



SACRED HEART CATHOLIC
Forming Saints and Scholars

**WELCOME
TO OUR
EARLY CHILDHOOD
PROGRAM**

**2026-2027
HANDBOOK**

Sacred Heart Catholic School
Jeffersonville, IN

Hello Sacred Heart Catholic School families!

Welcome to the Early Childhood Education Program! We are so excited to have your child come learn with us and be a part of our school family! The learning and success accomplished in the early years will help establish a solid foundation for learning and success throughout your child's school career. Our program has a lot to offer your child in the way of curriculum, social-emotional maturity and spiritual growth. We offer a few different classes to help meet your child's needs; we have our Childcare Ministry for 2 year olds, Beginners Program for 3 year olds and Preschool for 4 year olds, all located in the Early Childhood hallway.

In our Childcare Ministry program, we will help introduce your 2 year old to a structured setting and will introduce them to their colors, letters and numbers through purposeful play and environmental print. They will have a daily Circle Time and begin to learn how to come together and learn as a class, and they will come back together throughout the day for art or short story times. We will begin to work on their fine- and gross-motor skills as well as their social skills through a play based curriculum.

In our Beginners program, we teach your child letter sounds and recognition, colors and number recognition through purposeful play, interactive songs and games. We strengthen fine- and gross-motor skills in their fingers, hands, arms and legs. We run outside and play on the playground, we paint standing up to develop core strength, and we use purposeful play to teach your child to socialize, compromise, and share during Center Time. We currently offer 2 different classrooms based on age, Mrs. Hughes teaches our 30-36 month olds and Mrs. Emly teaches our older three year olds.

In our Preschool program, we prepare your student for Kindergarten by further developing all of those skills. We hone in on their fine motor skills by teaching them early Writing skills, such as letter and number formation and beginning to copy words and short sentences. We teach early Reading and Math skills, and grow their independence so that when they reach Kindergarten, they will be ready to begin reading, start working on math problems and be able to write short sentences on their own. We are a **Paths to Quality Level 3** program, which means we are committed to providing a nurturing environment with intentional teaching, through a planned curriculum, a focus on Kindergarten readiness and continued professional development.

We are honored to be able to help guide your child through his or her early childhood years. It's going to be a great school year! Thank you so much for choosing Sacred Heart Catholic School and for entrusting us with your child's future!

Jessica Stewart
Director of Early Childhood Education

Please review this handbook carefully and check with your child's teacher if you have any questions or need additional information. You may also find more school specific information in the **SHCS Family Handbook** that can be accessed at www.sacredheartschool.us under Parents/School Policies/Handbook.

OUR MISSION

Sacred Heart Catholic School community provides a Catholic foundation which cultivates disciples of Jesus and fosters academic excellence for all God's children.

OUR VISION

Sacred Heart Catholic will be recognized as a faith-filled exemplary school where preschool through eighth grade students will come to know, love, and serve God. Our school in partnership with our parents will form students to become moral and just servant-leaders in the 21st century.

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Catholic identity is awareness and an articulation of Catholic belief and practice. It is an attitude and an atmosphere of sincere Christian love. It is striving for excellence and using one's gifts as Jesus has taught. It is reflected in the school wherein the child attains a strong self-concept, learns self-discipline, gains a sense of being part of a larger family, and develops a relationship of religious study to real life. Since Sacred Heart is a Catholic School, the faculty & staff must recognize and foster the following elements that are the characteristics of a Catholic School:

1. An educational community of students, faculty, staff and parents inspired by the Christian message and life
2. A continuing dedication to growth in human knowledge in the light of the Catholic Faith
3. Fidelity to the Christian message, the tradition and the Magisterium of the Church
4. A commitment to the service of the people of God and the human family.
5. Develop the total Christian personality by instilling in the students a respect for life and reverence for Christian living.
6. To develop within the school a strong religious education program based on Catholic Theology, Scripture, Liturgical experience, and service so that each child will grow and develop in the Christian way of life.
7. Aid students in evaluation of their own capabilities and vocational possibilities.

