

St. Mary Preschool Family Handbook

1642 Silver Street
Ashland, NE 68003
Preschool: 402-944-7509
Rectory Office: 402-944-3554

Purpose: St. Mary Preschool Program is established to give children the opportunity and freedom to explore and experience the world around them, to allow them to search in wonder, and to treasure the joy of learning in a loving Christian atmosphere.

Primary Goals of the Program:

- 1 To engage children in a Christian atmosphere.
- 2 To create an environment that enables children to grow socially, emotionally, physically, spiritually and intellectually.
- 3 To provide appropriate play experiences which contribute to the developmental needs of the child.
- 4 To recognize each child as a unique individual and to develop this uniqueness through the love of learning and playing together.
- 5 To develop communication and interaction skills through spoken language activities and group interaction.
- 6 To foster mental growth by providing the space, equipment and time to: create, investigate, experiment and find joy in discovery.
- 7 To protect and foster the child's health and safety.
- 8 To develop self-control, self-direction and independence.

Enrollment/Withdrawal Procedures: A completed registration form, accompanied by your \$30 registration fee, will hold your child's spot in our preschool. Before your child can attend St. Mary Preschool, we will need a copy of your child's birth certificate, completed "Registration Form" and a record of your child's immunizations. The aforementioned forms can be acquired by contacting the St. Mary Rectory Office. You can access these same forms online at: home.windstream.net/stmaryashland/preschool/. All children registered by June 1st are guaranteed a spot in the class of their choice; we will hire teachers and remodel space to accommodate all paid registrations at this point. Registrations after June 1st may be denied or asked to move to an alternate class as needed. To withdraw your child from the program you must give a written two week notice and pay tuition for those two weeks.

Fees and Payment Responsibilities: Monthly fees are \$105 for St. Mary parishioners and \$115 for non-parishioners, per student, per class. Tuition for August will be prorated based on the number of days of class in that month. A \$30 registration fee is required to enroll. Payment is due on the first day of each month; make checks payable to "St. Mary Preschool". Automatic payments can be arranged with local banks by completing an "Electronic Authorization Form". There is a 5% discount for paying the entire year in full (10 months). There is also a 5% discount for families with multiple children or a child attending both classes. A \$35.00 returned check fee will be charged for any returned checks. After the 5th of every month, a late fee of \$5.00 per day will be assessed. If you are having trouble paying tuition and need to make alternate arrangements, please contact Father Gary Coulter at the St. Mary Rectory Office before late fees are assessed.

Discipline Policy: St. Mary Preschool strives to create a loving, safe and secure environment for your child. Any behavior intended to physically or emotionally harm someone will not be tolerated. Numerous

positive discipline methods such as redirection, positive reinforcement and role modeling will be used to prevent and discourage negative behaviors. Should these attempts fail, a time-out will be enforced. In the case numerous time-outs become necessary, a parent-teacher conference will be called. Parents will be contacted throughout this process, teachers will keep written documentation of behavior and open communication is encouraged.

Hours/Days of Operation:

- 1 Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 8:30 to 11:00 am. Children must be 3-years-old by June 30th to enroll.
- 2 Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons from 12:30 to 3:00 pm. Children must be 4-years-old by June 30th to enroll. Priority will be given to those children entering Kindergarten the following year.

Children who turn the appropriate age after June 30th will be considered for enrollment on an individual basis based on space availability and the Director’s evaluation as to whether or not the child is prepared to enter the desired class. Preschool classes will coincide with the Ashland-Greenwood Public Schools (AGPS) calendar for the school year in regards to Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter breaks only. Other days AGPS is not in session, preschool will still be in session. There will be no preschool on Catholic Holy Days of Obligation.

Daily Schedule: Morning Preschool Schedule

8:30-8:40	Greeting Time
8:40-8:55	Rug Time: show ‘n’ tell, themed book, calendar, weather report
8:55-9:05	Music: rhythm sticks, interactive music games
9:05-9:15	Snack
9:15-10:25	Free Play, Center Time
10:25-10:35	Jesus Time
10:35-10:50	Recess
10:50-11:00	Get Ready for Dismissal

Afternoon Preschool Schedule

12:30-12:40	Greeting Time
12:40-1:00	Rug Time: show ‘n’ tell, themed book, calendar, weather report, site words
1:00-1:10	Music: rhythm sticks, interactive music games
1:10-2:15	Free Play, Center Time
2:15-2:25	Jesus Time
2:25-2:35	Snack
2:35-2:50	Recess
2:50-3:00	Get Ready for Dismissal

Attendances and Absences: It is assumed that your child will attend everyday our preschool is open unless you notify us otherwise. As a courtesy to our teachers, we would appreciate a phone call if your child is ill or will not be attending class for any reason so that our teachers may prepare appropriately. You can report absences by calling the preschool at: 402-944-7509.

