

ST. ELIZABETH PRE-SCHOOL PARENT-STUDENT HANDBOOK 2011 – 2012

**This handbook outlines the philosophy, policies and guidelines used in operating our
Preschool Program serving children ages three to five years.**



The mission of the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Kansas City - St. Joseph, MO is to sustain an authentic Catholic environment where our faith is infused throughout educational experiences that promote academic excellence.

School Mission Statement

St. Elizabeth provides a Christ-centered, child-focused learning environment where Catholic ideals and a tradition of excellence are instilled.

Philosophy

St. Elizabeth school strives to provide students with a Catholic, child-centered, positive learning environment as an extension of the ministry to the community of St. Elizabeth parish. Our educational ministry is founded in the teachings of the Catholic Church, instilling personal faith, practicing social justice, and striving for academic excellence in accordance with Diocesan standards. Our faith based community welcomes students and families from diverse backgrounds and all religious denominations.

Students will have opportunities to grow in knowledge of the Catholic Faith focusing on the heritage and sacred traditions, along with Biblical formation and sacramental studies as outlined in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Students will have opportunities to grow and extend their faith lives by participating and leading service efforts through various parish and community outreach efforts, liturgical experience, and the daily emphasis on practicing the Christskills.

Students will be provided learning opportunities that facilitate the academic, social, and physical development of each child. Instructional methods and approaches will vary to provide ample opportunities for expression, creativity and development of a wide array of talents and abilities. Each student is valued for their unique capabilities.

Students will be provided a safe, structured environment that strives to meet their emotional, social, and physical needs through the emphasis of routines, procedures, consistent expectations, logical consequences, and developmentally appropriate practices.

Students will have the support of faculty, staff, and families; who in partnership will work to ensure opportunities for growth, achievement, and success so that they are able to identify their own capabilities and vocational possibilities.

Diocese of Kansas City/St. Joseph
Parent-Teacher Covenant

Because our school strives to be a faith and learning community, parent cooperation and good parent-teacher relations are essential. As members of a faith community, our first instinct is to assume that all of us, teachers, administrators, parents, guardians and other care-givers, have the child's best interest at heart.

While our school is excellent in many ways, no one within our community is perfect, and problems and misunderstandings will occur. When a problem or disagreement arises, we will make every effort to contact you to clarify the situation. Parents, guardians and family members who experience problems, or are confused with some matter regarding your child's educational experience, are asked to show similar respect by: a) striving first to learn the reasons behind a policy; b) inquiring about the teacher's or school's understanding or decision before judging or forming an opinion. Those who are not satisfied with what they have learned are asked to approach the administration to investigate the matter. In this way, positive resolutions can be reached.

Parents and guardians are asked to follow these guidelines for expressing concern over a school matter:

- ❖ If the problem involves routine procedures such as homework, class assignments, classroom or playground behavior, or student-to-student problems, then the parent is asked to contact the teacher first. The best way to do this is usually through a phone call to the school. Each teacher has their own extension, as well as voice mail and e-mail. For a variety of reasons, parents should not attempt to bring up a difficult or serious matter in front of other students while the teacher is on duty during the regular school day.
- ❖ If the problem is more serious, the parent or guardian should inform the principal in writing or with a phone call. Only signed notes or callers who identify themselves will be taken seriously. Due to school responsibilities, the principal may not be available immediately; therefore, patience in setting appointments or in expecting a return phone call is requested. Since concern for your child is uppermost in all our minds, we will make every effort to accommodate you and your concerns. We simply ask that you understand that many children and other parents may also be requiring our immediate attention at the time.
- ❖ All staff members of our school promise prompt attention to problems, privacy in discussing matters, professional courtesy and respect when problems are presented, and a sincere effort to resolve problems in a Christian manner. That is, we promise to approach problems and misunderstandings in a manner that expresses genuine concern for the welfare of your child spiritually, psychologically, academically, and physically, and also the welfare of his or her fellow students.

With this in mind, parents and guardians are expected to show the same concern and respect for the staff of our school, as well as the other children and families of our community. The following behaviors, therefore, are unacceptable within our community:

- 1) We will not tolerate assaults or harassment of a staff member, student, parent, guardian or family member.
- 2) We will not tolerate intimidating or verbally abusing any member of the community – in person or in writing.

