

# **St. Joseph's Preschool**

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Falls Church, VA 22046

## **PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK**

(Revised)

2010/2011

**St. Joseph's Preschool**

**Of Falls Church City**

**A Loving Legacy**

### **SCHOOL HISTORY**

The Sisters of the Missionary Servants of St. Joseph under the Columbian Province originally founded St. Joseph's Day Nursery and Kindergarten in 1957. With the permission and assistance of Former Bishop Peter L. Ireton, three young Sisters left their home country of Spain and came to Falls Church, Virginia to open a Day Nursery. On November 26, 1957, the original "little school" opened with only three students. Times were tough in these early days and the Sisters and the school relied heavily on the care and generosity of the surrounding community to make ends meet.

Over the years, the school evolved into a thriving, vibrant home away from home for over 70 children who have been welcomed daily with open arms and warm hearts by the nuns and the diverse and experienced group of

teachers employed at the school.

Of the original six young founders during the initial years of the school's inception, five remained with the school until 2005, offering services to the children. In February of 2005, the Sisters convened a parent/faculty meeting and announced they would be returning to their home countries or on to other missions in the later summer months. They were sad to be leaving and to be selling the school; however, their valuable skills and presence were needed to fulfill other callings. The nuns, who had arrived nearly fifty years ago, struggling with the language barrier and the uncertainty of whether the school would be a viable program, were now leaving a fully functioning and valuable asset to the community of Falls Church.

The school has since changed hands and is currently owned by a small group of individuals who are committed to preserving the legacy the sisters left behind.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The primary mission of St. Joseph's Preschool is to offer a safe, warm, and loving environment in a preschool setting where children can explore and learn. St. Joseph's believes that each child needs a strong foundation to build upon and we do our best to help each child establish such a foundation. The Center does not discriminate based on race, religion, color, sexual orientation, or national origin. In fact, St. Joseph's is proud of its diverse population of both children and families it serves and values this characteristic as one of the elements that makes St. Joseph's a truly unique place to be.

## **THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT/CURRICULUM**

St. Joseph's offers a safe and secure learning environment that is fully licensed to provide day care services in Fairfax County. We have modified our classrooms in a developmentally appropriate way. Each classroom has separate learning areas for Dramatic Play, Literacy, Building Blocks, Analytical skills, Art, Science, and Small and Gross Motor Skills. Religion is also offered on a weekly basis. St. Joseph's boasts a large fenced-in playground with areas of play for all age groups including two beautiful wooden play houses. Our Center is located in Falls Church beside the popular

W & OD bike trail.

As early childhood educators, we know that children who are in a safe, supportive and child friendly environment learn better and show more interest in learning. That said, children also need structure and predictability. To this end, each teacher is required to have written curriculum plans based on knowledge of child development and assessment of individual needs and interests. Although activities vary day by day, the basic classroom schedule remains consistent. This allows parents and children to have a general idea of what is going to happen during the day.

Our philosophy in education is a Hands on Creative learning environment with the Montessori/Reggio Emilia approach in mind. Our daily lessons and activities are age appropriate and child-directed to meet the needs of the whole child. Our teachers keep the children's interests in mind while planning the weekly lessons. We respect and are constantly amazed at what children are capable of doing. The following areas are ones that will be addressed in our daily lessons.

- Gross motor skills
- Small motor skills
- Social Development
- Emotional development
- Religious development
- Analytical skills

## **PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

**We serve children ages**

### **CLASS ROOMS**

**Two through Pre-K**

**Kittens, Bears, Monkeys,  
Dolphins, & Wildcats**

Children in the Kitten and Bear Class Rooms do not have to be fully potty trained. That is something that we assist with in the classrooms. Children entering the Monkeys and Pre-K, however, do need to be fully potty trained. We understand that accidents happen but if they become more common than not, we will have to discuss how best to handle the situation.

A list of necessary items to send with your child can be found under "What to send with your child"

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

The Center is open year-round, Monday- Friday, 6:45 AM - 6:00 PM.

