

# St. Mary School

## Pre K Program



### Mission Statement

St. Mary School is a welcoming community grounded in the traditions of the Daughters of Mercy. We strive to inspire *minds* through 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning while our Catholic faith aligns *hearts* with God and fosters *lives* of service.



Welcome to the preschool program at St. Mary School. Your child is about to enter a wonderful learning adventure. It is our objective to ease your little one into his/her new routine and surroundings and provide you, the parent, with the assurance that your child is safe and happy. It is our hope that your child's contentment and security will contribute to an exciting learning experience.

St. Mary Preschool provides that safe and enjoyable environment, allowing students to develop social and emotional competence that lends to learning. Our preschool program combines traditional Catholic disciplines, academics, contemporary state of the art technology, a "hands on" approach to learning and PLAY. As our preschool strengthens its focus on academic and kindergarten preparedness, play maintains a most vital role. Children learn through play. It must be a part of any quality preschool curriculum just like language arts and math skills. Play strongly supports critical thinking, social interaction, problem solving, creativity, physicality, imagination and so many other facets of development. Daily creative lessons and activities are planned to integrate play into strengthening these developmental characteristics. It is here where your child will wonder, explore and discover.

Our intention for Pre K 3 is to meet the needs of those incoming students and properly INTRODUCE them to the classroom and school settings and to the behavior that is expected in these environments. Many of the children have never been in a large group setting or away from family. Their world is their home and their family. It revolves around them. Now they must join a group, get along with others and listen to adults other than their family members. When they feel safe and happy, it all seems to fall into place. The children will be introduced to all areas of learning. Religion, Language Arts, Reading Readiness, Math Skills, Social Studies and Science along with our weekly "specials" of Physical Education, Music, Library /Media and Spanish keep our students learning and active.

Pre K 4 is all about PREPARING your little one for kindergarten. Here at St. Mary, the scaffolding curriculum begins in preschool. This year your little one will put to use the skills and behaviors they have learned in Pre-K3. These skills will continue to strengthen and develop in preparation for kindergarten. The tasks introduced to your child last year, such as holding a pencil correctly and recognizing letters will become second nature. Attention spans lengthen and learning activities become more challenging. Pre K 4 brings more proficiency to the many skills necessary for a good transition to kindergarten.

Pre K-3 and Pre K-4 are the youngest classes in St. Mary School. The children are included in all age appropriate, school centered activities. This promotes a sense of belonging. School centered activities provide a reciprocal opportunity for the littlest children to be a part of the whole and witness examples of acceptable behavior, support and participation. These events provide the occasion for older children to set such examples. The kindness, comradery and inclusion that is St. Mary School, reaches all the way down to the little ones.

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## ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

The following Arrival/Dismissal Procedures have been implemented to ensure the safety of all students.



### PRESCHOOL ARRIVAL

**Time: Pre K 3 & 4 Arrival time is between 7:40am and 8:15am. Students arriving after 8:15am are required to enter through the Main Office.**

**Morning Care is available from 6:30am - 7:40am (at a fee).**

**Students arriving by BUS** - Pre K bus riders will be assigned a bus buddy. The bus buddy will assist your little one off the bus and walk them to their classroom. Please note that bus transportation for the little ones in Pre K is available only for Vineland residents. **Your child is asked to wear the bus pass tag (name/address & bus number) for the first two weeks of school.**

**Students arriving by CAR** - All Pre K children arriving by car are to enter through the preschool door located at the north side of the building (through gates). **Parents/guardians are asked to enter slowly through the gates and park in a designated parking spot. Please do not block any entrances or doors.** You must turn off your vehicle and to insure safe arrival must accompany your child into the preschool classroom. (Siblings of preschool children are permitted to use this entrance also. They must proceed directly to their classroom before 7:50 to avoid being marked late.) **No siblings will be permitted to enter through preschool after 7:50am.**

