

# ST. MICHAEL PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK



## Information, Guidelines, Policies & Procedures 2020-2021

St. Michael Preschool is an important mission of  
St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Church.

### ***OUR REASON FOR BEING***

St. Michael Preschool provides a safe and loving environment where the development of the whole child and the joy of learning is nurtured through socialization and play as we grow in our love of Jesus and discover how God is a part of our everyday lives.

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**ST. MICHAEL PRESCHOOL 2020 ADDENDUM:**

**MODIFICATIONS TO POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

Please be aware that some of the policies/procedures outlined in the Parent Handbook may be altered/changed this year specifically concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. The new required and recommended NCDHHS guidelines and procedures listed in the [ST. MICHAEL PRESCHOOL REOPENING PLAN 2020-21](#) as well as those below in **red**, supersede all other policies until further notice. Questions or need for clarification should be referred to the director immediately.



***After reviewing the Reopening Plan and Parent Handbook, please sign and return the Parent Acknowledgement on page 31 of this document by Friday, September 4. Thank you for your support!***

*Dear Parents,*

*Welcome to St. Michael Preschool! Thank you for entrusting your child's very special years to us. As parents, you are your child's primary teachers. As Catholic preschool educators, we also play an important role in your child's life. Our goal is to help them prepare for formal education by nurturing the joy of learning in a safe and loving environment where they can grow in their love of Jesus.*

*We recognize that children whose basic emotional, social, spiritual, and physical needs are met and nurtured through the preschool years will be ready and eager to learn the academics in elementary school. Therefore, the curriculum for each age level is comprised of thematic units utilizing age-appropriate content and materials that allow children to experience success through self-initiated investigations, socialization, and play. Through rich meaningful experiences, your child will build self-confidence, self-esteem, and a sense of wonder about the world around them.*

*It is through a strong home-school connection that we can foster the best start for your child. We accept the responsibility to keep you informed of the learning readiness concepts and skills being taught and your child's developmental progress. Furthermore, parent participation is encouraged and welcomed as we work together to support the preschool's mission.*

*St. Michael Preschool has provided a safe, loving, faith-filled early childhood education to children in our community for over 37 years. The teachers and I look forward to a joyful and rewarding school year filled with love, learning, friendship, and fun. Thank you again for entrusting your child to our loving care and for your support and prayers.*

*God bless, and be assured of my prayers for you and your family,*

***Lisa Ciesla***

**God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him. 1 John 4:16**

## **DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM INFORMATION**

Our preschool programs offer a developmentally appropriate curriculum and each level builds on the previous one. Faith development, language and literacy, math, science, music and movement, and creative expression are included in classrooms daily. Learning objectives within each of these areas are addressed as children participate in hands-on activities that engage their curiosity while helping to build self-confidence and self-esteem in a safe, fun, and loving Catholic community. Parent and caregiver participation is welcomed as we work together to support the preschool's mission.

Whether exploring the many facets of dinosaurs, traveling to Mexico, England, or the moon, retelling a felt board Bible story, play-acting classic fairy tales, collecting bugs, or experimenting with erupting volcanoes, our goal is to expose the children to a wide variety of thematic units and provide a joyful atmosphere of learning through socialization and play. Units are designed to develop prekindergarten and kindergarten readiness skills.

In addition to regular classroom activities and outdoor play, the children attend music and movement 1-2 days a week and monthly Church Mornings. Also, a variety of in-house field trips occur throughout the year to bring the community to the children as well as provide enrichment in the cultural arts.

Teachers in our three, four, and five-year-old programs have a bachelor's degree in education or are certified with an Early Childhood Credential. Staff members receive first aid and CPR training and take continuing education classes yearly. Each classroom, including our 2's program, have a lead teacher and teacher assistant.

### **Two-Year-Old - Two Day (M/W or T/TH)**

The two-year-old program has 10 to 12 children in each class. It is an opportunity for parents to have time away while their children play and socialize in a safe caring environment. Depending on the needs of the children and the class, parents or caregivers may be asked to help in the classroom on a rotating basis. Activities are developmentally appropriate for the age of the children.

**Three-Year-Old - Two Day (T/TH), Three Day (M/W/F), or Four Day (M-TH)**

There are 15 to 16 children in the three-year-old classrooms. The 3’s program places significant emphasis on socialization. The teachers strive to help the children build self-confidence and self-esteem while they learn through play. We encourage and promote interest in imaginative, solitary, and cooperative play. All these activities are enriched with music and stories to learn shapes, colors, and counting while also developing fine and gross motor skills.

**Four-Year-Old - Four Day (M-TH) or Five Day (M-F)**

The four-year-old classes have 16-18 children. The program consists of an array of thematic units that teach kindergarten readiness skills in a fun, exciting, and age-appropriate way. Children are encouraged to look for peer relationships, play cooperatively, explore, create, and contribute to group activities. A multi-sensory handwriting approach is utilized and continued development of fine and gross motor skills is integrated.