It is the consensus of Sacred Heart Catholic School that every human being has a right to pursue knowledge corresponding with his/her dignity and God-given ability, regardless of background or sex. In the early years, education is often of the utmost importance because through education and guidance the children of today become the Catholic citizens of tomorrow.

PROGRAM GOAL

The goal of our Early Childhood Education Program is to provide a positive and caring environment where our students feel safe and loved and to instill a love for learning at a young age. We also prepare each child for a successful transition to kindergarten by optimizing their learning potential in all areas of development, such as early literacy/writing, math, communication/language, fine/gross motor skills and personal care. We believe that early childhood education is the development of the whole child, so we also focus on social/emotional growth and spiritual growth. We are committed to partnering with you on your child's educational journey.

EARLY CHILDHOOD ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

In order to enroll in the Sacred Heart Early Childhood program, a child must be 2 years of age by August 1 to enter the Childcare Ministry. A student must be 3 years of age by August 1 to enter the Beginners program and **students in Mrs. Emly's room must be fully potty trained.** A child must be 4 years of age by August 1 to enter the Preschool program and must be fully potty trained. The age of each student must be verified by a birth certificate, and a copy must be on record in the school office. We base the number of rooms and placement of children according to enrollment needs each year.

ADMITTANCE

Every child will be admitted on a trial basis. If at any time, the director and/or principal sees that a student and/or family does not align with the mission, policies and regulations contained in the handbook, or that the child's needs can not safely be met in our program, they may be asked to leave.

POTTY TRAINING

Any child that is not **fully** potty trained or that is unable to communicate their need to use the restroom, must wear a diaper/pullup. This is for the best interest of all staff and students in the classroom, as well as use of good hygiene practices. Teachers will work on potty training as each child shows that they are ready.

CHILDCARE MINISTRY (Must be 2 by August 1)

In our 2-year-old program, our youngest students will enjoy a full play-based curriculum. They will start to learn proper socialization skills through purposeful play. They will learn colors, numbers and letters through Centers, daily interactions with peers and teachers, and playing group games. They will begin to work their fine- and gross-motor skills during Center Time play, outdoor play, free art and movement. **Each child will need to bring his or her own lunch on a daily basis.**

BEGINNER'S PROGRAM (Mrs. Emly's room must be potty trained.)

In Beginners Preschool, our students start to learn problem solving and socializing skills through purposeful play. We introduce early math and literacy skills through music, center play and hands-on learning groups. We accept children where they are and enjoy watching their immense growth. **Students in the Beginner program are able to order lunch from the cafeteria.**

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM (Must be 4 and potty trained by August 1)

In Preschool, our older students learn to further grow and develop their problem solving and socialization skills through purposeful play. Math and literacy skills are strengthened through music, games, interactive videos and small group learning. They are well prepared for Kindergarten by the end of the school year. **Students in the Preschool program are able to order lunch from the cafeteria.**

COMMUNICATION

Your child's teacher may use Class Dojo or email to communicate with each family. Students will be checked in through PowerSchool by their teacher upon arrival. Parents will be able to communicate with their student's teacher through private messages, view photos posted by the teacher and receive important updates using the chosen form of communication. School

Messenger will be used to send out messages to the entire school or a select group. School Messenger will also be used for emergency information.

PRESCHOOL CLOTHING

Early Childhood students do not wear uniforms; however, clothing should be clean and appropriate play/activewear. **Students are required to wear socks and tennis shoes. For safety reasons, NO CROCS, SANDALS, BOOTS or FLIP FLOPS may be worn at school.**

No jewelry of any kind, this is a safety issue. Girls may have one pair of STUD earrings. No makeup of any kind. No toys brought from home, unless the teacher gives permission.

DISCIPLINE GUIDANCE POLICY

It is very important to our mission that a child's development is nurtured through caring, patience and understanding. However, while caring for our students, the teacher may have to respond to unsafe behavior. Hitting and kicking, biting and scratching, spitting, running from the classroom and hostile language, etc. are not permitted and could result in your student losing their spot in the program.