## **CENTER HOLIDAY CLOSINGS**

The center will be closed to commemorate the following holidays:

- Columbus Day - October 11<sup>th</sup>
- Thanksgiving - November 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>
- Christmas - December 24<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>
- New Year's Day - Early Closing on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>
  
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day - Jan. 17<sup>th</sup> Closed for a Teacher In-Service
- President's Day - February 21<sup>st</sup>
- Good Friday - April 22<sup>nd</sup> Closed for a Teacher In-Service
- Memorial Day - May 30<sup>th</sup>
- Independence Day - July 4<sup>th</sup>
- August 29<sup>th</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> - Teacher Work Week
- Labor Day - September 5<sup>th</sup>

## **DAILY SCHEDULE**

The daily schedule may vary depending on weather, field trips, special activities or guest instructors.

A general classroom schedule is as follows:

6:45 am	Center Opens
6:45 - 8:30 am	Table Top Activities

8:30 - 9:00 am	<u>MORNING SNACK</u>
9:00 - 9:30 am	Outside Play
9:30 - 11:30 am	Morning Circle Time, Open Learning Centers
11:30 - 12:30 pm	Blessing and <u>LUNCH</u> , getting ready to rest
12:30 - 2:30 pm	Quiet time (naps, listening to soft music, looking at books)
2:30 - 3:00 pm	Wake up, toileting, hand washing, <u>AFTERNOON SNACK</u>
3:00 - 4:00 pm	Group Time, Stories, Crafts, Music, Dramatic Play
4:00 - 5:00 pm	Large motor activities, outdoor fun, nature adventure (some classes go outside at different scheduled times)
5:00 - 6:00 pm	Clean-up, toileting, individual and small group activities
6:00 pm	Center Closes

## STAFF DEVELOPMENT

In accordance to the state of Virginia's licensing standards all staff members who work directly with children are expected to accumulate at least 16 hours of training annually. The Director completes this training as well.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Good communication between parents and the school is essential in order for the children's needs to be met and for the school to function well. We have several ways of communicating with you.

- Our teachers and teacher's aides make use of naptime to write daily reports or send email updates. The daily report tells you how your child ate and slept, as well as any memorable moments or special problems that occurred throughout the day.
- We have a monthly newsletter that is sent via email on the first of the month. Our newsletter will inform you about staff members, upcoming events, special activities, and what each class is working on. The newsletter will include class events, school holidays and the school menu. Please read this carefully.

- If your child receives a bruise, cut, or a small injury, the teacher or aide who sees the accident will fill out an incident report. The teacher filling out the report and another teacher on duty will sign this form. The report will contain the date, time, circumstances of the accident or incident, and treatment. The parent will receive a copy of the accident/incident report at time of pick up.
- The Director is always available. She is here to answer your questions, take messages for the teachers, or discuss your child's progress. Her door is always open. Please do not hesitate to call, email or stop in with questions, comments or concerns.
- If you would like to speak with your child's teacher, please contact the office and we will arrange for a conference or a phone call.

**Please let your child's teacher or the Director know of any significant changes in your child's routine or living situation. Young children react to changes at home with changes in behavior. Often, they cannot tell us in words what is bothering them. They show their discomfort by crying, hitting, backsliding on toilet training, and other ways. If we know what your child is reacting to, we can be more understanding and respond more appropriately to your child's behavior. Thank you for helping us to keep communication lines open.**

## **PARENTS' RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is a parent's right:

- To know about all aspects of the program
- To know all about their child's experience in the program
- To feel welcome visiting, calling, or observing
- To feel free to ask questions of the faculty (when they are able to respond without interrupting the program)
- To feel assured that their beliefs, concerns, and values are sought and respected
- To feel an assurance of complete confidentiality (where appropriate) on all matters involving the welfare of children and families.

It is a parent's responsibility:

- To read this handbook and follow all policies and procedures
- To keep all important information current, including contact information, medical exams, etc., and to respond to requests for information from staff
- To respect school staff as professionals who work with families to provide quality care.

## **PARENT VISITS**

St. Joseph's has an open door policy for parents whose children are at the school. Parent visits are encouraged; however, if a child is having a difficult time separating from his or her parent and a parental visit is stressful for the child, staff may advise that the parent not visit for the remainder of the day. Of course, this is just a recommendation.

Parents are also encouraged to call during the day to give staff any additional necessary information or to see how their child is doing.