**Transitional Kindergarten – Five Day (M-F)**

The TK program has 16 children in the class. This program offers a “kinder, gentler” approach for children who need an extra year to grow before entering a full-day kindergarten. Readiness to learn and question, interest in pretend play, construction and simple games, and utilization of the children’s developing sense of responsibility are all cultivated through this curriculum.

<b>PRESCHOOL PROGRAM</b>	<b>ENTRANCE AGE REQUIREMENTS</b>
2-day 2-year-old (M/W or T/TH)	2 by 8/31/2019
2-day 3-year-old (T/TH)	3 by 8/31/2019
3-day 3-year-old (M/W/F)	3 by 8/31/2019
4-day 3-year-old (M-TH)	3 by 8/31/2019
4-day 4-year-old (M-TH)	4 by 8/31/2019
5-day 4-year-old (M-F)	4 by 8/31/2019
5-day 5-year-old (M-F)	5 by 10/31/2019

A copy of your child’s birth certificate is required for our file. **The director reserves the right to extend the cut-off date for enrollment in all programs.**

## **REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

Priority for enrolling children in our programs is given to those whose parents are members of St. Michael Parish provided they register during the priority enrollment period. Once our parishioners' needs are filled, we open enrollment to Catholics from other parishes and then the public. St. Michael Preschool admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

Registration information will be sent home with currently enrolled children in January and published in the church bulletin in January and February. When the number of applications exceeds the number of spaces available in a program, enrollment in that program is by lottery.

### **Registration Fee:**

**A non-refundable registration fee of \$125** must accompany the application. If placed on a waitlist, the registration fee will be deferred until a seat can be offered to your child.

## **2020/2021 TUITION AND FEES**

<b>Preschool Program/Yearly Rate</b>	<b>Full Rate</b>	<b>Stewardship Rate*</b>
2 Day 2's	\$2010	\$1700
2 Day 3's	\$1690	\$1440
3 Day 3's	\$2545	\$2155
4 Day 3's	\$3390	\$2870
4 Day 4's	\$2830	\$2400
5 Day 4's and 5's (TK)	\$3540	\$3000

### **Stewardship Family:**

St. Michael Church, of which the Preschool is an integral part, is the result of the hard work and sacrifice contributed by parishioners. It is the ongoing time, talent, and treasure – acts of STEWARDSHIP – that make it possible for a community the size of St. Michael Parish to grow and thrive. Accordingly, a discounted rate of tuition, or “Stewardship Family Rate” is offered to active members of St. Michael Parish. To qualify for the Stewardship Family Rate, each family must have a current *Time, Talent, and Treasure Form* from the Parish Office. To learn more please visit <https://stmichaelpreschool.com/stewardship/>

### **Payment Schedule:**

Tuition is a yearly fee, payable as follows-

- Tuition payment in full by June 5, 2020, **or**
- One-half payment by June 5 and one-half by December 5 **or**
- Ten monthly payments - June 2020 and August 2020–April 2021
- No payment will be collected in July

\*Please note that absences cannot be deducted from tuition, and we are unable to provide prepayment or multiple child discounts.

### **Financial Assistance:**

Limited scholarships may be available for children who would be unable to attend the program for financial reasons. To discuss this or to obtain an application, please contact the director at (919) 468-6110 or [lciesla@stmccary.org](mailto:lciesla@stmccary.org).

### **Withdrawal:**

If a child is withdrawn without 30 days written notice, parents are responsible for paying an additional tuition payment.

### **Refunds:**

Unless tuition is paid in full, ***TUITION PAYMENTS ARE NOT REFUNDABLE ONCE THE SCHOOL YEAR HAS BEGUN.*** However, if a family is moving out of the area and the year has not begun, one-half of the June payment and the August payment will be refunded if they were received on time and the seat can be filled from our waiting list. Notice of withdrawal must be in writing.

### **Late Payment Fee:**

A late fee of \$15 per month applies to payments that are not received by the due date.

### **Return Fee:**

Your account will be assessed a fee equal to the charge that the preschool pays for any returned checks.

## **REQUESTS FOR TEACHERS**

A great deal of thought and planning goes into forming classes. Teacher recommendations for the placement of children for social and/or developmental reasons have top priority. Therefore, requests to place children with specific teachers cannot be honored while considering the best interests of all the children. Finally, it is our policy to consult parents of same age siblings regarding their wishes to have the children placed together or separated.

## **GOOD FAITH**

Children are accepted in good faith. However, on occasion, it is necessary to remove a child from the program. The director reserves the right to dismiss a child if, after a conference with the parents, she determines that it is in the best interest of the child and the preschool.