In response to these behaviors, the teacher WILL NOT use

- Threats or bribes
- Physical punishment, even if requested by the family
- Deprive your child of food or other basic needs
- Humiliation or isolation

In response to these behaviors, the teacher WILL

- Respect your child
- Establish clear expectations
- Use positive language to explain desired behaviors
- Speak calmly while being on your child's eye level
- Be consistent and offer clear, alternative choices
- Make each redirection a learning opportunity for future use
- Move student to a time out area for no longer than 1 minute per year of your child's age
- Enact loss of part or up to whole playtime, depending on behavior
- If none of the above are working, parents may be called to come pick up their child.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Indiana law requires that before a child enrolls for the first time in school, the parents or guardians must furnish a written statement of immunizations. This must be provided by the child's physician, the health department, or any other form of official documentation. The statement must show that the child has received these immunizations:

- 4 doses of DTP (diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis)
- 3 doses of polio vaccine
- 1 dose of MMR (measles, mumps and rubella)
- 2 doses of Hepatitis A vaccine
- 3 doses of Hepatitis B vaccine
- 1 dose of Varicella vaccine (unless the child has already had chickenpox, then physician documentation of disease history including month and year is proof of immunity for children entering preschool through 11th grade.)

MEDICATION POLICY

State law prohibits dispensing any medication without explicit written permission and written directions from parents. The medicine should be sent to the school office with directions as to time and dosage and medicine must be in the original container. Medication cannot be administered in the classroom. Students may not use siblings medications.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance in the Early Childhood Program is crucial in maximizing your child's success at school. Attending school regularly enables your child to become familiar with teachers and classmates as well as the day-to-day structure and routines. Children learn best when they feel comfortable and happy in their surroundings. If your child seems to be having a difficult time getting ready for school, please discuss this with your child's teacher. Some separation anxiety at this age is not at all uncommon. Most children acclimate quickly after arriving at school and becoming involved in familiar and fun activities. Regular attendance at school (90% or more) is expected; however, if there are extenuating circumstances please discuss this with the Director. **Failure to attend regularly and promptly may result in a child losing his/her spot in the program.**

REPORTING AN ABSENCE

1. **When a student is sick, please contact the student's teacher by 8:00 AM.**
2. When the student returns, **state law requires a note telling the teacher when and why the student was absent.** This note must accompany the student upon her/his return to school. If no phone call is made or no note is sent to school, the absence will be counted as unexcused.
3. If a student is experiencing a prolonged illness **(3 or more days), a doctor's note should accompany the student upon her/his return to school.**
4. No student will be dismissed early from school without a written request or, in an emergency, without obtaining parental verbal approval. To take a student off school grounds, the student must be met in the school office. Upon return, s/he must be brought to the office before going back to class.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Childcare Ministry and Beginners programs (2-3 year olds)

All students may start arriving at **7:15 a.m.** Parents may park in the side lot off of the church alley or the front parking lot and will enter through **Door D**, located inside the courtyard gate. For safety reasons, parents are required to walk their student to the classroom for morning arrival. All students need to be in their classroom, ready to learn, by **7:45 a.m.**

If a student is late, the parent or guardian must then enter through the lobby entrance, **DOOR A**, where the parent must sign their student in and then walk them to their classroom. *If you have grade school students as well, they can walk in with you at drop off.*

Half day students will be dismissed from the front lobby through **DOOR A** at **11:15 a.m.** Parking is available in the front parking lot.