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## PRESCHOOL DISMISSAL



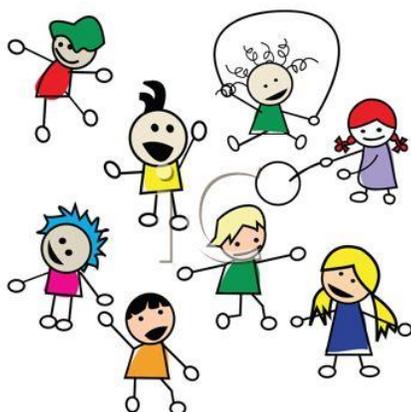
### AM Session/Half Day Students:

The preschool AM (half day) session is dismissed between 12:00 noon and 12:15pm. Parents are to pick up their child in the car line that forms in the front of the building by the north side double doors. Please wait in your car until the teacher instructs you to move forward and your child will be escorted to your car.

### Regular Dismissal (2:20pm):

**Students leaving by BUS** - All Pre K students will be assisted to their bus by their bus buddy.

**Students leaving by CAR** - All Pre K-3 & 4 students, their siblings and any kindergarten student that does not have an older sibling will be dismissed through the Preschool car line. This is located at the north parking lot (through gate). Again, parents and guardians are asked to enter slowly through the gates and follow car line to the right. Children are picked up at the double doors. For the safety of all, please wait in your car and move slowly toward the double doors and a member of our school staff or safety patrol will walk your child to your car.



## AFTER CARE

After Care is available at a minimal fee from 2:20pm - 5:30pm prompt. It is located in the pre K classrooms. Preschool students, who are scheduled for after school care, will remain supervised in the preschool classroom. Your child is to be picked up from After Care at the preschool door on the north side of the building.

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## PRE K CURRICULUM

The children are active and learning each day through creative, challenging, age appropriate lessons that integrate play. Throughout the week topics are covered in the following subject areas:

**RELIGION** - God's hand in our life and world is emphasized daily. The children will hear appropriate scripture stories and connect these stories to their world. Formal prayers are taught and woven throughout our day. The children become acquainted with Jesus and His love.

**LANGUAGE ARTS** - Language Arts is tied to the experiences of listening, speaking, reading, writing and looking at or viewing. Books are read aloud to the class daily. The children are introduced to independent reading by "looking at" picture books and interpreting what they visually represent. Letter recognition, sound recognition, comprehension and so much more fall under Language Arts.

**MATH SKILLS** - Basic math skills such as counting, numeral recognition, one/one correspondence, sequencing, matching, shapes, colors and so much more are touched upon in preschool. The children also begin addition and subtraction (take away) using manipulatives.

**SCIENCE** - During the early years of development, there is a curiosity or tendency to observe nature. Things like collecting rocks, leaves and digging in soil are some early engaging science experiences. Age appropriate science learning experiences are vital to helping the children understand their world, collect and organize information and to apply and test their ideas. **WONDER - EXPLORE - DISCOVER.**

**SOCIAL STUDIES** - Social studies gives the child an understanding of his world. It is expanding on what is familiar to a child. Through the roles of Community Helpers, children recognize that people have different functions in the community. Touching upon topics such as diversity,

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community, geography, and one's responsibility to this world (history/ecology) begins to prepare a child for this physical and social world.

**ART & CRAFTS** - Art is not only an activity in preschool, art is used to teach. The children will explore color and experience a variety of mediums through art. Fine motor skills will be strengthened and creativity will shine through. Art & Crafts is used as a learning tool for all subjects.



## SPECIALS

Throughout the week, the children will participate in "specials". These wonderfully enriching subjects of **Music, Physical Education, Technology and Spanish** are used to deliver essential content in different ways. Technology class introduces the children to using an iPad. As with art, these subjects facilitate learning in all other areas.

**Cooking and Show N' Tell** are also a part of the preschool curriculum. The children will work on recipes involving following directions, health, safety, measuring and mixing. Show N' Tell is a wonderful learning experience for a child. It improves communication and listening skills, encourages sharing and builds confidence.