## **WHAT IT MEANS TO BE INDEPENDENTLY TOILET TRAINED**

Children enrolled in our 3, 4, and 5-year-old classes are expected to be able to use the toilet independently. In addition to scheduled toilet breaks for the entire class, the children have access and are certainly able to go to the bathroom whenever they need to. Fully toilet trained children must be able to do the following without adult assistance and minimal adult prompting:

- Be accident-free in regular underwear (not training pants or disposable pull-ups) for a two-week daytime period
- Recognize and be able to tell a teacher in words that they need to use the toilet before they must go
- Hold their toilet need until they can get to the bathroom from a classroom or the playground or while waiting in line for other children to finish using the toilet
- Get on and off the toilet mostly independently
- Pull down/up their pants/underwear or lift dress/skirt (teachers can help with difficult snaps or buttons if needed)
- Wipe themselves after using the toilet
- Flush the toilet
- Wash/dry their hands

Please be aware that performance in a preschool setting may not be the same as it is at home. With 15-18 children in the class, teachers will do their best to encourage and remind children but are not able to continuously monitor each

child for non-verbal cues as the day's activities proceed. There are a lot of distractions at preschool with friends, toys, and fun activities that a less confident, not completely independently potty-trained child may have trouble maintaining dryness/cleanliness. We encourage you to foster this independence at home and in public.

We certainly do grant grace and will care for all children. If a child has an accident, teachers will help him/her change into dry clothes, mostly encouraging him/her to change independently. The wet/soiled clothes will be sent home in a bag. If accidents persist, parents will be called to discuss the child's readiness.

Please note that this policy is not in place to shame or punish a child or inconvenience the family. Rather, cleaning accidents in a preschool setting (the child, seat, floor/rug, etc.) is time-consuming. Our 3, 4, and 5-year-old classrooms are not outfitted for this, as it takes teachers away from spending time interacting with and facilitating the entire class in a fun and safe manner. This policy is intended to ensure the safety and happiness of all children and staff at the preschool. Thank you for your support and understanding.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

School begins at 9:30 am each morning and ends at 12:30 pm each afternoon. Children need to know that someone will bring them to school on time and be waiting when school is over. Therefore, please be prompt both in bringing your child to school and in picking up. Center routines and activities begin promptly each day and are disrupted by late arrivals. Thank you for your cooperation with this important request.

## **Arrival/Health Screening Procedures:**

- Arrival in the morning will begin no earlier than 9:15 a.m.
- St. Michael Preschool recognizes that one of the most critical components is getting the students safely in and out of the building at the start and end of the day. We ask for added patience as the process will look and feel different to ensure the health and safety of our community.
- To safely spread out our preschool communities on campus to minimize the number of people gathering in one place, parents have been assigned a

parking location (the same for arrival and dismissal), health screening station, and dismissal location. [CLICK HERE](#) for your assignments based on your child's age group.

- CDC/NCDHHS guidelines recommend families NOT to carpool with other families.
- A required daily health screening of children, staff, and any essential visitor will be conducted to identify symptoms, diagnosis, or exposure to COVID-19.
- Temperatures will be taken using a no-touch infrared thermometer. Anyone with a temperature reading of 100.4 or higher will not be permitted inside.
- Following passing criteria on the health screening, students will be escorted to their classroom by their teaching assistant.
- Parents must not give a pain reliever at home to mask a fever, which could pose serious harm to others in our preschool family and could result in dismissal from our program. We must look out for each other's best interests.

#### Dismissal Procedure:

- At dismissal, parents will locate their child's class at an assigned outdoor location. The teacher or assistant will walk the child(ren) directly to the parent.
- Please maintain social distance from teachers and other families during arrival and dismissal.
- The preschool office phone will not be monitored during arrival or dismissal periods. Parents must call the parish reception phone at 919-468-6100 to get in contact with the preschool.
- [CLICK HERE](#) For the detailed arrival and dismissal procedure, including a map, for your child's age group.

**Please Note: Children will not be dismissed to anyone other than a parent or legal guardian without prior written permission and proper identification.**

### **Parking:**

Parents and others who bring children to or pick children up from the preschool should park in designated spaces only, follow directional signals, and use extra care when driving through the parking lot. **Also, please carry or hold your children by the hand as you walk to and from your car.**

### **Late Pick-Up Fee:**

Please arrive promptly for your child's dismissal time. If children are not picked up at dismissal, parents will need to pick their children up in the preschool office. Except in the case of an emergency, a fee of \$10 for every ten minutes past dismissal is charged when children are picked up after 12:40 pm.

### **Emergencies:**

If you need to reach the preschool staff in an emergency, call the preschool office 919-468-6110 or the parish office 919-468-6100.

It is essential, particularly with sudden illness, a suspected case of the COVID-19, or another emergency, that the preschool office be able to reach you during the school day. Please make sure you keep your contact information as well as your emergency contacts up to date with the preschool office. Failure to be able to get in contact with you may result in dismissal from the preschool.

If you need to sign your child out before normal dismissal time, please **notify the preschool office in advance to plan for your child to be brought to the main courtyard entrance.** Parents will use the doorbell to signal arrival and your child will be walked to the door. In an emergency, please contact the office directly at **(919) 468-6110**

### **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

In addition to the illness policy listed below, parents are responsible for knowing and understanding the COVID symptoms and health screening questions. If a child does not meet the criteria for admittance to school on any given day, parents must refrain from bringing their child and/or siblings. For the health and safety of everyone, no exceptions will be made. [COVID symptoms outlined by CDC](#). Also, parents are encouraged to read the research on [children and COVID-19](#).

