

Dear Parents:

The staff of St. Mary Preschool and Extended Care would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child to our school. We would also like to thank you for allowing us to share with you in the growth and development of your child and for your willingness to have your child participate in our program.

Please take a few moments to read through this handbook. You will find our mission, philosophies, as well as the policies of St. Mary Preschool and Extended Care. **At the end of this handbook you will find a statement of agreement that must be signed by you and the St. Mary Preschool director PRIOR to your child's enrollment.**

You and your child are encouraged to visit our facility. You are always welcome to observe any aspect of our program.

We are excited about the coming year and are confident that both you and your child will find your experiences at St. Mary's both enjoyable and beneficial. Please call the school if you any questions or concerns about the policies addressed in this handbook or if there is any other way we can be of assistance.

You may contact us at:

St. Mary School
927 Marion Ave.
Big Rapids, MI 49307
(231) 796-6731

Sincerely,

St. Mary Preschool and Extended Care Staff

This handbook is an integral part of the St. Mary Preschool and Extended Care Program contract as is fully set forth in that contract, and as such, you agree to abide by the policies set out in this handbook.

Revisions typed September 19 TRK

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St. Mary School Mission Statement

Flowing from the mission of our parish, St. Mary School students will learn to know, love, and serve God through spiritual development, academic pursuits, and community service.

St. Mary Preschool and Extended Care Philosophy

It is the mission of St. Mary Preschool and Extended Care to be a pleasant, informal learning experience, which encourages a positive attitude toward learning. We believe that if given the chance, every child has the potential to develop a healthy sense of self-esteem; a feeling that he or she is special; and a foundation that will encourage enjoyable learning experiences now and in the future.

St. Mary Preschool and Extended Care is licensed by the State of Michigan Department of Human Services office of children and adult licensing. Therefore, we continue to meet the requirements set forth by the licensing rules of that agency as well as those requirements of the St. Mary School Board Committee.

St. Mary School and Preschool are fully accredited through the Michigan Association of Non Public Schools.

Program Goals

The goal of our program is to provide a safe and stimulating environment which will help each child grow and develop at his or her own pace.

The programs goals for children are as follows:

- To encourage children to establish friendships and interaction in a Christian environment.
- To provide a safe and secure environment designed to stimulate social, intellectual, spiritual, and physical growth.
- To help children develop effective communication, interpersonal relations, listening, and conflict resolution skills.
- To encourage children to express themselves in appropriate and acceptable ways.
- To offer experiences that enable children to develop self-esteem and confidence to make decisions for themselves.
- To develop in each child an interest in learning.

Admission Policy and Registration

Admission is open to children who are or will be 3 years of age by September 1st of the current school year for the Three year old class. Children entering into our afternoon class must be 5 or turning 5 in the current school year. Children must be toilet trained. Our program is tuition based on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Enrollment will be limited to a total of 16 children to the three-year old Preschool program and 18 children to our four-year old programs.

Preschool:

A non-refundable registration fee of \$50 is required for the preschool program for each child at the time of initial enrollment. This registration fee applies toward tuition cost. Tuition charges are based on full year enrollment depending on your scheduling choice. Scheduling options include:

(Three/Four year olds) 5 days a week

(Young 5 program) 5 days a week

Please contact our office for current tuition rates.

Extended Care: No registration fee is collected. Hours of operation are

7:30am to 5:15 pm

Children who are enrolled in extended care must have on file all paperwork as stated below.

Also, a weekly fee to be determined at the beginning of the school year will need to be paid on a weekly basis. All payments may be made by using SMART tuition

. Please do not leave your payment in the classroom.

Families will be billed according to the contract terms of at least three days per week.

Statements will be sent home periodically but not weekly. You may check the status of your bill at any time.

We do accept payments from the Department of Human Services (formally the Family Independence Agency).

****Failure to make payments at least bi-weekly can result in dismissal from our program.***

Enrollment Eligibility

The following information must be completed PRIOR to the admittance of each child for the preschool and extended care:

- Tuition Contract and Enrollment forms- send in as soon as possible along with the registration fee.
- Registration fee of \$50
- Signed statement of agreement from back of this handbook
- Child Information card (both sides)
- Green Health form with up-to-date copy of immunizations. Must be signed by a licensed physician.