## PROGRESS REPORTS

You will receive quarterly progress assessments on your child.



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## BEHAVIOR/CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Young children have very powerful feelings and need our help in learning to appropriately express them. We must approach problems and conflict as a learning opportunity and guide the children to respect themselves and others. Discipline helps children cope with the challenges of life and learn social skills. Learning self-control takes time and practice. At the preschool level, the children are just learning to interact with others. In every preschool class, children are on different levels of development. However, most 3 and 4 year olds should be demonstrating their ability to follow the basic rules and beginning to understand the consequences of negative behavior. Both the PreK 3 class and the PreK 4 class have classroom rules. There are school rules, too. Effective classroom and school management is essential to a successful school year. Our rules emphasize the desired action rather than the undesired action. We focus on 5 basic rules in the classroom.

### CLASSROOM RULES

- 1. Be kind. - This is the most important rule of all!**
- 2. Make good choices.**
- 3. Use your inside voice.**
- 4. Use your walking feet.**
- 5. Use hands for helping.**

These five rules are very basic and easily understood by 3 & 4 year old children. They are directing positive action. They promote safety, social skills, order and routine. At the preschool level, disruptive behavior is not abnormal. The children will learn however, that it is not acceptable. The children will be introduced to the rules. They will learn that proper behavior may change according to the activity taking place. The children will learn appropriate and acceptable behavior. We will

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address unacceptable behavior by talking to the child and issuing a "time out" if necessary. Parents are notified by a note or phone call of a time out incident. If the unacceptable behavior continues, the teacher will request a conference with the parent/guardian to discuss the behavior and together arrive at an effective way to curtail it. It would be necessary to involve the principal on any further decisions, should this strategy prove unsuccessful.

## LUNCH

The Preschool children are required to pack or purchase a lunch each day. "GO" foods not "SLOW FOODS" are encouraged. However, it is important to pack something your little one will eat. It is very difficult for a child to concentrate on anything when they don't eat their lunch and have an achy tummy.



**Packing Lunch** - Children are asked to have a packed lunch, with drink, in a lunch box with a small ice pack. This will sufficiently keep the lunch cold. Anything that your little one does not eat will be returned in the lunchbox. Unfortunately we are unable to heat foods. However, a thermos will keep foods sufficiently warm until served.

**Purchasing Lunch** - Lunch menus are available on the "parent" page of the school website. Each day a different "lunch of the day" is offered. Chicken Nuggets are offered every day and pizza is available on Fridays. An account is set up in your child's name with the amount of money you choose to deposit. Deposits can be made throughout the year. Please notify the teacher or classroom aide upon arrival if your child is purchasing lunch. If your child rides the bus to school, please place a note in his folder stating what your child is purchasing. You will be contacted if your little one is not eating their lunch.

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**TREATS** - Treats for after lunch may be purchased from the cafeteria. It will be provided after eating at least half of their lunch. Ice cream, hot pretzels and cookies are available for purchase.

## NAPTIME

Children attending a full day of preschool will be napping daily from 12:15 - 1:30pm. The children are made

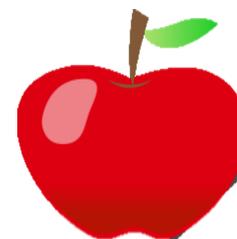


comfortable and encouraged to sleep or quietly rest. Each child is assigned their own personal cot for the entire school year. Each full day student is required bedding for nap. This can be a crib sized sheet, light blanket and small pillow or a bedroll or sleeping bag. Please put your child's bedding in a plastic bag **that can close**. Children are permitted a soft animal or doll if needed to make their rest easier. Hard dolls (Barbie) or toys/stuffed animals that talk or make noise are not permitted. All bedding will be sent home every two weeks to be laundered. Please return the clean bedding with your child on his next scheduled day.

## SNACK TIME

Each afternoon following nap, the children have a snack.