If your child has chronic allergies, you will need to work with their pediatrician to find a way to best manage the symptoms. In answering the health screening questions each morning, parents are affirming the health of their child and recognize that if there is any doubt, they should keep their child home, for the benefit of all. Failure to comply with any of this policy may result in dismissal.

### **Illness Policy:**

For the well-being of all the children and the staff, your child should not be sent to school if any of the following conditions exist:

1. **Fever, vomiting, diarrhea.** Your child must be kept home for 24 hours **after** his/her temperature is normal and/or vomiting and diarrhea has ceased.
2. **Frequent and productive coughing and sneezing.**
3. **A runny nose accompanied by green drainage or that requires constant wiping.**

**Please Note:** Sick children will be sent home. If your child arrives sick, he/she will not be permitted to stay. Also, if your child becomes sick while at school, you will be called and required to pick him/her up immediately.

### **Health and Immunization Record:**

A current medical form, including immunization records and a physical exam within twelve months of the beginning of school, must be on file in the preschool office before you drop your child off on his/her first day. **If your child typically experiences frequent cough or running nose due to allergies or asthma, please have your child's pediatrician document that on the Statement of Health form.**

### **Medication:**

Please speak with your child's teacher and the director if your child will need medication during school hours. Staff will administer medication only if a child's parent or guardian provides written consent, and the medication is available in an appropriately labeled and stored container with written instructions from the child's physician on the proper administration of the medication.

**Chronic Conditions and Allergies (including Asthma):**

These conditions ***must*** be brought to the attention of the director and teachers. If your child's food allergies are severe enough to warrant the use of an epi-pen, you ***must*** provide a snack daily for your child. On special birthdays and holidays in the classroom, please remember to send a special treat for your child.

**Food Sensitivity/Restrictions:**

Please see the director if your child has a food sensitivity or restriction with no documented medical action plan. You will be required to document this information with an explanation of the sensitivity and/or restriction and associated symptoms. Please note that once the sensitivity requires such, a formal action plan must be submitted by your child's physician.

**Communicable Disease:**

Any incidence of a communicable disease, contagious infection, or parasite must be reported to the preschool office. The preschool office will notify parents of any such cases and provide any necessary information. Cleaning and sanitizing of the preschool following proper protocol will be done immediately to make every effort to stop the spread of the disease, infection, or parasite.

**Absences:**

If your child is sick or will be absent from school, please inform your child's teachers or contact the preschool office if your child will be absent. 919-468-6110

**Handwashing:**

Studies have shown that proper handwashing is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. To provide as germ-free a learning environment as possible, the children are required to wash their hands when they arrive at school, before snack, and after using the restroom. The teacher may ask a child to wash their hands at other times throughout the day, for example after blowing their nose.

**Rest:**

Small children must go to bed early. School is not fun for tired children; it feels more like a burden than a pleasure. Please be sure that your child gets enough rest and eats a well-balanced breakfast.

**Allergy Sensitive Preschool:**

To maintain a safe environment for children with life-threatening allergies, snacks may not contain peanuts/nuts or peanut/nut products. ***This includes foods that have been produced in a plant with nut products.*** Please carefully read the labels on the food you send in.

**Safe Snacks:**

Children will bring a labeled water bottle from home or teachers will provide a disposable paper cup. Water fountains will not be used.

Children will bring their own snack to school. We ask that it be just one or two items that can be easily enjoyed by your child. Please ensure it is a peanut/nut-free snack closely following our allergy-sensitive policy found above. Please also refer to the Healthy Power Snacking information below for snack ideas for your child.

Due to potential choking hazards, all grapes, cherries, and mini tomatoes need to be cut in half. Popcorn and hard candy are not permitted. SunButter must be clearly labeled.

Given the nature of the pandemic, we ask that you be particularly mindful of using foods/containers/lunchboxes/drinks in which your child can handle the greatest amount of independence.

**Healthy Power Snacking:**

The possibilities of healthful snacking are endless. Ideally, snacks should be a good balance of carbohydrates, protein, and fat. They should also include, when possible, natural foods that are high in protein and fiber.

When protein is consumed with carbohydrates high in fiber (think fruits, veggies,

and whole grains) the benefits are endless. Protein and fiber help to keep blood sugars even and decrease the tendencies for blood glucose spikes as well as the subsequent blood sugar crashes. Fiber helps to keep little tummies full for longer periods. This can be advantageous when you need to run to a store following pick up or if lunch is delayed due to some unforeseen circumstance.

Lastly, the fiber in combination with good water intake will help to regulate your child’s digestive system and decrease the frequency of constipation.

Overall, the combination of complex carbohydrates (fruits, veggies, and whole grains) with protein and heart-healthy fats, help children to maintain their energy levels for longer periods, thereby, increasing your child's "learning ready" time and decrease the likelihood of temper tantrums possibly due to low blood sugar levels. A well-fueled body can handle the curveballs of life with ease. Try it out not only for your children but for yourself as well.

Below is a list of nutritious foods that most children enjoy including commonly available snacks that are free of peanuts and tree nuts. We think that you will find it helpful, but it is not a complete list. We encourage you to be creative and to check with your child’s teachers if you have any questions.