Arrival and Departure Procedures: The preschool door will remain closed until 8:20am for morning classes and 12:20pm for afternoon classes as preparations for your child's busy day will be underway until this time. Refer to the "OPEN" and "CLOSED" sign posted in our front window as your signal for entry. We ask that you enter through the door on the west side of the building (17th Street); parking is available on the south side of the building or near the church. We ask that you WALK YOUR CHILD INTO OUR BUILDING AND TO YOUR CAR to ensure the safety of your child. Only persons authorized in writing by parents/guardians may pick up your child and those persons that are unfamiliar to staff will be required to present photo ID. In the case of an emergency, verbal permission can be given by phone for an alternate pick-up. Please be sure to notify the Director of any changes in information regarding persons whom you authorize to pick up your child. Please be punctual when picking up your child at 11:00 am or 3:00 pm. Children become anxious when left waiting!

Transportation: Regular transportation to and from school within the city limits of Ashland is available for \$25 per month. Transportation fees for children outside the city limits of Ashland consist of the \$25 base fee referenced above plus \$5 per mile. *e.g. If your child needs transported to and from a location 5 miles outside of the city limits of Ashland, your transportation fee would be \$50 per month.* All drivers must pass a background check, possess a valid driver's license and hold a current, adequate vehicle insurance policy.

Inclement Weather and Natural Disaster Procedures: St. Mary Preschool will be closed when Ashland-Greenwood Public Schools are closed due to weather. In the event of a late start only, the morning session is canceled but the afternoon class will be in session as normal. Parents should consult local news on the internet, radio or television. In the instance severe weather hits while preschool is in session, all preschoolers and their teachers will take shelter in the church basement. Should time not allow for the class to walk to the church basement, preschoolers will take shelter with their teachers in the Education Center restrooms.

Health Policies: Do not send your child to preschool if you feel your child is too sick to go outside to play or join in normal activities. Children must be fever free (without medication) and vomit/diarrhea free for 24 hours before returning to preschool. Also, please do not send your child to preschool if they have other communicable illnesses such as: pink eye, impetigo, strep throat, flu, severe cough, unknown rashes, etc. Please notify the preschool of your child's illness or suspected illness. The preschool also agrees to notify the parents/guardians should children be exposed to an infectious or communicable disease and what symptoms to be aware of. If your child becomes ill while at preschool, they will be isolated in the Education Center office until you can arrange to pick them up.

Medications: Preschool staff will only give or apply medication, both prescription and non-prescription, with prior written permission accompanied by written instructions from a parent/guardian. The "Medication Permission Form" must be completed and given to the Director with the medication. A medication log will be completed by the Director and will be returned to the parent/guardian. A copy will then be placed in the child's file. Staff will comply with the instructions provided by the parent. Medication must be in its original container, stored according to instructions, clearly labeled for the named child; any excess will be returned to the parent. Medication that is expired or prescribed for another person will not be given to the child.

Snacks: A snack will be provided each day for your child. We attempt to provide healthy snacks and will often correlate our choice for the day with our theme, letter or number of the week. Please be sure to indicate any food allergies on the registration form.

Birthday Celebrations: Birthdays are a very special part of preschool. Your child may bring a birthday treat of their choice to celebrate! Children with summer birthdays may choose their half-birthday or any day they wish to celebrate. Please inform St. Mary Preschool staff when you plan to bring a birthday snack; parents of the birthday child are invited to share the snack time with us, too! Please do not bring birthday invitations to preschool unless you are inviting the entire class. We don't want someone to have hurt feelings because they were not invited.

Show and Tell: This is one of the most important parts of our week! Show and Tell occurs during Friday rug time; see the weekly newsletter for special Show and Tell themes. Children love to bring something special to share with the class. This can be a toy, picture, or a story to share. No guns, knives, or other weapons of any kind, toy or real, are allowed at preschool. Please encourage your students to leave valuable personal belongings at home as the St. Mary Preschool staff will not be responsible for broken or lost items.

Supplies: We ask that you provide a backpack for your child to transport their school work home. All other school supplies will be provided by St. Mary Preschool. Contact the Director for a list of needs in the instance you would like to donate supplies to the school. Diapers and pull-ups will not be allowed as your child MUST be potty trained prior to registration.

Outdoor Play: Weather permitting, outdoor time will be used for discovery and exercise. The attached parking lot and grassy area in the backyard of the rectory will be utilized. Children will be supervised at all times. Please dress your children appropriately. We encourage you to label clothing such as hats and mittens that can easily be misplaced.

Parent/Staff Communication: We encourage parents to seek out the director regularly to learn about their child's progress and ask questions. Parent-Teacher conferences will be held once per semester; we encourage you to attend. Newsletters will be sent home on most Fridays informing you of what we did during the week and plans for the following week. Please read the newsletter as it will keep you well informed of our activities, schedule and any changes.

Visitor Policy: You're welcome to drop in to see your child in action at school! Visitors are great fun, but can often upset our daily routine and cause children to behave in uncharacteristic ways. Please keep visits brief for this reason. This should be a time devoted to your child attending preschool; unfortunately, due to state licensing regulations we cannot allow you to bring siblings during your visit.

Field Trips: An important part of our preschool curriculum involves exposing the children to many varied experiences. We will inform parents of dates for the field trips in advance via newsletters. Parents are invited to join us on field trips!

By law, any known or suspected child abuse or neglect must be reported to child protective services and appropriate authorities. St. Mary Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, national origin, or religion. There will be at least one teacher present per every ten children during the morning session; at least one teacher will be present for every twelve children in the afternoon session.