Commission of any of the above acts on the part of a staff member will lead to appropriate disciplinary actions. Likewise, misconduct on the part of a parent, guardian or family member may lead to a warning or one of the following actions:

- 1) Limiting or refusing permission to enter or use school grounds or facilities;
- 2) Asking that someone other than the person exhibiting poor behavior represent the child's interest on school matters;
- 3) Refusing to allow the child to re-register, and, in extreme cases, initiating procedures to ask the family to withdraw the child from the school.

We rely on the good faith and the sincere efforts of everyone in the school community to keep the spirit of the covenant so that we may become the genuine faith community we strive to be.

Preschool Goals

Our curriculum identifies goals in all areas of development:

- **Social:** to help children feel comfortable in school, trust their new environment, make friends and feel they are a part of the group. We want to provide positive experiences in a classroom setting for the development of self-esteem and social competence. We provide opportunities for learning in a group, taking turns, sharing classroom materials and following directions.
- **Emotional:** to help children experience pride and self-confidence, to develop independence and self-control, to have a positive attitude toward life and to make better connections with others. We want to expand their understanding of themselves and the world around them.
- **Cognitive:** to help children become confident learners and to acquire foundational skills that lead to the ability to solve problems, ask questions and use words to describe their ideas, observations and feelings.
- **Physical:** to help children increase their large and small muscle skills and feel confident about what their bodies can do. We want to encourage appropriate independence in children through the use of routine tasks and self-help skills.

School Hours

8:00 a.m. – 3:20 p.m.

School Closing, Late Start and Early Dismissal

We are closed for the following days:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving (12:00 Dismissal on Wednesday before-No School Friday after)
- Feast of the Immaculate Conception (December 8)
- Christmas (usually two week break)
- New Years (part of Christmas break)
- Martin Luther King Day
- President's Day
- Holy Thursday (half day)
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Spring Break (March 12 - 16)
- In-service staff days (noted on school calendar)

School Closings

Closing of school due to bad weather or other severe emergencies will be announced by the School Reach telephone notification system and over local radio stations and major local TV stations. Announcements will state the "Southwest POD Schools - Diocese of Kansas City/St. Joseph will be closed". Parents may also call the school and get the information. Parents/guardians may, at their discretion, choose to remove their children from school early when they believe weather or streets are hazardous. In these cases, students must be dismissed through the school office. In the event of school closing due to the weather, all extracurricular activities scheduled for the afternoon and evening will be cancelled also. This includes athletics, band, scouts, etc.

Before and After Care

St. Elizabeth offers before school care from 7:15 to 7:45 a.m. every day that school is in session. After school care is available every day until 5:45 p.m., including early dismissal days, **except when preceding a holiday** (i.e. Holy Thursday). After school care is not available on these days. Enrollment may be full or part-time with fees adjusted accordingly. Children must be enrolled prior to using the services of these programs.

Enrollment Policy

Preschool students must be three years of age by December 31 and fully potty trained for admission to the Early Childhood Center (ECC). Pre-kindergarten children must be four years old by August 1st.

Families of current ECC students will have first priority during enrollment provided their registration materials are returned by the specified deadline. After the deadline, registration will be opened to all St. Elizabeth families and others who have requested enrollment information.

Enrollment is open to children ages 3 to 5, regardless of race, color or creed.

Consideration is given to:

- Families who are active members of our parish, which means:

- a. Registered and on file in the parish office
- b. Attend Mass regularly at St. Elizabeth
- c. Pledged and met pledge commitment to the parish
- Families currently sending children to our school
- Families from other parishes and the surrounding community

Enrollment takes place in January for the upcoming school year. A completed registration form and non-refundable deposit are required each year. Confirmation letters are sent out in mid-February.

Toileting

All children attending our preschool are expected to be potty-trained and able to use the bathroom independently. We have no facilities for changing diapers or pull-ups. We have scheduled bathroom times and children are allowed to use the bathroom anytime, always under supervision.

Fees and Payment Schedule

Fees are the major source of income for our program. Each family must understand the importance of fiscal responsibility and how this can directly affect the quality of care and education for the children. It is important for families to pay on time so that we can meet our expenses.