## **VISITORS**

Visitors other than parents or legal guardians of the children in attendance at St. Joseph's are welcome to view St. Joseph's and watch our caring, skilled teachers in action. Come and see for yourself how the children learn through play and organized activities. All visitors are asked to report to the office. The Director will accompany visitors through the school. For the safety and security of all our children, we ask that visitors return later or make an appointment if the Director is unable to assist at the moment.

Those interested in seeing St. Joseph's are welcome to call and schedule a tour with the Director.

## **ADMISSIONS POLICIES**

An initial interview with both parent and child is required before his or her formal admission into St. Joseph's. The interview is a good opportunity

for the parent to ask any questions of the Director and to take a tour and meet the teachers designated to their child's age group. If the parents and school officials feel that the program is appropriate for the child, the parents will receive all necessary forms and information needed for enrollment. Each parent is required to re-enroll his or her child before the beginning of each new school year in September.

Children must be two years of age to enter into the two year-olds class. Children must turn three years old by September 30th to be enrolled in the three year-olds class in September of that same year and so on. This is also the cut off date for children entering kindergarten. After a child turns the appropriate age, he or she may enroll at any time there is an opening throughout the school year. After a child is enrolled, any decision to move the child to another classroom or age group will be made by the Director, teachers, and parents of the child.

### **WAITING LIST**

If the Center is at capacity, a child's name can be placed on a waiting list and will be considered for enrollment in the order in which his or her application was received. When a spot becomes available, the parent has one week to decide to enroll their child or not. If the parent is still interested but chooses not to enroll their child, then the child's name can remain on the waiting list, but will move to the bottom. The Director reserves the right to charge a holding fee for a spot.

### **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

Prior to attendance at the school, the following is necessary:

- An orientation visit by parent and child
- A completed Enrollment Agreement Form - signed and dated (this agreement is considered a contract with the Center so please read and understand it completely.)
- Identity Age Verification (this could be a certified copy of his or her birth certificate, passport, etc.). The Director will look at it, but no copy will be kept by the school.
- A completed Child Registration Form
- A completed School Entrance Health Form -- signed by a physician,



- documenting all necessary immunizations, and the most recent physical(A physical may be required annually thereafter)
- A completed Developmental History
  - A completed Photographic Release
  - Permission Slip for Nature Walks and Heller Hall Walking
  - Payment of the registration fee, first month's tuition and supply fees
  - If one parent has custody of the child, a copy of the custody agreement is required.
  - Keypad Form
  - Tuition Information Form
  - Parent Handbook Agreement Form

Before enrollment, parents will be given a list of what a child needs to bring to school with them on a daily basis. This may vary depending on the age of the child and the classroom he or she is in. The list is located under "What to send with your child"

## **TERMINATION POLICIES**

St. Joseph's will make every effort to help a child adjust to his or her program. If the staff feels that a child is having an unusually difficult time adjusting, then a meeting will be held with the parents to discuss any concerns.

St. Joseph's reserves the right to terminate a child's placement in the program, at the discretion of the Director, when:

- A child may be a threat to his or her own safety or the safety of others, after other efforts to reduce this risk have been unsuccessful.
- A family refuses to support and cooperate with staff in developing a plan to meet the needs of their child in a manner that is consistent with the goals and philosophy of our program.
- A family is more than 15 days late in the payment of fees.

In all cases, St. Joseph's will make every effort to provide the family with two weeks notice if their child's placement in the school is to be terminated. However, in issues involving safety and security or noncompliance with Policies and Procedures, the school reserves the right to

insist on immediate withdrawal of the child from the program. This decision is never taken lightly and will only be made when necessary.

### **NOTICE OF INTENTION TO LEAVE THE PROGRAM**

The school requires a **written notice thirty (30) days** prior to withdrawal. This notice must include the departure date.

### **GRIEVANCES POLICIES**

The goal of St. Joseph's is to provide safe, secure and quality childcare services to each child. The school will make every effort to serve all children and will work with parents to meet the individual needs of each child. Orientation to the program, an initial get-acquainted conference with their child's teachers as well as subsequent parent-teacher conferences are all aimed to assure that parents feel comfortable with the care their child is receiving.

If parents still have questions or concerns about their child's well being, they should:

- Speak with their child's teacher.
- Request a conference with their child's teachers to discuss issues of concern
- Approach the Director regarding the same matter if they still have concerns after talking to their child's teachers.

