basic counting skills, classifying, forming sets and recognizing numerals. These concepts are taught through manipulative and play experiences.

Motor skills are a vital part of the young child's development and are crucial to the learning skills he/she will need in the future.

Gross motor - Body coordination is enhanced through large motor activities of walking, running, jumping, hopping, dancing, and skipping. Arm-eye coordination is attained by throwing a large ball or beanbag, catching and aiming at a target. Rhythm and movement provide an outlet of creative expression and the joy of using the body in dance, games and organized play.

Fine motor- Eye-hand coordination is developed through manipulating clay, stringing beads, hammering, pasting, coloring, and painting, pouring and using scissors. Dexterity and strength of the small muscles are developing skills that enhance reading readiness. Use of the natural hand preference is observed and encouraged, although

dominance is not achieved yet. Eye tracking is another fine motor activity that promotes the left-to-right progression skill required for reading readiness

CURRICULUM

The St. Nicholas Academy Preschool follows the Ohio Department of Early Learning and Development Standards.

A successful preschool program promotes the development of mind, body and soul of young children. The curriculum should not be centered on very specific subject areas, but rather it should be developed using a “hands-on” approach to learning in general. Multi-sensory activities that enhance the total development of the children are planned in a sequential manner that follows a theme or is part of a unit.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The St. Nicholas Academy Preschool curriculum is designed to promote positive and enjoyable learning experiences for the child, and positive interactions between adults and children.

The goal of our preschool program is to help each child develop a feeling of positive self-worth, competence, and mastery.

Therefore, discipline will be approached from the realization that children need to learn self-control and to be able to internalize rules of behavior. Clear rules of behavior and clear directions for compliance shall be established at the beginning of the year.

Positive feedback will be given to the child for following the classroom rules.

The rules of the preschool will be for safety, general health, and social interaction. A comfortable atmosphere and consistent daily schedule will provide each child with a sense of security and confidence. Each child’s individual rights shall be respected at all times.

The following list specifies the strategies for discipline and guidance:

- Clear, consistent, and reasonable limits will be set, and then followed through when enforcing these limits.
- The rules and direction for guidance will be done in a positive way.
- The child’s positive behavior will be emphasized.
- The uncooperative child shall be directed to another activity.
- When a child’s negative behavior shall involve frequent hitting, pushing, biting, or harm to himself/herself or other children, equipment, the child shall be removed from the scene for “time out”. The director reserves the right to send a child home from school at any time.
- Parents/guardians will be informed of inappropriate behavior.

FIELD TRIPS

St. Nicholas Academy Preschool may host field trips on campus or may take the students off campus for field trips. Each parent is responsible for their own child's transportation and supervision to, from and during the field trip. A designated chaperone may take responsibility for a student while on field trip with written approval from the parent. A person who is trained in first aid will attend all field trips and provide a first aid box which meets all requirements. All necessary forms will be taken to all outings for each child. Written permission, which includes child's name, destination, date, and signature of the parent(s) is required for each child to attend the field trip.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All preschool staff members are alert to potential hazards.

The school secretary/and or nurse will be available if needed throughout the school day. The preschool teacher and nurse are all trained in CPR, abuse recognition, first aid, and communicable diseases.

In case of illness, a child will be removed from the classroom. The aide will walk the child to the school office. If parents/guardians are needed, you will be called. Please make prior arrangements to have someone care for your child if he/she becomes ill at school.

In case of an emergency, the parents/guardians will be called and asked to come to the school. If it is a serious accident, 9-1-1 will be called. We will take your child to the nearest hospital. The principal or a staff member will accompany your child and take your signed medical form. You will be called immediately and asked to meet us at the hospital.

Medical Emergency Release Forms for each child are kept on file. These forms have pediatricians' telephone number, emergency telephone numbers; list the child's allergies, ongoing medication, previous hospitalizations, and permission to obtain emergency care.

The teacher and the classroom aide are sensitive to the child's behavior and actions. They will also observe the children for any health problems and refer them to principal and/or school secretary who will notify you.

Please do not send a child to school unless his/her temperature has been normal without medicine for a minimum of 24 hours. Also, do not send a child with a cold, stomachache, vomiting, diarrhea, runny nose or earache.

All children are expected to play outside daily, weather permitting. Please send your child in appropriate winter clothing. If your child is not well enough to participate in the entire program, it is best to keep him/her home until completely recovered.