**It is the responsibility of the parent or caregiver to maintain up-to-date information regarding their child. Failure to provide these items may result in your child's enrollment being cancelled.*

Daily Operation

St. Mary Preschool operates from **the first Tuesday after Labor Day to the Friday before Memorial Day** each year. We follow the St. Mary School Yearly Calendar for days off.

Extended Care is open the days of operation for St. Mary School (with the exception of the first days and last) until the last day, with exceptions of some half days (tentative). These are to be determined on a yearly basis with a calendar sent home in September of days closed.

Daily Preschool Schedule

A daily schedule has been developed to begin to prepare the children for Kindergarten. The daily schedule of the preschool classroom is designed to offer children a variety of learning experiences including group and self – initiated activities. A typical preschool day will include the following: (note there are no times listed, although we do these items in order daily, times do vary.)

The Daily schedules are posted in each classroom for parents and children to see at all times.

Staff and volunteer Screening policy

All staff and volunteers of St. Mary Preschool and Latchkey will have background checks performed by the Department of Human Services and Michigan State Police via the

ICHAT system. A volunteer is defined as having more than four consecutive hours a week for two consecutive weeks within the classroom. The volunteer will not be left unsupervised or in charge of the group.

As a requirement for St. Mary Parish, St. Mary Preschool and Latchkey employees will also be fingerprinted through the IDENTIX program as well as have on hand a background check through DHS and Michigan State Police ICHAT programs. Also, any persons wishing to volunteer in our classroom or school must first attend a class through the church called Protecting God's Children.

Any persons wishing to drive on fieldtrips with the program must first complete a background check through the DHS. This report must be on file with the school prior to the field trip in question.

ALL staff will sign a written notice of abuse and neglect, and a statement of non-conviction prior to employment. This will remain on file with the school.

In addition to the afore mentioned, all staff members will have on file a copy of a medical release signed by his or her physician stating the staff member is in good health along with a current copy of a negative TB test.

All staff members will comply with the Department of Human Services licensing rules and complete 12 hours of annual training (child development, curriculum, child discipline, nutrition, working with parents, and licensing rules for child care centers).

All lead caregivers will have current child CPR certification as well.

Curriculum

St. Mary Preschool follows the curriculum set forth by the Diocese of Grand Rapids as well as the staff of St. Mary School. Using several tools such as ZooPhonics, Handwriting without tears, and Everyday mathematics as models, we also follow the Standards for Care in Preschool set up by the Michigan Department of Education.

We use learning centers to encourage decision making, problem solving, and independence. These centers include but are not limited too, reading center, writing center, art, dramatic play, manipulative, table games, and texture table. These activities will support Large and small muscle activity, sensory exploration, social interaction, discovery and exploration, early math and science experiences, and creative experiences through art, music, and literature.

Drop-off / Pick-up Policy

We require all parents and caregivers bring their children into the building and see that the child is under supervision before leaving the premises. This contact with the teacher provides a time for communicating any special needs a child may have for the day.

Children may be brought in the classroom using the schools front or back doors.

A parent or caregiver is required to provide notification, preferably written, if ANYONE other than themselves or a car pool parent will be picking up their child. Please inform this person that we will ask to see some form of identification before releasing the child to their care. This person will be required to sign the child out of the building.

NO CHILD WILL BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE WITH ANYONE without permission of the parents. The school will contact the parents/caregivers prior to release if someone other than stated adult is picking up child without permission.

Transportation

Transportation to and from the center is to be provided by the parents or primary caregiver. Car pools may be formed.

Snacks and Food

Preschools snacks are to be provided daily by the parents or guardians. A calendar will be sent home monthly with each parents responsible day. Snacks need to be nutritious. Occasional birthday treats and holiday treats are of course allowed.