### **FEES**

It is the school's high priority to keep our services affordable and all fees are necessary in order to keep our program first rate and our facility open for business. Fees are evaluated each year and parents will be notified at least 30 days in advance of any increase in fees.

**Registration Fee:** Once a spot becomes available, there is a \$65 non-refundable fee to hold the spot for your child.

**Enrollment Fee:** A \$100 fee is to be paid at the time of enrollment or to confirm enrollment at a later date. This fee is non-refundable. This fee is payable at the time of initial enrollment. Each subsequent September, the re-enrollment fee is \$40.

**Tuition:** \$950 payable by the first of each month. Full monthly fees are payable for months which include holidays, school breaks, snow days or emergency school closings.

**\*Part-Time Tuition:** \$670 for three days a week (Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays) and \$550 for two days a week (Tuesdays & Thursdays)

\*Limited # of spots available for Part Time Enrollment

If you are going to miss a month, regardless of vacations or summer holidays, you will have to pay the full tuition for each month missed.

Payments must be made with a check or money order. **No cash will be accepted.**

**Late Payment Fee:** There is a five-day grace period for tuition to be paid after the first school day of each month. A \$50 late fee will be charged for payments received after that grace period. Additionally, a 10% late fee will be charged if tuition is not received by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month without written notice and consultation with the Director.

**Sibling Discount Policy:** There is a \$50 discount on tuition for siblings in the program.

**Materials Fee:** A \$150 supply fee is used to cover the cost of supplies. This fee is due upon enrollment and at each subsequent reenrollment.

**Leave of Absence:** If a child is taking a temporary leave of the program, then parents are responsible for the tuition to hold a child's spot.

**Returned Check Policy:** \$35 is charged with each check returned. After the second returned check, no further checks will be accepted. Tuition and other fees will be payable by money order.

**Late Pick-Up Fee:** St. Joseph's closes promptly at 6:00 pm, meaning all children should be out of the building before the door is locked at this time. We realize that this is sometimes difficult for busy, working parents and that most of our parents are very conscientious about picking up their child on time. However, in consideration of our staff who are also hard working

and have families of their own, our late pick-up policy shall be as follows.

- There is a \$20 late fee charge per child for every 15 minutes (or portion thereof) that parents are late (pick-up after 6:00 pm). These fees compensate the staff member required to stay late to supervise the child. All fees will be required before the child can return to the program the next day. These fees need to be in cash as they go to the closing staff.
- In the unlikely instance when parents and emergency contacts cannot be reached within 1 ½ hours of St. Joseph's closing, Child Protective Services will be called.
- Many schools choose to terminate the child from the program due to repeated late pick-ups (three or more times in a month). Although we do not want to establish this policy, we do reserve the right to terminate the child's enrollment if necessary.
- **If you are going to be late, please call the school so that we know you are running late.**

## **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

It is the school's mission to continue the legacy set forth by its founders and continue to provide affordable child-care to all members of the community, including low-income families. Families in need are encouraged to apply for tuition assistance through the Child Care Assistance Program provided by the Fairfax County Office for Children. Application forms can be picked up at the Fairfax County Office for Children.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

In the event of inclement weather, St. Joseph's will make every attempt to open as usual. However, to preserve the safety of our staff and children we will close if conditions warrant such action. The general policy is that the Center will follow Falls Church City Public Schools for delayed openings and closings due to inclement weather. Delays or closings will be announced on the radio and online at <http://www.fccps.k12.va.us/>.

If FCCPS has a one-hour delay, we will open at 8:00 am.  
If FCCPS has a two-hour delay, we will open at 9:00 am.  
If FCCPS has a one-hour early closing, we will close at 5:00 pm.  
If FCCPS has a two-hour early closing, we will close at 4:00 pm.

The Director does reserve the right to close earlier or open later due to natural disasters (i.e. Snow, ice ...) Call the school at 703-533-8441 for updates.

## **ATTENDANCE, ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE POLICIES**

We have found that children adjust more easily to the childcare program if they attend regularly and also arrive and depart at the same time each day. Children who arrive significantly after 9:00 a.m. miss the opportunity to ease into the morning with their peers and teachers on a common schedule. In addition, children arriving late may interrupt the flow and structure of the morning, which the teachers work hard to establish. Of course, we understand the common complications of daily life but we appreciate every effort being made to have your child present by 9:00 am each day of attendance.