**Please choose 1 Protein and 1 Carbohydrate to make your snack a “Power Snack”.**

Protein	Carbohydrate
Beans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• edamame</li> <li>• bean salsas, salads, or dips</li> </ul>	Whole Grain Crackers and Chips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 to 5 grams of fiber per serving is ideal</li> <li>• Triscuits, Wheat Thins</li> <li>• bean chips, whole-grain tortilla chips</li> <li>• Goldfish, pretzels</li> </ul>
Hummus SunButter (sunflower seed butter)	Whole Grain Cereals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wheat, Corn, Rice Chex,</li> <li>• Oatmeal Squares (Life Cereal)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kashi</li> <li>• Cheerios (Multi-Grain and Oat)</li> </ul>
<p>Yogurt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• watch for hidden sugars in flavored varieties</li> </ul> <p>Milk / Soy Milk</p>	<p>Fresh Fruits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• apples, pears, watermelon, cantaloupe, grapes (cut in half), berries, peaches, etc.</li> <li>• Other acceptable fruits include applesauce, fruit spreads, and raisins</li> </ul>
<p>Cheese</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• hard cheeses - cheddar, mozzarella</li> <li>• soft cheeses - cottage, ricotta, brie</li> <li>• cream cheese</li> <li>• cheese sticks, cubes, slices</li> </ul>	<p>Fresh Veggies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• carrot sticks, celery, cauliflower, cucumbers, red peppers, green peppers, broccoli, zucchini, cherry tomatoes (cut in half), etc.</li> </ul>
<p>Meats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• slices of turkey, ham, or lean beef</li> <li>• turkey pepperoni</li> </ul> <p>Eggs (hardboiled)</p>	<p>Whole Grain Breads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% whole wheat or whitewheat</li> <li>• pita, tortilla, bagel, muffin</li> <li>• can be used with fruit spread, sun butter, deli meat or cheese</li> </ul>

**Birthday Celebrations:**

For the safety of everyone, please do not send in any edible OR non-edible treats (i.e., goodie bags). Teachers will celebrate the child’s birthday within the classroom. Children will be recognized on their birthday with a special crown/hat/song, etc. this way the children can still celebrate their special day.

**Clothing:**

Per NCDHHS Child Care guidelines, preschool children are not required to wear face shields or cloth face masks. If a child (over the age of 2) develops symptoms during the day and needs to wait for pick-up by a parent, he/she may be asked to wear a mask if he/she will tolerate it. If a parent chooses for their child to wear a face covering, the child MUST be independent in its use, both in wearing,

changing and disposal of the mask. Teachers will not be able to assist a child with proper care/wearing of the mask.

Children should wear close-toed shoes with rubber soles. Sandals and leather-soled shoes pose a safety hazard when children play on the playground equipment. All clothing should be suitable for outdoor play and easy to manage. **All strings must be removed from jackets and shirts (hoods and hems). They pose an immediate danger to children when they play on the equipment.**

Outdoor play is a regular part of our day and your child must always be well enough to go outdoors with the other children. **Please dress your child appropriately for the weather and be sure to put sunscreen on him/her before coming to school.**

**All items that your child brings to school should be marked with his/her first and last name.**

### **Preschool Safety Protocols:**

The safety of our preschoolers and families is of utmost importance. In collaboration with David Wulff, Director of St. Michael Campus Security and the Cary Police Department, safety and security measures for our entire Parish are routinely reviewed and evaluated. The following procedures have been established:

- The preschool's front door and playground door will remain locked throughout the school day.
- All classroom doors are locked throughout the school day only accessible by the teacher key.
- The interior hallway doors leading to the stairwells up to the Trinity offices or down to the Church office are locked, only accessible by staff key.
- All parish staff has the Rave Panic Button App on their phones if an immediate call for fire, police, or emergency services is warranted.
- The Fire Lane located at the back-parking lot nearest the playground must not be used for loading or unloading children. Traffic cones are used to mark this fire lane.

### **Fire Drills/Severe Weather Drills/Emergency Evacuation Drills:**

Fire drills are conducted monthly. Severe weather and emergency evacuation drills are conducted periodically.

### **Visitors:**

Per CDC/NCDHHS recommendations, we must limit non-essential visitors/volunteers to our preschool. Exemptions include those healthcare professionals who support children with special health care needs, early intervention coordinators, and providers for children with IFSP/IEP's. Please see the director first if you wish to employ a private speech therapist or other service providers.

When children are present, parents and other individuals should enter through the courtyard doors, and unless dropping off or picking up children, sign in and obtain a VISITOR badge at the office. Any doors may be used to exit the building.

### **CUSTODY AGREEMENTS**

The safety and well-being of our students and staff is always our priority. To ensure everyone's safety, we request a copy of family custody agreements to keep in our records.

### **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

There are many ways for parents to become involved in the preschool despite the protocols in place due to the pandemic. While we are not permitted to allow visitors or classroom volunteers, we encourage you to participate in the virtual community your child's teacher creates. Engage with us through email or on social media by sharing pictures and messages that pertain to your child's learning. At times we may request items for the classroom, we are grateful for what you can provide.

