

ST. MICHAEL PRESCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK



Information, Guidelines, Policies & Procedures

2025-2026

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

Mission Statement: 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 are 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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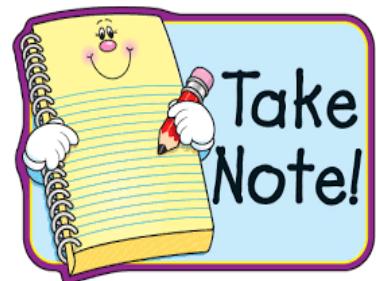
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PRESCHOOL POLICY/PROCEDURE STATEMENT 2025-2026

Please be aware that at any time, the policies and procedures outlined in this Parent Handbook may be altered/changed, in response to direction or recommendations from St. Michael Church, the Diocese of Raleigh, Wake County Health Dept., and/or the CDC. Questions or need for clarification should be referred to the director immediately.



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

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 teacher. 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 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 exploration and discovery, 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 of keeping 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 40 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,

Paula Renke

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 by boat, train, or airplane, 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, monthly Bible stories, and Preschool Prayer time at church. 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 programs have a 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 has a lead teacher and a teacher assistant.

Two-Year-Old – Two Day (T/TH) or Three Day (M/W/F):

The two-year-old program has 10 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 (T/W/Th or 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): Not offered this year

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.

Age Requirements:

2-Year-Old Programs	2 by 8/31
3-Year-Old Programs	3 by 8/31
4-Year-Old Programs	4 by 8/31
Transitional Kindergarten Program	5 by 10/31

*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 emailed 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 waitlist.

Registration Fee:

A **non-refundable registration fee of \$150** must accompany the application along with the first 1/10 tuition payment. If placed on a waitlist, the first tuition payment will be deferred until a seat can be offered to your child.

TUITION - 2025-2026

Preschool Program/Yearly Rate	Full Rate	Monthly Full Rate	Catholic Steward Rate*
2 Day Programs	\$2,464	\$246.40/month	\$2,292
3 Day Programs	\$3,309	\$330.90/month	\$3,077
4 Day Programs	\$3,998	\$399.80/month	\$3,718
5 Day Program - 4 year olds	\$4,228	\$422.80/month	\$3,932
Discovery Day Friday	\$725	\$90.65/month	n/a

****Tuition, once paid, is not refundable****

Absences for sickness, travel, or holidays cannot be deducted from tuition payments.

***Catholic Stewardship Rate:** Catholic Steward families are those who are dedicated to raising their children in the Catholic faith and are active in the parish community. These active families attend Sunday Mass regularly and serve in the community through gifts of time, talent, and treasure. If you would like to apply for the St. Michael Steward Tuition Rate, the online application form can be found at the following link <http://www.stmichaelcary.org/steward-tuition-rate/>

TUITION PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Tuition is a yearly fee, **payable in one of the following intervals:**

- 9 equal monthly payments due on the first of each month beginning on August 1 and concluding on April 1,
- Payment in full on September 1, or
- One-half of tuition minus first 1/10 tuition payment on August 1, and remaining half by January 5.

Note: your first tuition payment was made at the time of enrollment. Tuition is late if not received by the 5th of the month and will incur a late fee of \$20.00.

Your tuition balance is always available for your review in your Brightwheel account.

Payment Methods:

- Set up auto draft through Brightwheel
- Contact the office if there are special circumstances that require alternate arrangements.

Return Check Fee:

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

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 prenke@stmcary.org.

Withdrawal/Dismissal:

Thirty days written notice is required before a child is withdrawn from the program.

Our policy is that refunds will not be made once tuition has been paid.

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.

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.

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 use the toilet
- 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 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 may cause a not completely independently potty-trained child to 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 DAY PROCEDURES

Drop-off and Pick Up: For the safety and security of the children and staff: the following procedures have been established.

- Be Prompt: 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. It is important to establish a routine for the child as well as to respect the teacher's time.
 - **Late Pick-Up Fee:** Except in the case of an emergency, there is a late fee of \$10 when pick-up is made 10 minutes past your child's dismissal time (per child) and an additional \$1 for every 1 minute increment.
- 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 hand as you walk to and from your car.**

- **Please Note:** Children will not be dismissed to anyone other than a parent or legal guardian without prior written permission and proper identification.
- While preschool is in session, parents and other visitors should ring the doorbell at the courtyard doors, and unless dropping off or picking up children, sign in and obtain a VISITOR badge at the office.

Communication will be emailed prior to the start of school with detailed information regarding arrival, dismissal, and parking procedures.

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, 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.

If you need to sign your child out before normal dismissal time, please notify the preschool office in advance via phone or email (preschool@stmcary.org) 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

Parents are responsible for following the health policies outlined below. If there is any doubt, a child should be kept at home, for the benefit of all. Failure to comply with any of these policies may result in dismissal from the program.

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.