If your child will not be attending school (sick, visiting family...) please notify the school by 9:00 am the day your child will be absent. We all come to care for each child in our center and worry when children are absent.

In the interest of the safety of all children, please turn off the motor of your car when you arrive at the school to drop off or pick up your child.

There are four parking spaces provided for your convenience. If there is no parking space available, there is street parking. Please do not park in the parking lot unless you are parking in one of the four marked spaces also follow the arrows for proper entrance and exit. Disregard to this policy makes it very difficult to maneuver in the parking lot and causes several safety issues.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE RECORDS**

An adult must accompany all children into the school and the teacher must be made aware of your child's arrival and departure. As a security

measure, there is a list for parents to record the arrival and departure time for their child. This list is located in the front hall. The adult dropping off and picking up the child is asked to sign the sheet daily. Please make sure that you leave a number that you can be reached at for that day.

## **INDIVIDUALS AUTHORIZED TO PICK UP THE CHILD**

St. Joseph's can release a child only to the parents or legal guardian(s) of the child, or to the individuals authorized to pick up the child whom the parents/guardians have listed on the Child Registration Form, under the Person Authorized/Not Authorized to Pick Up Child section. Staff members may require any person picking up a child to provide proof of identification.

If a child is going to leave the center with an individual who is not on the Authorization Form, the parent must give **written** notice to the teacher/Director before the scheduled pick-up and the individual must have photo ID.

If an unauthorized person arrives at the school to pick up a child, the school will notify the parent immediately.

## **MISSING CHILD POLICY**

The center's missing child policy is as follows:

- It is the staff's responsibility to know where children in attendance are at all times of the day.
- If a child is thought to be missing, the Director will be notified immediately of this possibility.
- The Center, playground, and surrounding areas are to be thoroughly searched in order to determine whether the child is present or missing.
- If it is determined that the child in question is indeed missing the Director will notify 911 immediately. The parents will then be contacted as well.

## **CUSTODIAL RIGHTS**

If only one parent has custody of the child and the other is not authorized to pick up the child, the parent must inform the school of this fact and must provide the Director with an official copy of the Court Order confirming the physical custody of the child. If there is any change in the

legal custody of the child while the child is enrolled at St. Joseph's, the parent must immediately notify the school and must provide a certified copy of the order confirming the change.

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICIES**

Our goal is a school full of healthy children. We can come close to achieving this goal if parents and staff work together. Our staff members practice and teach good health habits, such as hand washing before meals and after toileting. We ask parents to do their part by keeping ill children out of school.

All of our staff members are certified in First Aid and CPR. As part of our morning greeting, we do screen children to make sure they are not showing signs of illness. If a sign is there, the child will not be allowed to stay at the center that day. Signs we look for are:

- Fever, temperature of over 101 degrees Fahrenheit
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Severe chest or nasal congestion
- Unexplained rash
- Behavior indicating pain or distress
- The contagious stage of a communicable disease

To reduce the risk of infection to the student body, a child who is showing the above signs while in school will be separated from the other students. We will make the child comfortable and contact the parent(s) to pick up the child.

If your child is sent home with a fever of 101° or more your child cannot return to school until he/she is fever free for 24 hours without using fever reducing medication.

If your child is sent home with vomiting or diarrhea your child cannot return to school until vomiting and/or diarrhea have ceased for at least 24 hours.

Please make sure the information on your child's registration form is up to date so we can reach you if your child becomes ill or injured. If the school is unable to contact you, the emergency contact listed on the registration form will be called. Please list people who will know your whereabouts or who could pick up your child if you cannot be reached. If your

routine changes, please inform the office and leave a number where you can be reached for that day.

All students must be immunized and/or tested in accordance with the current Virginia State Board of Health requirements found in the Virginia School Health Guidelines. These forms must be on file before your child begins school.

## **COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Families are required to inform the Director of any communicable diseases that may have been brought into the school. The families are asked to notify the school within 24 hours if a child with a communicable disease has been in the school within the 2-week period preceding the diagnosis. The school will notify the families of all the other children who attended the school with the sick child. The school will not disclose the name of the sick child to other families.