Healthy "GO" foods are encouraged. Please pack separately from lunch a healthy snack (that your little one will eat) along with a small juice/water and any needed utensils. There is NO snack on "Early Dismissal" days.



\*\*Donations of healthy snacks, juice boxes and small water bottles are always appreciated. These are stored in the classroom and are available should a little one complain their belly hurts, thirsty, hungry or forgot a snack.

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# DRESS CODE

Children will work and play freely, be more independent and confident in clothing that is easy and comfortable for them to manage. When dressing your child each day please remember that the preschool children are learning to manage their clothing when using the lavatory. Belts, buckles, etc. make it difficult. The children go outdoors everyday (weather permitting), have circle time and other activities on the rug, play on the floor and work with paint and other mediums. Dress your little one comfortably and appropriately for the day's activity and weather. A sweater or sweatshirt can be stored in your child's cubby. **Sleeveless tank tops, flip flops and sandals are not permitted.** Children must wear closed shoes for playground safety. Socks are strongly encouraged. Jewelry is limited to post earrings and religious medals. Each child should have a complete set of spare clothing including pants, shirt, underwear and socks at the preschool. Spare clothing will be kept in your child's cubby.



# GYM UNIFORM

The St. Mary School gym uniform is to be worn on gym day. Children are required to wear sneakers for their own safety and white or black athletic socks.

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## ILLNESS

Please do not send a sick child to school. For the care and comfort of that child and the health and safety of all children in the class, a child exhibiting symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea and fever should not be in preschool. Please notify the Nurse's Office at 856-692-8537 x 303 if your child is absent. **Children must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.**

If your child is taken ill while at school, the school nurse will attentively care for your child and notify either parent or emergency contact. The ill child will remain with the nurse until signed out at the Main Office.

## FLU SHOT REQUIREMENT

All preschool children are required to have a flu shot before January 1<sup>st</sup>.

## EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please communicate any allergies or existing medical conditions your child may have with both the teacher and school nurse. The nurse will coordinate any necessary "plan of action" with the teacher.

Teachers are trained in CPR/First Aid/ Epi Pen Injection and use of the defibrillator. The health, safety and comfort of your child are important to us.



## FIELD TRIPS

One of the biggest advantages of field trips is that they allow the children the real world experience. The children enjoy the opportunity to ride the bus and go with their friends. The trip should clearly illustrate and enhance information taught in the classroom. The preschool classes do take a field trip each year. Preschool children are required to be accompanied by a chaperone.

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## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

Through the tremendous efforts of the PTA, St. Mary School offers a variety of activities that promote social interaction for the child, family and parents. After school hours events such as Family Fun Nights, The Ice Cream Social, The Talent Show Dinner and Uncorked are just a few. Activities such as Laps for Learning, Canned Food Collections and Cards for Seniors allow the children the opportunity to help, share their gifts and talents and to think of others. Children love it when their family attends school activities. They

are proud of both their school and their family members. A positive attitude and involvement with your child's school is so important to your child's developing attitude about school.



## TOILET TRAINING PreK3

Toilet training is a very complex process to a little one. The perfect age to begin training is different for every child. A parent's willingness to train is as important as a child's readiness to be trained. The preschool staff at St. Mary School will gladly ASSIST you in your efforts to train your child. All children in training are required to use Pull - Ups. It must be a pull up that will open and re-fasten at the sides (like the Pull-Up brand). This allows us to change the child without removing shoes and clothing. Each child in training is asked to supply a pack of pull-ups and a pack of wipes. These are labeled and used exclusively for your child. You will be notified when to replenish your child's supply.

We do not use potty chairs or potty seats for health and sanitary reasons. The children use a regular sized toilet. It can be frightening to a child. At home, talk to your little one about using the potty. Familiarize your child with it by helping

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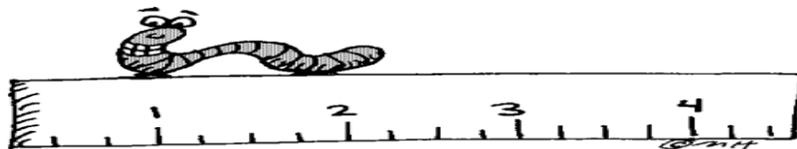
your child to sit on the toilet. We will observe your little one and take note if dry in between our bathroom breaks (approx. 1 ½ hours). Eventually we will request underwear and another set of spare clothing and . . . look forward to celebrating this very big accomplishment with your child!