## **CALENDAR/WEATHER CLOSINGS**

The calendar will remain as scheduled; however, special programs will be modified to avoid the congregation of large groups and virtual alternatives will be added as they can be scheduled.

Our policy is to assess conditions on St. Michael Campus and the local area to determine closings or delays at the preschool. We understand this may not always reflect weather conditions in your area or follow the Wake County School closings or delays, so please use your discretion when bringing your child to school.

Parents will be informed of school closings and delays via our all call communication system through the primary phone, text message, and email provided.

On delayed openings, Early Arrival and Lunch Programs are canceled and children bring a peanut/nut-free lunch and attend from 11:00-1:00 pm. We understand that this later dismissal time may interfere with younger children's nap schedules, so again, please use your best judgment in sending your younger preschooler these days.

### **Make-up Days:**

In the event of excessive closures due to unforeseen circumstances, make-up days are to be determined by the director.

## **IN-HOUSE FIELD TRIPS**

For everyone's safety, the Diocese of Raleigh is prohibiting any in-house field trips until further notice. Diocesan policy regarding field trips, NC law, and other safety considerations prohibit us from taking field trips. However, efforts are made to bring the community to the children with "in-house field trips" and parents are encouraged to plan after-school outings that enhance what the children are learning in the classroom.

## **EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS**

**SAFETY MEASURES:** For both programs, children will be assigned to smaller groupings consisting of their classmates and/or age group. Weather permitting, the children will enjoy the playground or other outdoor activities. On inclement weather days, children will be divided by their assigned groups to unused indoor space. Classroom and teacher assignments will vary. Please Note: No drop-in option is available until further notice.

Program fees are listed below. Days missed due to illness cannot be reimbursed. However, if a child withdraws from the program, a refund will be issued. Space is limited. If the registration cap is hit before September 1, a lottery will be conducted. Otherwise, registration will be on a first-come-first-served basis. Extended Day registration forms, along with payment, should be turned into the preschool office. Program fees are due in full before the first day of program attendance.

### **Early Arrival:**

An early arrival program is available for all enrolled children Monday through Friday beginning at 8:15 am. The cost is \$6 per month, or \$5.50 for children attending weekly for the year. Classroom and teacher assignments will vary each day and will be provided upon arrival. Students in the morning program will split their time between the classroom and playground. Snack or breakfast is not provided during this program. Children are escorted to their regular classrooms at 9:15 am.

### **Lunch Program:**

The lunch program is for children in the 3, 4, and 5-year-old classes. Children can stay from 12:30-1:30 pm on most Tuesdays and Wednesdays throughout the school year (see school calendar for exceptions [www.stmichaelpreschool.com](http://www.stmichaelpreschool.com)). Students will need to bring a nut-free lunch, and weather permitting, will go outside on the playground after they have finished eating. Parents are requested to wait at the entrance to the playground for teachers to dismiss their children. The cost is \$6 per month, or \$5.50 for children attending weekly for the year.

### **Adventure Camp:**

Adventure Camp will not begin until we are permitted to run programs that mix different age groups.

Adventure Camp is offered once a month, typically on the first Thursday and Friday from 12:30 – 2:00 pm. It is offered to students in the 3, 4, and 5-year-old preschool programs. Students in Adventure Camp will need to bring a nut-free lunch. Following lunch, students will explore, create, and investigate. Each camp is theme-based (see themes on the registration form). Parents will pick up students by entering the preschool main doors. The Adventure Camp Fee is \$12.50 per camp; no discount is offered.

### **AROUND THE GROUNDS:**

Due to the health department restrictions, congregating on campus before or after school is prohibited until further notice. Please remember to maintain social distance from others at all times. All adults are required to wear masks while on campus.

It is fun to visit before and after school. The children may play sidewalk games, or if the St. Michael School classes are not outside, they may play on the playground or the grass area behind the church. For the safety of the children, please do not allow them to play on the hill near the parish offices or the outside staircases. Please be considerate when playing near trees and flower beds.

**Please Note:** Running is not permitted in the hallways or classrooms.

### **SAFE ENVIORNMENT: Ensuring the Safety of Children**

Safety and well-being are vital to the growth and development of children.

Helping to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in our care is part of our job as teachers, part of our duty as citizens, and part of our partnership with parents. Children should be given every chance to live and grow, free from abuse and neglect.

Following North Carolina Law, staff members will report observations or suspicions of child abuse and neglect to the Department of Social Services. By our guidelines, the suspicion that a minor has been abused or neglected will be

reported to the preschool director. She must ensure that the allegation is reported to the Child Protective Services Division of the Department of Social Services. The director will also notify the Pastor of St. Michael Church and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools that such a report has been made and follow the guidance of the Child Protective Agency regarding notification of parents or legal guardians.