Children will need to have a lunch provided from home. St. Mary School does participate in the Big Rapids public school lunch program. Lunches may be purchased daily through this program for a fee to be determined at the start of the school year. If a child forgets a lunch from home, one will be provided by the school, the parent will be charged the appropriate lunch fee. A calendar will be sent home monthly with the daily lunches available. Along with this, a menu will be posted within each classroom of the daily lunches.

Afternoon snack will be provided by the school and will adhere to a nutritious standard. A menu of snacks will be posted in the extended care classroom.

If your child is allergic to any specific food item, we will need to know prior to your child beginning our program to notify the other parents and guardians.

Rest and Relaxation

Rest time is a very important part of the child's daily schedule. Rest time is scheduled from 12:20 to 2:30 pm daily. Children are not required to sleep, but are asked to remain quietly on their mats during rest time. We encourage you to provide a small blanket and pillow for your child to help them relax. They also may bring in a "snuggly" from home to help them feel more secure. Please be sure to label all belongings with the child's name. Children who do not sleep will be encouraged to read books quietly on their mats while the other's sleep.

All rest items must be taken home weekly for laundering.

Late Pick-up Policy

If you know you will be detained please inform the school immediately so we know when the child will be picked up.

Anytime a child is left beyond our hours of operation he or she is considered late. The first time this occurs a verbal warning will be issued with a fee of \$5.00 per 5-minute period being charged to your account. The second time during the same semester, a written warning will be issued as well as the fee charged. Regretfully, the third occurrence in the same semester will result in the immediate dismissal from St. Mary Extended Care.

***** Please Note:** If a child has not been picked up from the center 15 minutes after the contracted time, the emergency contact person listed on the child's information card will be notified. If the emergency contact person cannot be reached after 20 minutes, the staff at St. Mary will notify the Department of Public Safety in Big Rapids. If the Department of Public Safety is unable to contact the parent or emergency contact person, Child Protective Services will be contacted.

Parent Custody

In cases of separation or divorce - until we have legal documentation on file- we are obligated by law to release the child to a parent or to other individuals listed on the Child Information Card. Please inform the Director if there are parental restrictions.

Protective Services Policy

St. Mary staff is required by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse and or neglect in accordance with Public Act 238 of 1975, Family Independent Agency. It is our policy to adhere to this policy. If a parent/guardian of the child is suspected of abuse, the director will follow the guidance of the child protective agency regarding the notification of the parent/guardian. A staff member who is accused of suspected child abuse will be suspended immediately pending the outcome of the case. The parent/guardian of suspected abused children will be notified. No accusation or affirmation of guilt will be made until the investigation is complete. Staff found guilty will be dismissed immediately.

Discipline

The staff of St. Mary Preschool and Extended Care will use positive methods of discipline and guidance, which will encourage each child to develop self-control, self-esteem, and self-direction. We believe that when children are actively involved in developmentally appropriate

learning activities, misbehavior is least likely to occur. Our goal is to assist children in conflict resolution strategies to help strengthen their problem solving skills.

We realize that conflicts will occur with young children. We use these circumstances to help children learn conflict resolution strategies and problem solving skills. Our staff will model positive techniques by teaching children the importance of listening to others, identifying the problem at hand, seeking solutions, and agreeing on solutions. We feel it is important for adults to be facilitators in the problem solving effort rather than dictate what the solution should be.

Occasionally, children's behaviors go beyond normal limits. When this occurs the teaching staff will explain the negative effects of the child's behavior and attempt immediate re-direction. If this is not successful then separating the child from the situation will become necessary. If potentially harmful behaviors persist, a conference with the parents or caregiver, the director/teacher, and the principal will be scheduled to coordinate a plan of action. Regretfully, if attempts to eliminate harmful behaviors are not successful, the center staff may request the child be removed from the center to ensure the health and safety of all children enrolled. Hitting, biting, embarrassing, or humiliating the children will not be used by any staff member of St. Mary School. The use of "time outs" at the preschool is discouraged but may be necessary if redirection is not working.

Dismissal from Care

St. Mary Preschool and Extended Care staff reserves the right to request the dismissal from the program if the child's needs or those of the other children are being compromised.

Regretfully, enrollment eligibility will be terminated for non-payment of tuition or non-compliance of the Department of Human Services or Health Department regulations.