## SAFETY DRILLS

For the safety of our children and in compliance with state and local government requirements, St. Mary School conducts monthly fire safety drills and school security drills. It is not unusual for 3 & 4 year old children to become fearful during the drill. The teacher will speak to the class prior to the drill and explain what will take place and why this is done. Please reassure your little one.



## PRE K - Policies and Recommendations At - A - Glance



1. All children entering St. Mary Preschool must be 2 ½ years (30 months) old by October 1st.
2. A written note is required if someone other than you, the parent/guardian, will be picking up your child.

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3. Please do not send an ill child to preschool. Please call and inform the Nurse at 856-692-8537 x 303 when your little one is absent or late. **Students must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.**
4. All children are asked to arrive at the preschool by 8:15am. Our school's safety standards require any child arriving after 8:15am be "signed in" at the Main Office.
5. Please notify your child's teacher and the school nurse of any allergies or medical precautions necessary for your child's health and safety.
6. Health and safety restricts us from allowing pacifiers.
7. Please apply sunscreen on your child each morning. For safety reasons, teachers are not allowed to apply sunscreen.
8. Please LABEL EVERYTHING (lunch box, back pack, bedding, spare clothing, jackets, sweatshirts, etc.)
9. Spills and bathroom accidents do happen. All children are required to have a spare (full) set of clothing at the preschool. This should include bottoms, top, underwear and socks labeled with child's name. Please place in a zip lock plastic bag with your child's name on the bag.
10. Your little one is asked to bring a back pack and folder to school each day. Daily work and any classroom correspondence will go home in the folder. The folder is checked each morning for any communication from home.
11. WEDNESDAY COMMUNICATION ENVELOPE - this is a SCHOOL OFFICE to HOME communication envelope. No paperwork is to be returned in this envelope. It will be sent home every Wednesday with all correspondence from the school office. Please review all information, sign where designated and return to school.

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12. **ACTIVITY PREVIEW** - this is a weekly view of the many planned activities for the Pre K. This alerts you to materials your child might need to bring to class as well as upcoming events, show and tell theme and schedule, etc.
13. Please send to preschool an old "bigger" sized T-shirt that will cover your child's clothing. This will be used as a paint smock to protect clothing.
14. Each child is asked to contribute three boxes of tissues and three packs of baby wipes. This supply gets us to spring depending on the severity of cold season.
15. **FULL DAY** students are required to have "BEDDING." A crib sheet with small pillow/blanket or a bedroll or sleeping bag is fine. For hygiene, please send bedding to school in a plastic bag that can close. Bedding will remain at preschool for two weeks (used approx. 15 hrs.), go home to be laundered and returned on your child's next scheduled day.
16. When dressing your little one for their day, please remember: we go outdoors everyday (weather permitting). We do a tremendous amount of activity on the rug, working with paint and playing on the floor. Easy clothing (can pull up and down) helps your little one gain responsibility and confidence when using the bathroom. No sandals, flip flops, or open toed shoes are permitted.
17. PreK-3: Little ones in "potty training" are required to supply a pack of PULL-UPS and wipes. We must be able to take the pull- up apart at the sides and reattach it. These will be labeled for your child exclusively and will be used as needed. A small supply will be kept in your child's cubby and the remainder pulled as needed. You will be notified of the need to replenish.
18. Birthdays are special...so we celebrate them!!! If you wish to share your child's birthday celebration with the class, please speak to your child's teacher
19. Communicate with your child's teacher any happenings, concerns or questions you may have. Your child's teacher will do the same.

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