- **Monthly Tuition:** Billed in nine equal payments, due by the 15th of each month, September through May. A late fee will be assessed if tuition is not paid by the 20th of each month.
- If payment is not received by the last day of the month, the student may not return to class until payment is made unless prior arrangements have been made through the school office.

Full day (8:00 a.m. - 3:20 p.m.)

2 days per week = \$340

3 days per week = \$407

5 days per week = \$530

Additional days

We understand there may be times when parents need their child to attend additional time at school. If possible, we will try to accommodate these needs. Rates for additional time at school are as follows:

\$32 single full day (8:00 a.m. – 3:20 p.m.)

Annual Enrollment Fee

Parishioners - \$195 non-refundable, due at time of registration.

Non-parishioners - \$225 non-refundable, due at time of registration.

Returned Check Fee

We will notify you immediately if we have a returned check. You will be assessed whatever bank fees are incurred.

Fundraisers

Preschool families have the option to participate in all-school fundraisers throughout the year. Participating in these sales helps to build community and raise funds for many school programs and your child's future.

Arrival and Pick-Up

Parents taking their children to their classrooms are asked to be certain the teacher knows he/she has arrived. Children dropped off in the carpool line will be taken to their classrooms by the school staff or safety patrol. When picking up your child, please be certain the teacher acknowledges your arrival and the release of your child to you.

Children will only be released to parents and/or guardians unless written permission is on file. This form shall state the person's name, their relationship to the child, their phone number and the parent's signature. Parents should advise their teacher in writing if a person not listed on the written permission form will be picking up your child. Staff members will ask for photo identification of anyone with whom they are not already acquainted.

- **Divorce and Separation:** In the event of divorce or separation, we require a copy of the custodial arrangements and order of protection (if one exists) for our files. If the non-custodial parent attempts to pick up the child, without the consent or knowledge of the custodial parent, we will call the police and the custodial parent immediately.
- **Communication:** Please keep the school informed of any good news, problems or any situation your child(ren) may be experiencing which may affect school performance or behavior. Any information you share will be kept confidential.

Traffic Safety Procedures

ECC Procedures (Grades Preschool through Kindergarten)

Morning Drop-Off – Doors open at 7:50am

- Enter carpool line on Walnut Street heading south.
- Proceed to school lot entrance on Walnut Street and pull up carefully.
- Preschool parents should stop outside of the ECC east door to allow students to exit the car.
- Pre-K and Kindergarten parents should proceed to the front of the ECC to allow students to exit the car.
- Teachers and Jr. High safety patrol students will aid the children in getting out of the cars and into the building.
- Exit out onto 75th Street **RIGHT TURN ONLY.**
- Parking is permitted in the designated spots along the fence line facing 75th street.

Afternoon Pick-Up – Dismissal begins at 3:20pm

- Students are picked up in the same manner they were dropped off.
- Teachers will be on duty in the afternoon to aid the students in getting into cars.
- Do not go into the classroom(s) to pick up your student(s). This could prevent the teachers from getting to their carpool responsibilities on time.

*** Students attending class in the Parish Ministry Center (PMC) should be dropped off at the west door of the PMC. They will be dismissed from the ECC.**

Curriculum

The usual daily curriculum, which is posted in each classroom, provides a developmentally appropriate program, which includes but is not limited to:

