

ST. JOHN'S AREA SCHOOL



# St. John's Area School Pre-Kindergarten Handbook

## **Mission Statement**

As a Catholic school, we are dedicated to helping the whole child see **God in all things**. Guiding students through successes and challenges, we prepare them to live in and contribute to our changing world.

## **Vision Statement**

St. John's Area School welcomes all children into our Christ-Centered learning environment. We strive to promote an excellent education and instill in our students the courage to imagine their bright futures. We build on the children's varied backgrounds and challenge them to achieve success morally as well as academically. Together, in a safe and loving environment, we share experiences that will foster well-formed individuals and life-long learners who live and model their Catholic Faith. Students are encouraged to use their God-given gifts to serve and positively impact the lives of others. We support students in their spiritual growth in order to prepare the next generation of Catholic leaders.

## **Goals**

The goal for the St. John's Area School Pre-Kindergarten program is to provide an atmosphere where your child is able to grow physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually, and intellectually. Activities are planned to foster your child's curiosity and help develop an appreciation for learning.

**Root Beliefs:** See God in all things, We are always learning, Serve others

**Core Values:** Respect and Serve

## **Pre-K and the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress**

St. John's Area School has adopted the Minnesota Early Childhood Indicators of Progress (ECIP's) as the standards that is the basis of our curriculum. These standards are a *framework* for what each child *should* know before Kindergarten. You can find a copy of the ECIP's at <https://education.mn.gov.MDE/dse/early/ind/>

SJAS has created goals for the children in the Pre-K classes that align with the Early Childhood Indicators of Progress. The goals are written in a way that is easy for Pre-K children to understand. SJAS has standards-based progress reports, where each standard is represented on the report card that is sent home quarterly.

Each day, the teacher will post one goal for the class to see. Throughout the day, the teacher will refer back to the goal and remind the students what they are trying to achieve. It does not always mean this goal can be accomplished immediately. An example of a goal would be: "We can identify colors." At the end of a color lesson, the students' mastery is checked, and the teacher will move on to the next goal or decide if the class should work on colors for a few more days.

If you have any questions or concerns about the ECIP's, progress reports, or the classroom goals, please feel free to communicate with the teacher.

### **Objectives for SJAS Pre-Kindergarten**

1. To help build a foundation of faith and belief in God.
2. To help build a positive self-concept through guided activities.
3. To develop a positive attitude toward school.
4. To help develop appropriate social skills.
5. To teach respect, responsibility, and cooperation.
6. To teach new skills and improve on skills your child already has.
7. To feel comfortable participating in a group.
8. To foster a sense of creativity and help stimulate curiosity in learning.

## **SJAS Pre-Kindergarten Policies**

### **Ages**

Children in our program must be 4 to 5 years of age, and have reached the minimum age of 4 by September 1<sup>st</sup>. Some exceptions will be made on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the office if your child is 3, and you would like to apply. Children must be able to take care of their bathroom needs independently.

### **Days and Hours of Operation**

Pre-Kindergarten Program (morning only): 8:00-11:00am

Lunch and Recess (optional): 11:00-11:50

Multi-Age Program (afternoon only/optional): 11:50-2:45pm

Classes are held every Monday, Wednesday and every other Friday **OR** Tuesday, Thursday, and every other Friday that school is in session. Enrollment is on a first come first served basis.

### **Pre-K Schedule (Subject to Change)**

8:00 – Arrival/Free Play

8:45 – Snack and Story Time

9:00 – Exercise/Outside

9:30 – Group and Calendar Time

9:45 – Learning Centers/Science

10:15 – Religion

10:30 – Math

11:00 – Lunch and Recess

12:00 – Story Time

12:10 – Rest Time

12:40 – Quiet Toys/Project

1:30 – Library/Blue Bins (Play)

2:00 – Free Play

2:30 – Afternoon Group Time

2:45 – Time to Go!

**Tuition**

Tuition amounts are located on a separate tuition form. Costs do not vary with individual absences or illnesses. Tuition statements are sent out to families each month.

**Transportation**

Transportation is arranged by individual families. SJAS does not own or operate school buses. Pre-K Students are not eligible for busing UNLESS they are picked up or dropped off at a regular designated bus stop and are traveling with a K-6 grade student (according to the public school district policy).

**Insurance**

Catholic Mutual of Omaha insures St. John's Area School with multi-peril coverage.

**Immunizations and Physicals**

Immunizations and a health care summary are required. These forms are provided and may be completed any time before the beginning of the school year. **All forms must be turned in by the first day of school.**

**Provisions for Students with Special Needs**

The parents of any child with special needs must discuss this with the child's teacher prior to school opening in the Fall to assess the child's abilities and to determine if accommodations will be necessary to attend Pre-Kindergarten.

**Discrimination**

This program will not discriminate on the basis of sex, religion, creed, color, national origin, or source of payment.