Some of the most common communicable diseases, which should be reported to the Director, are strep throat, conjunctivitis (pink eye), chickenpox, lice, flu, and impetigo.

**If your child has a communicable disease, such as the ones mentioned above, you are required to present a doctor's note saying your child is no longer contagious before your child may return to school.**

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

**We do not administer ANY medication unless it is a life sustaining medication.** All medications must be administered by the child's parent with the exception of life sustaining medications. Under no circumstances may the child retain possession of any medicine once he or she comes under the supervision of the staff. Medication is given as needed for life threatening emergencies. A completed Medication Administration Form with the physician's signature is required for all life sustaining medications. **There will be no exceptions to the above policy. Contact the Director if your child will need to keep life sustaining medication in the building.**

A MAT (Medication Administration Training) certified staff member will administer the medication. There is at least one staff member in each room with MAT training.



## **EMERGENCY CARE PROCEDURES**

Throughout the day, staff trained in First Aid, CPR and MAT are on-site. In the event of an accident that requires medical attention, staff will proceed in the following way:

If the accident indicates a need for immediate emergency treatment, the Director or senior staff member will call 911 to have the child transported to the closest emergency room. The child's parents will then also be called.

For less serious accidents and minor injuries, staff will administer first aid and then notify the parents by either a phone call or a copy of the incident report itself. In some cases, staff may recommend to the family that the child be taken to the doctor for follow-up care.

In all cases, regardless of the severity of the injury, center staff will complete an Incident Report describing the occurrence, type of First Aid administered, and disposition of the child following the incident. The Director or teacher will sign the report. The report will be in the child's folder or cubby at the end of the day for pick up. Copies of all incident reports are kept on file at the school.

If the parents have any objections to our Medical or Emergency Policies, they need to provide them in writing.

## **DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The goal of discipline is to help children develop self-control and the necessary skills to assume responsibility for their own behavior. Through appropriate forms of care and discipline, children are taught to respect themselves and others.

The school's rules defining limits and expected behaviors are made with the children's ages and abilities in mind. These rules are explained in each classroom in a way children will understand. Discipline based on these rules depends on a foundation of mutual respect and affection between teacher and child. Most behavior problems can be avoided by providing the children with choices as well as challenging and interesting activities that are age

appropriate for the child. Teachers help children learn appropriate behavior by modeling expected behavior, encouraging problem solving, using praise and positive guidance and by setting clear and consistent limits that are developmentally appropriate for each child.

As teachers, our role is to guide each child toward behavior that is safe and sociable. We do not expect perfection. Children need and expect adults to set limits that they cannot make for themselves. Discipline is the enforcement of these limits using both guidance and positive redirection. Effective discipline is fair and consistent. Our discipline policy is as follows:

- When needed the teacher will remove the child from the situation and offer an alternative quiet activity.
- When ready, with a teacher's approval, the child will then be allowed to go back to the group.
- If the behavior continues, the teacher will sit down with the parents to discuss any changes at home or school that may be affecting the child's behavior.

The following methods of discipline are prohibited at St. Joseph's and at St. Joseph's-sponsored events. These standards apply to staff, parents, and visitors on the premises.

- A child shall not be hit or shaken at any time
- A child shall not be restricted movement through binding or tying, forcing a child to assume an uncomfortable position, or exercise as punishment
- A child shall not be enclosed in a small confined space or any space that the child cannot freely exit himself
- A child shall not be punished by another child or another child's parent
- A child shall not be separated from the group so that the child is away from hearing and vision of a staff member
- A child shall not be punished for toilet accidents
- A child shall not be assigned nicknames by staff members
- A child shall not be punished by the application unpleasant or harmful substances
- An adult shall neither force nor withhold food from a child.

- An adult shall neither force a child to nap nor withhold a nap from a child.
- A child shall not be punished or verbally berated at any time
- Verbal abuse of a child or the child's family shall not be used, this includes belittling remarks
- There shall be no physical punishment or disciplinary action to the child's body

In some cases, parent-teacher conferences may be needed to decide on a joint approach to discipline. Expulsion of a student is not something we at St. Joseph's feel should occur; however, we do reserve the right to take that into consideration in extreme cases.