Afternoon dismissal is **2:35 p.m.** Parents will use **Door D** and walk in to pick their student up from the teacher. The door closes at **2:50 p.m.** *If you have grade school students as well, you can wait outside the classroom and your older child can walk down and meet you.*

Preschool program (4 year olds)

You will be given a hanging car tag. Please make sure this is visible for the fastest and smoothest arrival/dismissal procedure

All students may start arriving at **7:15 a.m.** For arrival, parents will drop off their student in the back parking lot with our K-8th students. A staff member will be there to help get your child out of their carseat and will help them walk in with the other students. All students need to be in their classroom, ready to learn, by **7:45 a.m.**

If a student is late, the parent or guardian must then enter through the lobby entrance, **DOOR A**, where the parent must sign their student in.

Afternoon dismissal is **2:35 p.m.** Preschool students will exit out of the side door of the PAC (that faces Martha Avenue). Parents will form a single lane car line along the sidewalk on Martha Ave. Parents are asked to exit their car and your child will be walked to you. If there are other siblings in the Early Childhood Program, they can walk out with your Preschooler. If there are older siblings, you may park in the front parking lot after picking up your Preschooler and your older student(s) will walk out to your car with the walkers. Parents will **carefully** pull out of the front parking lot onto 8th Street.

RECESS

Recess is part of the school program. It is essential to the physical, social, and mental well-being of each child to be out in the fresh air with classmates. Recess provides numerous possibilities for our students to work on their fine- and gross-motor skills, vital for healthy growth. During inclement weather, or on very hot/very cold days, all students will remain indoors to play and socialize. To ensure the safety of our students, both the teacher and instructional aide will be present to supervise.

SPECIAL AREA

Our Preschool class (4 year olds) will attend Library, Gym, Art and Music each week to enrich their developmental and academic growth. They will also attend Mass every Friday with the rest of the school.

CLASS PROGRAMS

Some of our celebrations include

- Birthday party for Jesus
- Special family activities
- Holidays
- Field Day
- End-of-year program

BIRTHDAYS

- Each child will have the opportunity to celebrate his or her birthday during snack time at school. We welcome a small, healthy snack to share with the class (ie. fruit, goldfish, pretzels, Gogurts, etc). **All treats must be store bought.** Parents and/or special persons may come and share in the celebration, and must be Safe Parish trained.

MEAL POLICY

Sacred Heart does not offer breakfast in the morning. Students should have breakfast before entering the building, no breakfast food is allowed in the classrooms in order to not interfere with the morning routine in the classroom. The daily schedule includes morning snack time and lunch time.

MEAL CHARGE POLICY

STUDENTS IN THE 2-YEAR-OLD CLASSROOM DO NOT RECEIVE LUNCH FROM THE CAFETERIA. THEY MUST BRING LUNCH FROM HOME.

Sacred Heart Catholic School feeds all children, Beginners through 8th grade, who choose school lunch. The price of the school lunch and a la carte items can be found on the website. A lunch account must be set up and funded by families for each student attending Sacred Heart Catholic School.

SCHEDULED EARLY DISMISSAL

Any school day on the calendar that is scheduled as a 1:00 p.m. dismissal, includes our Early Childhood program. On these days, Early Childhood students will dismiss starting at 12:50 p.m. and there will be **NO AFTERCARE**. You will need to plan ahead for student pick-up arrangements in these instances.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Sacred Heart Catholic School **does not** follow the Greater Clark County School district's decisions when canceling, delaying, or closing school early due to weather or any other unforeseen event. We make these decisions on our own. Our situation is very different due to not having buses to worry about, students not waiting out at bus stops in the extreme cold, and the majority of our families living very close to school. We will do our best to make informed decisions and get the word out in a timely manner, once the decision has been made. In the end, it is the parent who determines if it is safe to bring his or her student to school. If you feel it is unsafe in your area, please call the front office and let staff know you will be keeping your student home.

In the event of a cancellation or 2-hour delay, we will notify **WDRB Fox 41 Snowfox**. You will see **Sacred Heart Catholic School-Jeffersonville** listed separately on the school closing/delay list. You can go to www.WDRB.com and register to receive text message notifications when there is a closing or delay. We will also post the information on our website and send out a school-wide email.