St. Mary Preschool and Extended Care may request dismissal from our program for the following reasons:

- Non-Cooperation of parent or child that jeopardizes the health and or safety of another child.
- Delinquency of payment of fees.
- Inability of the child or parent to adjust to the center's program
- Abuse of the opening or closing times
- Failure to pick up a sick child within the 30 minute allotted time frame.
- Failure to submit all required forms.

Withdrawal Procedures

A notice of one week would be appreciated if your child is to be withdrawn from our program. This will enable a child who is on the waiting list to fill the vacancy.

To withdraw a child from the St. Mary Preschool or Extended Care program, the parent or guardian must notify the director. Please check with the office at the time of withdrawal to determine if any billing adjustments need to be made.

Child Illness/ Injury Policy (Health Care Plan)

Proper care at the beginning of an illness can often shorten its duration.

In the event that your child becomes ill at home or while at the center it is necessary to keep your child out of the center for a complete **24 hours AFTER** all symptoms or signs of illness have passed. This policy includes, but is not limited to, fever, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, nasal congestion, and eye discharge. If your child is prescribed an anti-biotic from his or her physician, they should be kept at home for a full 24 hours from the first dose.

Children who are ill are not to be brought to the center. The following are examples of children who are ill:

- A temperature of 100 degrees F. or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea has occurred more than once in the past 24 hours
- A contagious disease such as chicken pox, strep throat or pink eye
- An unidentified rash
- Has not been on a prescribed medication for at least 24 hours or continues to have symptoms of illness
- Has a constant, thick, colored nasal discharge

If a child should become ill while at the center, parents will be contacted immediately. The child will be taken to the school office and supervised by our school secretary or Principal until such time as the child can be picked up. If the child is not picked up within thirty minutes, the emergency contact person on the child's enrollment form will be called.

Children may return to the center when they are symptom free for 24hrs and have been appropriately treated or have been given medical approval to return to child care.

The school will report all communicable diseases, when required, to the local health department and to parents of all enrolled children. Parents of all enrolled children will be notified when their child has been exposed to an illness other than a communicable disease.

Superficial injuries will be washed with soap and water and covered with a bandage or treated with ice. Parents will be told about the minor injury when the child is picked up at the center or delivered to the parent or other authorized person.

The staff of St. Mary Preschool has received training in first aid. We will follow standard emergency medical procedures for treating injuries. A head injury will be treated as a serious

injury, and parents will be notified as soon as possible. Members of our staff have a current certification in infant and child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

If there is a need for emergency medical treatment, 911 will be called and the child will be taken to Mecosta County Medical Center. Should an ambulance be needed, the school will call for one. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible after contacting 911. A member of St. Mary Preschool will accompany the child to the emergency room in the ambulance.

In addition:

- all staff of St. Mary Preschool will wash hands when necessary... such as after using the bathroom, helping a child use the bathroom, nose wiping, sneezing ,etc..
- any handling of bodily fluids will require the staff to use gloves located in the classroom and in the school office. The schools maintenance supervisor will be contacted and asked to help with any of these messes.
- toys in the preschool classrooms will be sanitized on a minimum of once weekly using bleach solution.
- tables within the classroom will be washed using soapy water, plain water, and bleach water prior to snack and after as well.

St. Mary Preschool/Latchkey/Extended Care Policy Bathroom Accidents

If a child has an accident, the staff of St. Mary's will assist the child in changing into extra clothing, bagging up the extra clothes, and notifying the parent upon arrival. The staff member will wear appropriate gloves, clean the child using paper towel and water, and then bag up the clothing. If the accident requires an extended effort of cleaning of the child, the staff member will notify the parent. The parent may be asked to come and assist, depending on the severity of the incident. **ALL BATHROOM ACCIDENTS WILL BE REPORTED TO THE PARENT.** This will happen by phone or when the parent picks up the child. If you have special instructions with regards to your child, they must be submitted in writing to the St. Mary Preschool/Latchkey Director.