### **PROCEDURES FOR SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT**

Virginia law requires that child-care providers report all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect to child protective services regardless of the abuser/neglector's relationship to the child. The appropriate child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the abuse or neglect is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. St. Joseph's complies with this policy, will cooperate fully with any investigation, and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect, for our concern is always the protection of the child.

### **FOOD POLICY**

St Joseph's serves a morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack. The morning snack is not meant to be a replacement for breakfast. Meals are prepared in the school by a trained and state certified cook. If your child is arriving after 8:40, they will not receive morning snack. A menu is posted in the hall as well as each classroom. The menu is also uploaded onto our website.

St. Joseph's is a **nut free center**. We provide care for children who have life threatening allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, etc...and our priority is safety.

Children who require a special diet must have a letter from a pediatrician. If your child has any food allergies, parents must send in a written letter about the child's allergies to the Director or the teacher. If

your child is required to eat a special diet, parents are responsible for bringing the meal.

## **SCHOOL DRESS**

Please dress your child in clothes that are comfortable, washable, and appropriate for a day of playing and learning. Hooded jackets, sweatshirts, and shorts that have drawstrings present a major safety hazard for young children. The cord can become caught when a child is climbing, sliding, or engaged in other active play and result in choking or other serious injury. It is for that reason that children are not permitted to wear any shirts, jackets, sweatshirts, jewelry, or articles that are tied around the neck. We appreciate your cooperation with this policy by sending your children to school with appropriate clothing. **All children must wear sneakers on the playground. No sandals or open-toed shoes are allowed outside. If your child wears sandals or open-toed shoes to school, make sure he/she has a pair of sneakers to change into or he/she will not be allowed on the playground.**

Any clothing that may be taken off and misplaced (hats, sweaters, mittens, coats, etc.) must be clearly labeled with your child's name.

Please provide an extra set of clothing (shirt, pants, socks, underwear and shoes). **Please make certain that your child's clothes are changed seasonally and that all items are labeled with the child's first and last name.**

## **WHAT TO SEND WITH YOUR CHILD**

Each child needs to have the following items brought in:

- A complete change of clothing (shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes) in a clear plastic box with the child's name on it
- A labeled blanket and sheet to lie on during nap (a fitted crib sheet works really well). If your child wants an additional blanket to fold and use as a pillow, that is fine but we are limited in our storage space so please keep that in mind.
- Sunscreen/Bug spray can be brought in and must be left with the child's teacher. We ask that you please do not leave sunscreen or

insect spray in your child's cubby or backpack. Please make sure that you fill out the appropriate form as teachers cannot apply these items without a signed authorization.

- If your child is in diapers or pull-ups, you are responsible for bringing those in as well as wipes and diaper cream only if needed.

## PLAYGROUND REGULATIONS

Weather permitting; all children spend time outside everyday. We shall exercise our very best judgment regarding outside play. If a child is not well enough to be outdoors, he or she is not well enough to be at school. Please make sure that your child has outer clothing appropriate for the day's forecast. This includes but is not limited to hat, coat, scarf and gloves or mittens.

Teachers will also use their best judgment when it comes to temperature. If the temperature is below 32°, children are not allowed outside. Anything above 32° is acceptable for appropriate periods of time. St. Joseph's staff knows that fresh air and exercise are very important to a child's development - even if it is only 5-10 minutes at a time.

Similarly, teachers will take children out during the summer. Due to the heat in our area, staff will use their best judgment as to how long to stay out. When the heat reaches 90°, children are outside for a short time (5-15 min.) and then go inside for a while to cool down. This cycle is repeated throughout the day.

Teachers and assistants supervise the playground. **Safety is a priority at all times.** All children will go out unless the weather dictates otherwise. The children are to obey the following playground regulations:

- Avoid playing games that tear or ruin clothes or are unnecessarily rough.
- Tackling, wrestling or keep-away activities are not acceptable.
- Use only appropriate language as in the classroom or at home.
- Fighting is not acceptable and will result in appropriate disciplinary action
- Hard objects may never be used or thrown (rocks, snowballs, etc.). Baseballs and other hard balls are not permitted.