- **Free Choice or Center Time:** Children may choose activities from a variety of classroom centers, which may include blocks, house, puzzles, books, music, computer, dress-up and art. Teachers provide experiences with a variety of manipulatives that allow the children to make decisions, explore, act and do. The activities develop fine motor skills to match the different developmental levels of the children. Free choice also provides the children with daily opportunities to remain in touch with a wide range of feelings, both positive and negative and learn to recognize and express them in an acceptable way. During this time, teachers take the opportunity to spend relaxed morning time with each child. This gives the teacher information as to the mood of the child for that day.
- **Circle Time:** Teacher-directed readiness skills such as math, science and literature are incorporated in a discussion of the calendar, weather, jobs for the day and story time. The teacher provides any special information the children need to further their understanding of the theme.
- **Student Work Time:** These activities, which include art, science, language arts, math, religion and social studies, provide children with opportunities to learn new concepts while gaining experience with work techniques and ways of thinking. Art projects enhance and reinforce these concepts being introduced at school. Teachers understand that the process is more important than the end product. While the children are at work, teachers can move around the room and spend individual time working with each child on developmentally appropriate projects.
- **Group Time:** This provides large group social encounters, which allow children to gain confidence in their social skills. This includes sharing time such as show-n-tell where children learn to work and cooperate with their peers when talking and listening.
- **Lunchtime and Snacks:** This is an opportunity to relax and socialize with other children. It is also an opportunity for children to learn about nutrition, food safety, cleanliness and manners.
- **Recess or Large Muscle Activity:** Vigorous play in the outdoor play area or one of our larger open areas indoors offers children the opportunity for physical growth and coordination. The children can develop new skills while being encouraged to run, jump, climb, skip, hop, swing, play games, etc.
- **Rest Time:** Children in the preschool program are required to take a rest every day. Each child will need to bring a tri-fold mat, small pillow and blanket from home.

Clothing and Supplies

Coat hooks and cubbies for each child are located in the classrooms. Each child must have a complete change of clothes: underwear, socks, a shirt and pants or shorts appropriate for the season. We also ask that you bring a jacket or sweater for use in case the weather unexpectedly changes. **Please mark all items with your child's name in permanent marker.**

- **Seasonal Dressing:** We take children outside daily. During the winter months children should wear mittens, hats and warm, sturdy shoes. Please dress your

- child appropriately for active play and the weather. Fresh air is important, even if it is only for a short period of time.
- **Dressing Safely:** Children should wear soft-soled, flexible shoes that cover the whole foot. Tennis shoes are best. Dress shoes, boots and flip flops are not safe for running and climbing. Shoelaces must be a safe length. If sandals or jellies are worn, the child must have a pair of tennis shoes to change into for outside play.

Bedding

Children must bring a blanket and small pillow to be used during rest time. These will be sent home periodically for laundering.

School Supplies: School supply lists are available at the Preschool Open House in August; however, parents have the option to purchase Supply Kits through the CPTA in early spring. Order forms are available to each family at that time.

2011-2012 St. Elizabeth School Supply List Preschool

Qty Description

- 1 8 Color Washable Watercolors
- 2 Baby Wipes 80 Count
- 2 Crayola Classic Thick Markers 10 Count
- 1 Kleenex Tissue 120 Count
- 3 Paper towel roll
- 1 Disinfecting Wipes 35 Count
- 1 Composition Book (black and white)

Items Not Included in Kit

- 1 Disinfecting Spray
- 1 22 oz. All Purpose Cleaner
- 1 School bag or backpack (easy to open and BIG)
- 1 Lunchbox
- 1 Small pillow/blanket

2011-2012 St. Elizabeth School Supply List Pre-Kindergarten

Qty Description

- 1 Blunt 5" Fiskar Scissors
- 3 Elmer's School Glue-4 oz.
- 4 Color Crayola Washable Markers (8, 10, or 12 pack)
- 2 120 Count Kleenex Tissue
- 2 Bounty Paper Towel Roll
- 4 Solid Color Pocket Only Folder
- 1 24 Count Crayola Crayons
- 3 Elmer's Glue Stick-Large
- 2 Disinfectant Wipes
- 1 Package Dry Erase-Low Odor Markers
- 3 Watercolor Paint (Crayola Brand)

Items Not Included in Kit

- 1 School bag or backpack (easy to open and BIG)
- 1 Lunchbox
- 1 Small pillow/blanket
- 1 Quad-Fold Vinyl Resting Mat

Lunches and Nutrition

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten students must bring a sack lunch to school. **Please do not send items that require heating or preparation.**

Students may purchase chocolate or white milk.

We believe good nutrition is essential for children. Lunch should consist of one serving of protein, two servings of vegetables and/or fruit and one serving of bread or grains. A small dessert may also be included. Our goal is for mealtime to be a pleasant and enjoyable social time for the children. We never force children to eat, we will only offer and encourage. Teachers are present at all meals. Withdrawal of food is never used as a disciplinary action. If a child forgets their lunch, a parent will be called.