**Minimum Enrollment**

Parents who enroll their child are participating in a 9-month program. If family circumstances dictate withdrawal from our program, families are asked to give the school a two-week notice – if possible.

### **Visiting the School**

Parents and family members are welcome to visit any time.\*However, please note: Due to the health and safety guidelines for COVID-19, family and visitors may be limited.

### **Supervision**

Children are always supervised by the teacher (or adult volunteers) in charge.

### **If a Child Becomes Ill**

If a child becomes ill at school, the child will have the use of a cot and will be supervised. The parents, or person designated on the emergency card, will be notified.

### **Communicable Diseases**

Parents will be notified of infections or communicable diseases by a written statement from the school. Parents/Guardians should notify SJAS as soon as possible if their child has been diagnosed or exposed to a communicable disease.

### **Exclusion of Ill Children**

We are not allowed by law to have children in attendance at school with a communicable disease. If your child has a fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, they must stay home until the symptom is gone for 24 hours, *without medication*. If your child is vomiting or has diarrhea, they must stay home until 24 hours after those symptoms stop. If symptoms are COVID related, the child must be quarantined according to the MDH COVID K-12 School Decision Tree. Parents are required to notify the school of any absence. Children with rashes will be permitted to return to school with a doctor's note saying they are not or are no longer contagious. The teacher also has the right to send a child home if she feels the child is too sick to be in school.

### **Medications**

If medication is *necessary*, written instructions must be provided and the medication must have the pharmacy label providing the doctor's name and instructions. The medication will be kept in the school office. If refrigeration is necessary, the medication will be kept in the office refrigerator. Cough drops are permitted with a parent note, but must be kept in the school office.

## **Discipline**

Discipline will be handled in a consistent and loving manner. When problems arise, the child(ren) will be redirected away from the conflict toward a different and constructive activity. We encourage the participation and cooperation, understanding that each child is different, growing and learning at his/her own pace.

## **Child Abuse**

Teachers are mandated by law to report any suspected cases of child abuse to the county Social Services.

## **Phone Calls**

The school has one main phone line: 320-968-7972. Please feel free to call at any time. If you would like to speak to the classroom teacher, the best times to call are before and after class sessions.

## **Communication**

The classroom teacher is available before school and after school each day when in session. In addition, a weekly classroom newsletter is sent home with each child. Seesaw Family is also a great way to communicate with the teacher, and emails are always welcomed.

## **Public Relations**

Occasionally the local newspaper may take photos for a story involving a student activity. Your child's photo may appear in the local newspaper or on our social media accounts unless you have signed and returned the 'Please do not publish my child's photo!' form, which states you do not want your child's photo or name made public in any way. Photographs of students will be posted to the school's Facebook and Instagram accounts throughout the school year, but the names of students will never be released on social media platforms.



## **Classroom Policies**

### **Arrival and Dismissal**

Children should be dropped off no earlier than 10 minutes before the start of class. This is to allow the teacher time to prepare for the day. Children should also be picked up as soon as class is ended. Pick-up and drop-off for Pre-K children should take place at door 2. If children from other grades are being picked up as well, please use door 7, located near the parking lot of the church. Buses will pick up and drop off at the front of the building.

### **Absence from School**

If your child is not able to attend school, please call the office and leave a message. The classroom teacher will be notified.

### **School Cancellations**

In the event of bad weather, please check with TV Channels 4, 5, or 11. Any time that Foley Public School District 51 is closed, starting late, or dismissing early, SJAS will do the same, unless parents are notified in advance.

### **Personal Belongings**

Please mark your child's belongings with his/her name. If your child has a valuable, or an especially loved item, please use your best judgement as to whether or not the item should come to school. Toys from home are only allowed in class on days designated for Show-and-Tell.

### **School Bags**

The children need to bring a school bag every day. Papers and projects are usually sent home after each class. We request that it be large enough to accommodate a regular size folder and a blanket. Please make sure your child's name is on their backpack.

### **Homework and Folders**

Homework will be sent home once per week. Homework is always optional. Check the Pre-K Calendar for any special days. Students are encouraged to do their homework because this will lay a good foundation for their future homework habits. Please be sure to check your child's Take-Home Folder daily and send it back the next Pre-K day.

### **Pre-K Clothing and Dress Code**

Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes that are appropriate for the weather. The children go outside each day unless the weather dictates otherwise. During the winter months, the children need snow pants, boots, hats, coat, and mittens. Please put your child's name on these items. It would be a good idea to pack extra socks and mittens as well.

Each child has an "Extra Clothes Bag" at school. Parents are responsible for sending these items to school in the designated bag: 2 pairs of socks, 2 pairs of underpants, 1 pair of shorts, 1 pair of pants, 1 short sleeve shirt, and 1 long sleeve shirt. These items will be kept at school in case of emergencies.