Medication

All medication administered, accidents or injuries occurring during the time the child is in our care, marked changes in behavior or appearance and any observation of injuries to a child's body received outside of our care will be documented. Parents will be informed immediately if the occurrence is at school. As a licensed child care provider, we are required to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the local authorities.

St. Mary Preschool will administer medications via the school office. Prescriptive and non-prescriptive medication will only be given to children if parents have completed the authorization form provided. All medicine must be in its original container bearing the label with child's name, dosage and administration directions. Administrator will not exceed the age-related dosage on the label of any medication without a written doctor's authorization. Blanket authorizations, such as dispensing Tylenol at my discretion, are not allowed.

Prior to applying sunscreen or insect repellent to a child, administrator will obtain a written authorization from the child's parent. The authorization shall include the brand and the ingredient strength.

Emergency Procedures

Staff and children of St. Mary Preschool and Extended care participate in monthly fire, and storm drills. These procedures are posted on the classroom walls. We also participate in "lock down" safety drills.

On rare occasions weather or other external conditions will prompt a decisions to close the school. In these situations, an announcement will be made on local radio and television. If the school is closed due to severe weather, extended care will also be closed.

Parent Participation and Parent Letters

Parent participation is an important component to the success of our program. Children benefit from having family members involved in their daily activities. This is a wonderful way to demonstrate to children the value of a home- school partnership. Parents are welcome at anytime to assist with class projects, field trips, special events, or just spending time in the classroom. * *Any parent or volunteer spending more than four hours per week for two or more consecutive weeks, or any time alone with the children without direct supervision, must be willing to be checked through the central clearance of the Family Independence Agency. This will require the volunteer to submit a driver's license and social security card to the FIA prior to returning to the classroom.*

All personnel, paid or volunteer, who have any contact with St. Mary School students must have back ground checks performed. This is done through St. Mary Church office.

The teacher will provide parents with newsletters and calendars on classroom activities. These will also be posted in the classroom.

An opportunity for parent / teacher conferences will be provided for the parent or guardian. A request for such a conference can be made by the parent at any time.

Field Trips

Children must have a signed permission slip from their parents to participate in any field trip. Parents usually provide all transportation on such field trips. Volunteer drivers must provide a valid Driver's License and proof of insurance. Child to adult ratios will be limited to no more

than 5 children per vehicle. * *Any parent or volunteer spending any time alone with the children without direct supervision must be willing to be checked through the central clearance of the Family Independence Agency. This must be done prior to the parent or volunteer driving on any field trips as well.*

Out Door Play

Our schedule includes outdoor activities each day, weather permitting. Our policy is if the temperature is 15 degrees F. or above, and not more than 90 degrees F, all children will be provided with outdoor activities each day. Parents are responsible for helping their child dress appropriately; Extra clothing may be labeled and kept at the center.

As of June of 2012, a plan is set in motion for the purchase of new playground equipment for use by the preschool and extended care students. This equipment will meet the requirements set forth by the licensing rules and will be inspected by the Parish insurance company as well as a Licensed Playground Inspector.

Dress Code

Children of St. Mary Preschool and Extended Care are not required to wear school uniforms or adhere to school dress codes. However, comfortable play clothes are a necessity. For SAFETY reasons, **children may NOT wear open toed shoes (sandals or flip flops) to school.**

We do tend to get messy and children will rarely come home clean super clean.

Other Helpful Notes

We discourage the children to bring toys from home with the exception of given “Show and Tell” days. Toys have a tendency to get lost or broken.

Because we have woodchips on our playground, **please do not allow your child to wear open toed shoes to school...this is a safety issue.**

ITEMS NEEDED FOR EACH CHILD We ask that you provide your child with the following items to make their stay here comfortable. **All items must be labeled with your child’s name.** The monthly newsletters may ask for some particular objects to be brought in such as books to share, or paper towel holders, or scrap paper and so forth.

- complete set of change of clothes (note your child’s growth and weather) – to be kept in backpacks.
- a backpack to be brought in daily (this may come home empty most days)
- appropriate outdoor clothing (hats, mittens, snow pants and boots when necessary)

How Parents Can Help Prepare Their Children for School **

Help your child discover books by:

- ◇ Reading to him/her.
- ◇ Asking questions about the stories.
- ◇ Talking about the pictures.