Suspicious of child sexual abuse by a member of the staff, other church employee or volunteer, will be reported to the Director of the Diocesan Program for Child and Youth Protection, 1-866-535-SAFE. In addition to notifying Diocesan officials, the civil authorities will be notified. A staff member, volunteer, or church employee who is accused of child sexual abuse will be suspended, reassigned, or given leave pending the investigation. When the allegation involves church personnel or volunteers, the parents or legal guardian of the child or children will be notified of the allegation of abuse. Any staff member or volunteer who admits is found guilty of or pleads no contest to charges of child sexual abuse will be dismissed.

### **VOULUNTEERS:**

**We value our parents and volunteers and all they bring to our community; however, we will follow the current recommendation of the CDC/NCDHHS to restrict parents and/or volunteers from entering the building until further notice.**

Parent participation is welcomed. If you are interested in spending time in your child's classroom, please speak with the teacher to coordinate a day and time for a visit.

Many activities depend on parents volunteering their time and talent. As a result, there will be various times during the year that we ask for help. We invite you to play an important role in your child's early education.

### **Three, Four, and Five-Year-Old Parent Volunteer Guidelines:**

Thanks for joining us in the classroom. We know that you will have fun and we ask you to please remember:

- To sign in at the office and obtain a VISITOR badge before you go to the classroom
- To ask your child's teacher what activities you will be helping with and what expectations she has for you
- That you are here to spend the morning with all the children, not just your child
- Positive conversation... Use lots of praise and encouragement... e.g. "Good work! I like the way you..." etc.
- To wash your hands and wear gloves when helping with snack
- To encourage the children to help you clean up in centers, games, projects or in any other area in which you work with them
- To be discreet in sharing details of the morning with others; never discuss any child's progress, behavior, or development with his/her parents or with the parents of another child

We appreciate your cooperation with these guidelines, and we hope you have as much fun in our classroom as we do!!

### **ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD:**

You will be surprised at the intense thinking that goes into your child's pictures and projects. Saying such things as, "Tell me about your picture," will help encourage your child's best efforts. Find a special place to keep pictures and other items your child makes and watch his/her improvement as the year progresses. Each piece of work is important to your child, so please do not let him/her see you toss it in the wastebasket. Your child's artwork is a result of his/her creativity and development. ***Process, not product,*** is our goal.

### **DAILY ACTIVITIES:**

Parents will be kept informed of their child's daily activities through emails, newsletters, teacher notes, and **virtual communications. Opportunities for parents to "see" the meaningful learning occurring for their child will be available through class photo sites, recorded videos, and/or social media posts.**

## **CONFERENCES AND EVALUATIONS:**

Due to the protocols during the pandemic, it is likely conferences will be held virtually or over the phone. The preschool office will notify you accordingly.

In all our preschool programs, teachers communicate verbally and in writing with parents in an ongoing manner to convey information about the progress of their children. Formal conferences for our three, four, and five-year-old children are held in January.

In addition to formal conferences, parents or teachers may request meetings at any time during the year. Parents who wish to discuss their child should make an appointment with their child's teacher. This may be done in person, by email, or by leaving a message for your child's teacher with the office at 919-468-6110.

**Please Note:** Morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up are not appropriate times for conferences.

## **SEPARATION ANXIETY**

Some young children go through a stage of difficulty in separating from a parent in a new or unfamiliar environment. Many times, as preschool educators we see this occur at the beginning of the school year, but it can occur at other times. Most children pass through this phase quickly and become comfortable with being at school and separate happily from their parents. However, the way we address this issue is vitally important to the child, the parents, and the preschool classroom.

Most often, staying in the classroom with a child who is having difficulty prolongs his/her anxiety. Therefore, we generally encourage parents to drop their child off and leave the room. \*

If necessary, we work with parents to formulate a strategy for a happy drop-off, and we comfort a child who is having difficulty in ways he/she is used to, always assuring the child that either Mom or Dad will return soon. The information you provide on the "About My Child" form helps provide insight, as well as from consulting with you if the situation arises.

\* Concerned parents are welcome to watch their child through the observation window in the classroom, to wait for a time in the office, or to call during the day to see how their child is doing.

### **GUIDING BEHAVIOR**

Appropriate behavior is always encouraged and reinforced. Our teachers have incorporated effective strategies from the Second Step Program to guide the development of self-regulation and social-emotional skills such as problem-solving and self-talk.

When undesirable behaviors occur, positive guidance and redirection of a child's attention is generally sufficient action. In extreme situations, a child may be given a time-out in the classroom or be removed from the classroom to think about and/or talk about his/her behavior. Physically aggressive behavior such as biting, kicking, hitting, etc. cannot be tolerated. To protect all the children and encourage acceptable behavior, the staff will intervene immediately if a child becomes physically aggressive.

Teachers will work closely with parents to help children be successful at school. However, parents must understand that consistently aggressive or disruptive behavior is not acceptable and may result in dismissal from the program.

## **SPECIAL NEEDS**

The diocese of Raleigh Catholic Schools acknowledges that there are students who require special services to meet their full human potential. St. Michael Preschool is committed to all students succeeding to the best of their abilities. If a student has a diagnosed special need (documented by licensed medical personnel) accommodations may be offered that can be reasonably made within the regular preschool program and when the school has the resources available to accommodate the student's needs. However, modifications or alterations to the program will not be made. If a student cannot be accommodated within the preschool program, every effort will be made to assist with placement in another school program beyond St. Michael Preschool.