Please notify us in writing of any food allergies for your child.

Health Policies

- **Medical Health Form:** Each child enrolled must have a health form stating that they are a well child and are current on all immunizations. Immunizations are recorded and submitted to the health department annually.
- **Medicines:** Our school is not obligated to supply, dispense or administer medication to children. Parents must make arrangements to dispense medications to their own children. Please notify staff if assistance is required.
- **Staff:** All staff members are required to have a medical exam upon employment and TB tests every year. Staff is expected to follow the same illness policy as the children.
- **Illness Policies:** The health of our children and staff is a primary concern. Illness affects our families and staff physically, mentally and financially. Our illness policy is based on input from the Kansas City Missouri Health Department and is strictly enforced.

Plan Ahead for Illness: Group care is an ideal place for the spread of infection. Young children are ill several times a year. All families must plan ahead for illness at home or school. We feel it is best to have at least two family members "on call" to assist in these situations.

If your child is ill please keep them home from school. Please call and tell us what is wrong so we can watch the other children for similar symptoms. Some illnesses need to be reported to the Health Department.

Exclusion from School for Illness:

A child who develops any of the following symptoms will be sent home. Your child must be picked up within an hour of notification.

- Fever of 100 degrees orally, 99 degrees auxiliary

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Impetigo or ringworm
- Conjunctivitis (Pink-eye)
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Head or body lice
- Chicken Pox
- Severe and frequent coughing
- Yellow or green discharge
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Difficult and rapid breathing
- Headache or stiff neck
- Unknown rash or bumps
- Infected crusty skin patch

Readmission: The standard rule is 24 hours out. Children must be able to follow the full daily routine to be back in school. If you bring them back and symptoms reappear, they will be sent home again.

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| • Fever and vomiting | 24 hours fever/vomiting free |
| • Diarrhea | 24 hours digesting solids |
| • Impetigo or ringworm | 24 hours on antibiotic |
| • Conjunctivitis | 24 hours on antibiotic |
| • Sore or Strep Throat | 24 hours on antibiotic |
| • Head or body lice | Completely nit free |
| • Chicken Pox | Completely scabbed over |
| • Severe and frequent coughing | Signed note from physician |
| • Yellowish skin or eyes | Signed note from physician |
| • Difficult and rapid breathing | Signed note from physician |
| • Unknown rash or bumps | Signed note from physician |
| • Infected crusty skin patch | Signed note from physician |

Safety Policies

- **Accidents and Emergencies:**

Young children routinely suffer minor scrapes, bumps and bruises while playing. If your child has a minor accident or injury, we will take the following steps:

- Comfort and calm the child
- If there is bleeding, we put on gloves and stop the bleeding; wash the cut or scrape with soap and water.
- Apply ice and/or bandage if necessary.
- Complete an accident report in duplicate. One copy for you and one for our records.

If your child has an injury (non-life threatening) which involves a deep cut or abrasion, a bump on the head, a possible sprain, we call parents immediately. You will make the decision on what type of emergency treatment with your physician.

If your child has an allergic reaction or ingests a poisonous substance we will call Poison Control immediately. We will follow their recommendations and then call the parents.

- **First Aid:**
Universal precaution will be used when treating any accident or illness that involves body fluids, (blood, vomit, urine or bowel movements). Gloves and appropriate sanitizing and clean up materials are on site. Each teacher has a small first aid kit, while a larger kit is located on the main floor of the ECC building.
- **Serious Illness or Accident:**
In case of serious emergency, we will call 911 and administer first aid. The parents will be called immediately (or the emergency contact, if we are unable to reach a parent). A staff person will accompany the ambulance to the hospital with the signed statement giving permission for emergency treatment. The staff member will remain with the child until the parents arrive.
- **Fire Inspection:**
Our school is inspected annually by the KCMO Fire Marshall's Office.
- **Safety Drills:**
Fire, tornado and lock down drills will be held regularly. Safety plans are posted in each classroom and practiced regularly.
- **Field Trip Safety:**
We only select safe and age-appropriate field trips. Permission slips are required for each field trip. We provide adequate supervision on each trip, as parents help chaperone these events. The first aid kit and emergency forms are taken on each trip. Each child will wear a nametag with the school name, address and phone number. Children are instructed in bus and stranger safety before each trip. You may keep your child home if you do not want them to attend field trips.
- **Safe Environment:**
The following provisions are followed to ensure a safe environment for our children:
 - Cleaning and chemical supplies are located in locked cabinets
 - Smoke-free environment
 - Furnace and storage areas are kept locked
 - Building is exterminated monthly
 - At least one staff member on site at all times is trained in child CPR and First Aid