Please remember that flip flops are never allowed in Pre-K. All sandals must have a strap around the back of the foot. Shoes with Velcro straps are encouraged. Since children at this age cannot tie their own shoes, laces are not preferred.

### **Snack**

Snack is served every morning. Milk, water, or juice will always be available, and do not need to be brought to school. All parents are responsible for sending **one snack for the entire class** once per quarter. Please remember to keep snacks on the healthier side since these children are beginning to make food choices that will affect their eating habits for the rest of their lives.

Special days should have special snacks! You may bring special treats for your child's birthday. Please make sure these are store-bought items that are sealed. Check with the teacher to see if any allergies are present in the classroom.

**Lunch**

The Pre-K lunch program at SJAS is independent from the K-6 lunch program. For this reason, St. John's has set up payment for your child's participation in the lunch program to one payment per year or two payments for each half-year. Checks for Pre-K Hot Lunch should be made out separately from checks for the K-6 lunch program. If your child would like milk at lunch time with their cold lunch, they must bring 35 cents to school in their lunchbox.

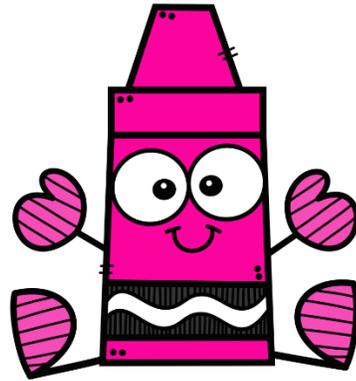
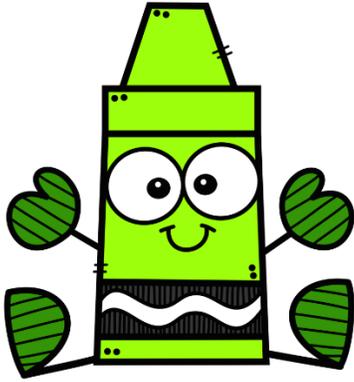
**Field Trips and Special Events**

Parents will be notified in advance when a field trip is arranged and they are welcome to come on the outings! A signed permission slip is required for your child to attend. Occasionally, a special event such as a concert or other entertainment may be planned.

**Pets**

Live animals are allowed to visit the classroom only after the teacher has received a parent's consent for each student. This ensures that none of the students are allergic to a particular animal.

The class also has a "pet" that changes each year. The "animal" will be sent home periodically with students over a weekend. This is planned because the connection of school to home is so important! The class "pet" is sanitized prior to being reintroduced to the class and also before being sent home with a student.



## Pre-Kindergarten Activities

**Art:** Art activities help to improve fine motor coordination through tearing, pasting, drawing, painting, cutting, coloring, building, and other small movements. The art process, not the product, is important.

**Dramatic Play:** Children are encouraged to participate in music and rhythm activities, as well as being actively involved in telling stories, dressing up, and pretend play. Each month, the Dramatic Play Center will be changed to a fun new theme for each child to explore and enjoy.

**Movement and Exercise:** Activities involving large motor skills such as throwing, hopping, running, dancing, climbing, and other physical skills are part of each day in the Pre-K classroom. The purpose is to help develop coordination and to enjoy being physically active.

**Games:** Board games and puzzles are an important part of Pre-K life. This is when we learn how to: take turns, share, and even how to “lose gracefully.” Students will have the opportunity to play games and complete puzzles on a daily basis.

**Religion:** Pre-K children will be introduced to the concepts of prayer, Fruits of the Spirit, Christian Living, and parts of the church. For reference, the Fruits of the Spirit are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

**Stories:** Many story books are used throughout the school year. These stories are chosen carefully and are used to foster an appreciation for literature, to help develop memory skills and pre-reading skills (order of events, summaries, characters, beginning, middle, end). Stories also aid in developing listening skills and curiosity about the world.

**Colors/Shapes/Letters:** Children will learn about basic colors and shapes. They will also be introduced to the entire alphabet in preparation for Kindergarten.

**Math:** Children will be introduced to numbers 0-10 along with limited exposure to larger numbers. They will be asked to sort, count, compare, and develop matching skills.

**Science:** Awareness in our physical world will be developed and fostered through hands-on activities and question and answer sessions. A few of the topics we may learn about (among many others) are: water use and manipulation, plant growth stages, our five senses, and basic knowledge and care of our bodies.

**Language Development:** Children will be encouraged to verbally share ideas, thoughts and experiences. They will also be encouraged to express feelings and opinions.

**Cooking:** There will be opportunities to roll, mix, taste, and decorate. Children will not be allowed in the kitchen, or near ovens, hot plates, etc.

**Technology Use:** Young children are not encouraged to use technology more than necessary. During school closures and special circumstances, families may be asked to help students complete online work per the teacher's request.