## **SCHOOL BAGS**

Children are expected to bring a small backpack or school bag each day. This allows them to be responsible for their items like show-and-share, hats, and gloves, etc. Also, please plan to regularly check your child's school bag for artwork and preschool information.

## **ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER/EMAIL CHANGES**

Please contact the office if your address, phone number, e-mail address, or emergency information changes.

## **PLAYGROUND SAFETY RULES**

Until further notice, per health department guidelines the playground is not open to the St. Michael community or our preschool families; it is reserved for preschool use during the week. St. Michael Parish playground is designed and developmentally appropriate for use by children between the ages of two and seven. The smaller playground is specifically designed for use by children three and under, and the large playground is for children 3-7. When the center is open, the playground is reserved for use by the children who attend the preschool programs. Children who attend St. Michael School often use the big playground early in the morning and in the afternoon.

The playground is open for use by parishioners at other times. At no time, however, are children permitted on the playground without adult supervision.

Listed below are the playground rules that we teach the children. We request your cooperation in following the rules and in reinforcing them.

1. Wait for your turn.
2. DO NOT THROW ROCKS OR SAND.
3. Please do not push ahead when standing or walking in line.
4. Swings
  - Walk far behind, or far in front of the swings so you will not get hit.
  - Please, do not swing on your belly.
  - Only one person at a time on a swing.
5. Play with trucks only in the special areas we show you.
6. Only one child at a time on ladders, slides, and pole.
7. Slide down the slides, feet first, on your bottom.
8. Parallel Bars are for upper body use only.
  1. Do not climb or stand on bars.
  2. Do not spin around on them. They are too close together.
9. Never leave the playground without a teacher.
10. Listen to **EVERY** teacher on the playground, not just your classroom teachers.
11. DO NOT CLIMB ON THE FENCE.
12. Spiral: **GO UP ONLY**. Use the slides, the stairs, or the fireman's pole to go down.

### **ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT**

Here at St. Michael Preschool we take pride in providing high-quality programs for young children. To help assure that such programs continue, the Diocese of Raleigh Early Childhood directors, in conjunction with the Diocesan Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, has developed and implemented the use of an assessment tool for evaluating and improving our early childhood programs. It is based on **NAEYC** accreditation standards, American Montessori Standards, NC Foundations Childcare requirements, the Diocesan Handbook for Administrators, and the Early Childhood Quality Assessment Instrument.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY**

St. Michael Preschool was established in 1983. The Center is operated under the rules and regulations set by the pastor of St. Michael the Archangel Roman Catholic Church and the preschool director.

### **QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNS:**

Communication is crucial to the success of our program. Anything unclear should be addressed immediately.

- Questions or concerns about your child or classroom activities should be discussed first with your child's teacher. If your child's teacher is unable to satisfy your concerns, contact the director.
- Questions, comments, or concerns about the facility, program, staff, or policies should be referred to the director. If the director is unable to satisfy your concerns, you should seek a meeting with our pastor, Fr. Michael Burbeck at 919-468-6100.

### **PRESCHOOL OFFICE COMMUNICATION:**

As always, St. Michael Preschool values accurate, clear, and timely communication. We will utilize our typical communication methods, such as email updates, director's newsletters, [preschool website](#), social media, and the Blackboard Connect notification system.

Parents are encouraged to check the preschool website Parent Resources tab for the [St. Michael Preschool News](#). Also, our social media is updated often with photos of the wonderful learning occurring. Our Closed Facebook Page will include photos and videos.

#### **How to Reach Us...**

**St. Michael Preschool**  
**804 High House Road**  
**Cary, North Carolina 27513**  
Office: 919-468-6110  
FAX: 919-468-6130

#### **Follow Us On...**



**Twitter:** @stmpreschoolnc

**Instagram:** @stmpreschoolnc

**Facebook:** StMichael Preschool (Friend us and then request to join our closed group)

Lisa Ciesla, Director, [lciesla@stm Cary.org](mailto:lciesla@stm Cary.org)

Michele Lanuti, Administrative Assistant, [mlanuti@stm Cary.org](mailto:mlanuti@stm Cary.org)

The preschool office is located on the middle floor of the Trinity Center

Office Hours: 9 am – 1 pm August through May

Summer hours by appointment only



**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT:**  
**ST. MICHAEL PRESCHOOL**

**REOPENING PLAN & PARENT HANDBOOK**

I read and understand the 2020-21 St. Michael Preschool Parent Handbook and Reopening Plan and agree to follow all school policies and procedures stated therein.

I understand in the case of a public health crisis/pandemic situation, guidance from public health experts (i.e. NCDHHS and/or CDC) shall be incorporated into the preschool's plan for prudent precautions for student/faculty health. This plan may be modified, as necessary.

Parents accept and assume all risks of returning their child to school.

**Please print your child's name and sign below:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Signature

**Please sign and return this form by**  
**Friday, September 4, 2020**