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is an important part of our program. Your involvement is essential for your child and the preschool's success. Here are a few ways you can help:

- Integrated Thematic Instruction volunteer
- Donations
- Classroom involvement
- Assist with school parties
- Assist on field trips
- Share special talents or professional services with children

Parent Enrichment

St. Elizabeth School offers a parenting series called Love and Logic. This program is provided to help parents enhance their parenting skills and is required for all preschool families.

Communication

The philosophy of St. Elizabeth School reflects the belief that the education of our students is best accomplished when parents and school personnel work as partners. Please keep the school informed of any good news, problems or situation your child may be experiencing which may affect school performance or behavior. Teachers are expected to keep parents up-to-date regarding your child's progress as well as notifying parents immediately should a problem or concern arise.

- **Newsletters:** A newsletter from the grade school is posted on the Sycamore site every other Friday throughout the school year. The preschool and pre-kindergarten newsletters are issued at the first of each month.
- **Open House:** Preschool Open House is held in August, prior to the start of school. This is a chance to meet your child's teacher and visit the classroom.
- **Parent Teacher Conferences:** Conferences are scheduled in October. Parents will receive a developmentally appropriate, assessment of their child's progress. These conferences are the perfect time to ask questions or express any concerns you may have. But you don't have to wait for conferences since the teachers are always available to discuss your questions or concerns. Feel free to speak with them anytime.
- **Portfolios:** This is a collection of your child's work throughout the year, showing the progression of learning that has taken place. These are shown to parents at our Portfolio Night in late April and taken home during the last week of school.

Discipline

Discipline is a process, which helps children to see the sense in acting in an appropriate manner. Physical, emotional and verbal punishment will not be practiced. Each child is treated with respect and patience. Our philosophy is based on the NAEYC developmentally appropriate practices.

- **Anticipation:** First we try to anticipate any discipline problems we could have with young children. We do this by evaluating our schedule, the environment, our transitions, and classroom activities to make sure they are safe and developmentally appropriate. We arrange the children's environment and schedules in a way that will allow for a variety of choices in equipment and activities.
- **Hesitation:** When there is no physical aggression involved the children will be given the opportunity to work out the problem without teacher intervention first. If the argument escalates, the teacher will gently intervene by identifying the problem and identifying the feelings involved with both parties. The teacher will then help the children look at different solutions for the problem.
- **Redirection:** We use redirection as our main strategy. If there is an argument over a toy or activity, we can redirect the child/children to another toy or activity.
- **Time Out:** Time out is primarily used when a child is out of control. If a child is having a temper tantrum and needs to regain self-control they will be asked to sit in a designated cool down area until they regain control. They can rejoin the group when they are able to.

If escalating behaviors are a concern, parents and teachers will work together to develop a plan to meet the student's needs.

Dismissal

Our program reserves the right to request the withdrawal of a child from our school, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Failure to seek professional services for a serious physical, cognitive, emotional or behavioral problem displayed by the child or failure to follow the prescribed plan.
- Consistent disregard for our illness policy.
- Consistent late payment or failure to pay.
- Consistent late pick-up of your child.
- Consistent disregard for any program policy stated in the handbook.
- If your child is not adjusting to a group setting within a reasonable amount of time.
- A parent who would show disrespect for our staff or children.

Grievance Procedures

If a problem arises in the preschool or classroom and parents need to contact someone, the first course of action would be to speak with the teacher. If further communication is needed, preschool administrators will be available for further discussion.

Child Abuse

School officials (including principals, teachers and paraprofessionals) are required by law to report actual or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate agency within 24 hours of their knowledge of the situation.