- Children riding bikes or cars need to ride safely and correctly as well as take turns with their friends. If they fail to do so, their riding privileges will be suspended.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

All staff receives training on the school's emergency evacuation procedures including fire, tornado, flooding, intruder and shelter in place. They participate in monthly fire/general evacuation and biannual shelter in place drills to practice those procedures. A record of these drills is kept in the school office.

In the event of a fire or other building emergency, staff will escort children from the school or playground to the designated relocation site. The Lead Teacher will conduct a head count prior to leaving the school and again at the relocation site. He/She will also bring the attendance sheet and the children's emergency contact information with them. The Assistant Teacher or Co-Lead Teacher will bring and carry emergency bags containing diapers, wipes, gloves, first aid kits, and blankets. Some snacks will also be included for the children.

The designated relocation site is the grassy area furthest from the Center along the fence line. Staff and children will wait at the relocation site until they have received the all clear from the Fire Department or other authorized personnel. In the event that children and staff will be unable to return to the school in a timely fashion, the Director or another staff member will notify families via e-mail and/or by phone that they need to come and pick up their children.

In the event of a tornado or other high winds, children and teachers will assemble in the hallway by the copy room and in the hallway by room 8 (Wild Cats).

In the event of flooding, children and teachers will assemble on the second floor of the building.

## **CELEBRATIONS OF BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAYS**

Birthdays are special events in the lives of children. Each class will

make a special time to acknowledge a child's birthday. However we will not be having birthday parties in the classroom and parents may not bring in special treats due to food allergies and the safety for all children.

**Parents are always encouraged to participate in any way they are able we have an open door policy.**

All Catholic holidays are given special notice at St. Joseph's. These include but are not limited to The Advent Season, Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Lent, and Easter. Children learn throughout the year the significance of these and other various religious holidays. In addition, the families of St. Joseph's bring with them a vast array of customs and holiday traditions. We encourage families to share their traditions with us.

### **TOYS, BOOKS**

Children are encouraged to bring books to share during circle time. Toys from home may not be brought except for designated show and tell days. Toy guns, bows and arrows, or knives are NEVER allowed at St. Joseph's.

We cannot be responsible for loss of or damage to any books and toys brought by the children, although we make extra efforts to preserve them. Please make sure that all books and toys are clearly labeled with your child's name.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are privileges planned by teachers and approved by the school administration with educational purposes as the primary objective and in light of financial considerations. A child must give the teacher a permission form signed by a parent prior to participating in the field trip. Parents will receive detailed written information about the field trip. To maintain the highest staff per child ratio possible, all staff members assist on field trips. Please note the departure times, as no staff members can remain at the school for late arrivals. **If a parent does not want their child to participate in a specific field trip, then the parent must make alternate arrangements for childcare on the date of the trip.**

It should also be understood, in light of world conditions and specifically threats of terrorism against Americans, it may be necessary to cancel school-sponsored trips.

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

St. Joseph's Preschool does not provide transportation to or from the center. Parents will be required to sign permission forms for their child to participate in any special event that requires motorized transportation. In the event that motorized transportation is used to transport children St. Joseph's Preschool will act in accordance to the licensing standards of the state of Virginia in their selection of a vehicle. In addition, St. Joseph's Preschool staff will comply with Virginia State Licensing Standards while transporting children in order to ensure safety and proper supervision. Our complete policy on transportation is located in the office for more detailed information.

## **PUBLICITY**

Television and radio stations, newspapers and other media sources may contact and visit St. Joseph's in order to photograph and/or interview the children. These interviews and/or photographs may be distributed or broadcasted to the general public. In addition, photographs of children may be used in any brochures and informative publications describing the school, which are distributed to the public. **If you do not wish your child to be included in any such interviews or photographs, you can indicate that wish on our Photographic Release form.** Any pictures will be used at the discretion of the school Director.

## **AGREEMENT**

I have received the St. Joseph's Preschool Parent/Student Handbook and all information specific to school and state policies, where applicable. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the policies and procedures in this handbook.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and familiarized myself with the policies and procedures in this handbook.

I understand that it is my responsibility to go directly to school management with any questions I may have regarding the policies, procedures, and information contained in this handbook.



Information in this guide may be subject to change.

Please sign this acknowledgment, and return it to the Director.

Date

Parent/Guardian's Signature