Students should come to school ready to learn. Please send them to school in clothes that are comfortable. We expect students to wear closed toe or gym shoes.

No prescription medications, vitamins, modified diet, or fluoride supplements will be administered unless instructions to administer are written, signed, and dated by a licensed physician, and are prescribed for your child. Forms are available in the school office.

Staff members responsible for administering prescription medication shall complete the written forms each time it is administered. Forms will be kept on file for one year.

Hand washing before snacks and after restroom break are stressed. The teacher and the aide always wash their hands before handling food.

Please notify us of any changes in your place of employment or residence. We must have a working emergency number at all times.

NECESSARY CLOTHING

We ask that a complete set of clothes, including underwear, socks, pants and shirt, be brought in a gallon size Ziploc bag and labeled with the child's name. We require this for all St. Nicholas Academy Preschool students. This will solve any problem that may arise with spills, wetness, from the weather or accidents, etc. The classroom teacher will inform the parent in writing if the child's clothes were changed and the reason for the change.

SUPERVISION

All areas used by the St. Nicholas Academy Preschool will have full supervision.

No child will ever be left alone or unsupervised.

The child to staff ratio will differ according to age:

3 year olds – 1:12

4/5 year olds – 1:14

There will always be at least two trained staff on duty and on site.

Children will be greeted at the preschool by the teacher or aide and turned over to the parents/guardians at the end of the school day.

All children have practice tornado and fire drills according to school policy and there are evacuation diagrams posted in all areas.

TOILET TRAINING/ACCIDENTS

All students must be toilet trained to enter our preschool.

Due to licensing guidelines, diapers, pull-ups, and training pants are not permitted in the preschool building. Children will be encouraged to visit the bathroom often throughout

the day. If a child has a urinary accident throughout the day, we will assist your child in changing into his/her extra set of clothes. If a child has a bowel movement accident during the day, we will call home immediately. We will require a parent or adult listed on the emergency medical form to come to school to assist the child in changing his/her clothes. The child can then return to class to finish the day. Great caution will be taken in order to be discreet around other children in the classroom. Parents are encouraged to work with their child on independent wiping in the restroom. While teachers can verbally assist them, they cannot actually wipe them.

STATE OF OHIO PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK ADDENDUM 1/6/11 BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT/DISCIPLINE POLICY

- A preschool staff member in charge of a child or a group of children shall be responsible for their discipline.
- The school shall have a written discipline policy describing the school's philosophy of discipline and the specific methods of discipline used at the school. This written policy shall be on file at the school for review. Constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques are to be used at all times, and shall include such measures as redirection, separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation, and praise for appropriate behavior.
- There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or a similar cubicle.
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, and derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.
- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
- Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use.
- Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.
- The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

STATE OF OHIO PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK ADDENDUM 1/6/11 COMMUNICABLE DISEASES POLICY

- The following precautions shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease: The school shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.

- A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated and discharged to his parent or guardian: Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a twenty-four hour period) - Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound. - Difficult or rapid breathing. - Yellowish skin or eyes. - Conjunctivitis. - Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit taken by the auxiliary method when in combination with other signs of illness. - Untreated infected skin patch (es). - Unusually dark urine and/or grey or white stool. - Stiff neck. - Evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation.
- A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease should be cared for in a room or portion of a room not being used in the Preschool program.
- A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be within sight and hearing of an adult at all times. No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised.
- A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease should be made comfortable and provided with a cot. All linens and blankets used by the ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child. After use, the cots shall be disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent, or if soiled with blood, feces, vomit or other body fluids, the cots shall be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent.
- A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease should be observed carefully for worsening condition.
- A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease should be discharged to parent or guardian as soon as practical.
- Each program shall have a written policy concerning the management of communicable disease. The policy shall include, at a minimum, the program's means of training all preschool staff in signs and symptoms of illness and in hand washing and disinfection procedures.
- Procedures for isolating and discharging an ill child and policy for readmitting ill child.
- Procedures for notifying the parent or guardian immediately when a child is exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness or has been exposed to a communicable disease.
- Procedures regarding the care of a mildly ill child. "Mildly ill child" means a child who is experiencing minor common cold symptoms, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in the above listings of this rule or a child who does not feel well enough to participate in activities, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in the listings shown above of this rule.

We are blessed to have your child and family at St. Nicholas Academy, and we look forward to a wonderful year!