Take walks with your child in the community or neighborhood:

- ◇ Talk about what you see.
- ◇ Take him/her to see the public library, the neighborhood grocery store, the zoo.

Talk to your child:

- ◇ Let your child tell you what he/she is doing at school.
- ◇ Encourage him/her to talk about friends, interests and things he/she is doing.

Help your child develop independence:

- ◇ Give him/her small household jobs to do.
- ◇ Permit him/her to make small purchases at the grocery store.
- ◇ Allow your child to dress himself/herself, starting with their coat and shoes.

Help your child understand the meaning of good behavior:

- ◇ Teach him/her how to talk to adults.
- ◇ Show him/her how to act in public places.
- ◇ Let him/her know how you expect him/her to behave in school.

Give your child recognition for what he/she does:

- ◇ Recognize a job well done.
- ◇ Never make fun of his/her efforts.
- ◇ Build on his/her strengths.

Help your child by doing “with” him/her, not “for” him/her:

- ◇ Let him/her complete a task at his/her own rate.
- ◇ Encourage him/her to try new things.
- ◇ Teach him/her to complete tasks that he/she starts.

Accept him/her for what he/she is:

- ◇ Don't criticize his/her shortcomings and failures.
- ◇ Don't re-do what your child does.

◇ BE PROUD OF YOUR CHILD!

***Adapted from: E. Thurman & N. Neisen, Cincinnati Public*

Department of Human Services
Office of Children and Adult Licensing

As required by Administrative code R400.5105b the following information is provided for all parents enrolled at St. Mary Preschool, Extended Care, and Latchkey. **Please sign the attached statement (statement of understanding) as verification that you were provide with this information upon your child's enrollment.**

R 400.5102 Licensee

Rule 102.

(2) A licensee shall have the following administrative responsibilities regarding staff:

- Develop and implement a written screening policy for all staff and volunteers, including parents, having contact with other children.

R400.5106 Program

Rule 106.

(1) A center shall provide a program of daily activities and relationships that offers opportunity for the developmental growth of each child in all of the following areas:

- Physical development, including large and small muscle.
- Social development, including communication skills.
- Emotional development, including positive self-concept
- Intellectual development

(2) A center shall permit parents to visit the program for the purpose of observing their children at all times.

(3) A center operating with children in attendance for 5 or more continuous hours per day shall provide for daily outdoor play, unless prevented by inclement weather conditions.

(4) A center shall provide each child under school age in attendance for 5 or more continuous ours a day with an opportunity to rest.

(5) A center shall provide children less than 3 years of age with an opportunity to rest regardless of the number of hours in care.

(6) A center shall permit children under 12 months of age to eat and sleep on demand.

[Rule 400.5205 and R 400.5209 applies only to children from birth to 2 ½ years of age as required in Part 2 of these rules.] These do not apply to our center:

Parent Notification of the Licensing Notebook: childcare organizations Act, 1973 Public Act 116 Michigan Department of Human Services

All child care centers must maintain a licensing notebook which includes all licensing inspections reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans. The notebook must include all reports issued and CAPS developed on and after May 27, 2010 until the license is closed.

- *St. Mary Preschool and extended care maintains a licensing notebook of all inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans.*
- *The notebook will be available to parents for review during regular business hours.*
- *Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from at least the past two years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult licensing website at www.michigan.gov/michildcare.*

Statement of Understanding

As of _____, St. Mary Preschool, Extended Care, and Latchkey, agrees to provide child care services for the following named child(ren):

(Printed name of Child)

(date of birth)

(Printed name of Child)

(date of birth)

Upon signing this agreement I, as the parent or legal guardian of the afore noted child(ren), have read, understand, and agree to abide by all of the provisions contained in this handbook.

Parent or Legal Guardian:

St. Mary Preschool, Extended
Care, and Latchkey

(Signature)

(Signature)

(Printed Name)

(Printed Name)

(Relationship to child)

(Title)

(date)

(date)