General Health:

For your child's comfort and out of consideration for the other children and staff, children must remain home if they have had any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours:

- fever
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- frequent cough*
- frequent sneezing*
- continuous nasal discharge
- rash
- conjunctivitis (pink eye)

Children must be fever-free
(without the use of medication)
for 24 hours before returning to school.

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, it is suggested that you provide a snack for your child during special events in the classroom.

Allergies: *Children with chronic allergies with symptoms such as a frequent cough, sneezing, or runny nose, should work with their pediatrician to determine an effective way to manage symptoms. The preschool reserves the right to request a written note from the doctor.

Communicable Diseases: Parents should notify the office immediately if their child is diagnosed with an infectious disease (in example, COVID or Hand, Foot, and Mouth). 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 disease, infection, or parasite.

COVID Illness Policy:

Parents are responsible for being knowledgeable of symptoms related to COVID. Staying home when sick is essential to keeping infections out of childcare settings and preventing spread to others. **Children/adults who have symptoms of COVID need to stay home and contact their health care provider or for testing and care.**

- **Positive COVID Diagnosis** – a child/staff member who tests positive for COVID must remain out of preschool while having symptoms and/or fever. Individuals may return to preschool when symptoms are improving, **and when** they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

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, pediatrician documentation on the Statement of Health form is required.**

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.

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.

Absences:

If your child is sick or will be absent from school, please email your child's teacher AND the preschool office at preschool@stmcary.org.

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 or use hand sanitizer, if a sink is not readily available, 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. Any food items that contain nuts or processed in a facility with nuts will be sent home with a notice of our policy.

Water and Safe Snacks:

Children will bring a labeled water bottle from home or teachers will provide a disposable paper cup. Please do not fill water bottle with milk, juice, or sugary drinks.

Children will bring their own snacks to school. We ask that it be just one or two items that can be easily enjoyed by your child in a short time. **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.

We ask that you be particularly mindful of using food containers, lunchboxes, water bottles in which your child can handle with the greatest amount of independence.

Healthy Power Snacking:

The possibilities of healthful snacking are endless. Ideally, snacks should have 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, 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"> • edamame • bean salsas, salads, or dips 	Whole Grain Crackers and Chips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 to 5 grams of fiber per serving is ideal • Triscuits, Wheat Thins • bean chips, whole-grain tortilla chips • Goldfish, pretzels
Hummus SunButter (sunflower seed butter)	Whole Grain Cereals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheat, Corn, Rice Chex, • Oatmeal Squares (Life Cereal) • Kashi • Cheerios (Multi-Grain and Oat)
Yogurt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • watch for hidden sugars in flavored varieties Milk / Soy Milk in prepackaged containers or in addition to a water bottle	Fresh Fruits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apples, pears, watermelon, cantaloupe, grapes (cut in half), berries, peaches, etc. • Other acceptable fruits include applesauce, fruit spreads, and raisins
Cheese <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hard cheeses - cheddar, mozzarella • soft cheeses - cottage, ricotta, brie • cream cheese • cheese sticks, cubes, slices 	Fresh Veggies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carrot sticks, celery, cauliflower, cucumbers, red peppers, green peppers, broccoli, zucchini, cherry tomatoes (cut in half), etc.
Meats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slices of turkey, ham, or lean beef • turkey pepperoni Eggs (hardboiled)	Whole Grain Breads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% whole wheat or whitewheat • pita, tortilla, bagel, muffin • can be used with fruit spread, sun butter, deli meat, or cheese

Birthday Celebrations:

Teachers will share their routine for celebrating your child's birthday within the classroom. Children will be recognized on their birthday with a special certificate/crown/hat/song, etc. Optional birthday treats need to follow our allergy sensitive policy.

Clothing:

Children should wear closed-toed shoes with rubber soles. Sandals, Crocs, shoes with heels, and leather-soled shoes pose a safety hazard when children play on 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.**

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 a 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.
- The Fire Lane located at the back parking lot nearest the playground must not be used for loading or unloading children.
- Regular safety drills are performed throughout the school year.

Custody Agreements:

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

Playground Safety:

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 preschool is open, the playground is reserved for use by the children who attend preschool programs.

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.

- Wait for your turn.
- DO NOT THROW ROCKS OR SAND.
- Please do not push ahead when standing or walking in line.
- Walk far behind the swings, or far in front of them so you will not get hit.
- Please, do not swing on your belly.
- Only one person at a time on a swing.
- Play with trucks only in the special areas we show you.
- Only one child at a time on ladders, slides, and pole.
- Slide down the slides, feet first, and on your bottom.
- Never leave the playground without a teacher.
- Listen to **EVERY** teacher on the playground, not just your classroom teachers.
- DO NOT CLIMB ON THE FENCE.
- Spiral: **GO UP ONLY**. Use the slides, the stairs, or the fireman's pole to go down.

Fire Drills/Severe Weather Drills/Emergency Evacuation Drills:

Fire drills are conducted monthly. Severe weather and emergency evacuation drills are conducted in the fall and spring.

DISTANCE LEARNING

Each school of the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh shall have a plan for transitioning to distance learning strategies in the event of a natural disaster, disease outbreak or any other circumstances that make it unsafe or imprudent to continue on-campus education. The judgment of the school administration, in consultation with their pastor (where applicable), and in conjunction with the Office of Education of the Catholic Diocese of Raleigh, will determine when the change to the school's normal instructional model warrants the transition to distance learning. The strategies used for distance learning will be developed by the school administration and faculty.

In the case of a public health crisis/pandemic situation, guidance from public health experts (i.e., NCDHHS) shall be incorporated into-the school plan for prudent precautions for student/faculty health. This plan may be modified as necessary and:

- a) School retains the right to implement any such changes, whether prior to and/or during the Academic Year, in its sole discretion**
- b) No adjustments can be made with regard to the student attending virtual/in-person outside of the School's policies; and**
- c) No adjustment will be made to the current school year's tuition charges in response to such changes.**

Additionally, students will be required to comply with School's health and safety protocols as described in the school's policies, protocols, and procedures to limit the spread of communicable diseases and failure to comply with such protocols may result in the immediate removal of the child from campus.

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

CALENDAR/WEATHER CLOSINGS

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 email and through the Brightwheel App which will send a Post to the Classroom Group through the primary cell number.

On delayed openings, the Early Arrival Program is canceled, and children bring a peanut/nut-free snack and attend from 11:00-12:30 pm. The After Care Program will proceed as usual.

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

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

Early Arrival:

An early arrival program is available for all enrolled children and is available Monday through Friday beginning at 8:15 am. Drop off is located daily at the preschool front door. Students in the morning program will have supervised time for socialization and play. Snack or breakfast is **not** provided during this program. Children are escorted to their regular classrooms at 9:30 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 Mondays – Fridays throughout the school year. Students will eat their lunch at 12:40 and then go to the playground, weather permitting, with pick up will occurring on the playground or at the main preschool door.

Camp:

Camp is offered two times a month, beginning in October, from 12:30 – 2:00 pm. It is offered to students in the 3, 4, and 5-year-old preschool programs. Students staying for Camp will need to bring a peanut/nut-free lunch. Following lunch,

students will explore, create, and investigate. Each camp is theme-based (see themes on the registration form). The dismissal locations are typically the playground or preschool main door on inclement weather days.

AROUND THE GROUNDS

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 ENVIRONMENT: 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.

Suspicions 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 or is found guilty of or pleads no contest to charges of child sexual abuse will be dismissed.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT/VOLUNTEERS

Parent participation is welcomed. We value our parents and volunteers and all they bring to our community. 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:

- Have on file with the preschool office a completed Volunteer Level A or Level C Safe Environment form
- 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 with others; please 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!!

COMMUNICATION

Parents will be kept informed of their child's learning activities and progress primarily through the Brightwheel App. If you have not already done so, please be sure to download Brightwheel to your phone.

MEET THE TEACHER/PARENT ORIENTATION/ONBOARDING

Meet the Teacher day and Parent Orientation/Onboarding days are one hour events to allow each child to become comfortable with her/his new teacher and parents are required to attend.

Parents are asked to bring any questions from the handbook to the orientation.

CONFERENCES AND EVALUATIONS

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, teachers will send home a narrative summary in the Fall and Spring highlighting a child's area of strengths as well as developmental goals.

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.

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.

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 other soliciting other information 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 to calm 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 water bottles, snack, show-and-share, hats, gloves, etc. Also, please plan to regularly check your child's school bag for artwork and preschool information.

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

ADDRESS/PHONE NUMBER/EMAIL CHANGES

Please contact the office if your address, phone number, e-mail address, or emergency information changes, as well as update your Brightwheel account.

ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

Here at St. Michael Preschool, we take pride in providing high-quality programs for young children. To help ensure that such programs continue, the Diocese of Raleigh Early Childhood directors, in conjunction with the Superintendent of Schools, 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.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

As a Catholic school in the Diocese of Raleigh, St. Michael Preschool has a racially non-discriminatory policy for all students and admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students.

Our school does not discriminate based on race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of our educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletics, and other school-administered programs.

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

St. Michael Preschool was established in 1984. 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 in collaboration with the Diocese of Raleigh Office of Education.

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. Scott McCue at 919-468-6100.

PRESCHOOL OFFICE COMMUNICATION

As always, St. Michael Preschool values accurate, clear, and timely communication. We will utilize email updates, director newsletters, [preschool website](#), social media, and the Brightwheel Newsfeed tool.

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.

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...

Instagram: @stmpreschoolnc
Facebook: StMichael Preschool



Paula Renke, Director, prenke@stmcary.org

Melanie O'Brien, Assistant to the Director, MObrien@stmcary.org

Suzanne Park, Office Assistant, spark@stmcary.org

The preschool/office is located directly behind the church
within the Trinity Center

Office Hours: 9 am – 1 pm August through May

Summer hours by appointment only