If at any time, Sacred Heart Catholic School needs to have an unplanned early dismissal, a message will be sent out to all parents/guardians. Situations warranting early dismissal are most commonly weather-related issues, and the situation will warrant the dismissal time. On these days, Early Childhood students will dismiss 10 minutes prior to the school dismissal and there

will be **NO AFTERCARE**. You will need to make alternate arrangements for student pick up in these instances.

2-HOUR DELAY

Two-hour delays are called when it looks like conditions will improve or when having more light to travel by will help families arrive at school more safely. In rare instances, a 2-hour delay could turn into a cancellation, so continue listening and watching for updates. There will be Aftercare on these days unless noted otherwise.

If we are on a 2-hour delay

- There will be **NO MORNING SESSION CLASSES**. Students registered for the full day program may arrive at **9:15 a.m.**.
- School doors open at **9:15 a.m.**.
- School starts at **9:45 a.m.**.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

In accordance with state laws, our preschool classes will discuss emergencies and will participate in periodic safety drills. The purpose of each drill is to teach the children how to respond quickly and safely in the event of an emergency. Emergency information is located in each room in the building. Evacuation procedures are also posted throughout the school.

- Fire Drills: The purpose of the fire drill is to teach the children how to evacuate the building in a rapid, orderly, and safe manner. These are held monthly.
- Tornado Drills: Students are taught to take shelter in a structurally sound location on the first floor of the building with no windows. Students sit on the ground and place their hands on their heads. Tornado drills are scheduled each semester.
- Intruder/Man-made Drills: These drills are also scheduled regularly during the year. Students and teachers “take cover” to get out of harm’s way should an intruder be on school grounds or other potentially harmful situation that constitutes appropriate action to ensure safety.

These emergency drills will be done under the direction of the principal with records of these drills being kept in the principal's office.

DAILY SCHEDULE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD-8TH GRADE

7:15-7:45	-School building is open to all students
7:45-7:50	-Morning bell rings; Announcements and morning prayer begin
11:15	-Morning session dismissal
2:35	-Early Childhood dismissal
2:45	-Announcements and dismissal for K-8th grade
2:45-6:00	-Sacred Heart Aftercare

SHCS AFTERCARE PROGRAM

Our Aftercare program provides after school care from 2:45 p.m.-6:00 p.m. If you wish to use this service, please contact the Director at jessicastewart@sacredheartschool.us or call 812-283-3123 ext. 107.

VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

Sacred Heart Catholic School welcomes all parents and any other family visitors who have a sincere interest in our school. ALL VISITORS (non-staff members) are required to sign in at the front office when entering the building and pick up a **Visitor ID** tag to wear while in the school building. Visitors are asked not to interrupt class and must make an appointment to observe a class or meet with a teacher.

Anyone called to donate his or her time and/or talent for the benefit of Sacred Heart Catholic School is encouraged to do so. Please inform your child's teacher, but understand that the appropriate time for volunteers in the classroom is at the discretion of the teacher. Having family members volunteer in the school and/or classroom is a special time for our students, and siblings **may not** visit during this time. This includes those who volunteer as Room Parents and those who volunteer during celebrations, field trips, field day, etc.

Prior to volunteering, all volunteers must complete the Safe Parish Training program, which includes a Criminal Background Check. To access this mandatory training, go to www.archindysafeparish.org. After registering a username, use the password Archindyl2021.

Upon successful completion of the program, a certificate will be issued and a copy must be turned in to the front office.

SUPPLY LISTS (a copy can be found in your registration packet)

Ms. Atkinson's Class (2 year olds)

- Book bag (**standard size** to fit folder and nap supplies, no wheels)
- 1 roll of paper towels
- 3 packages of baby wipes
- 1 can of Lysol spray
- 2 containers disinfecting wipes
- 2 boxes of tissues
- 10 glue sticks (purple disappearing glue)
- 1 pack of sheet protectors
- 1 box of broad line washable markers (10 pack)

GIRLS: 1 box of gallon size Ziploc baggies

BOYS: 1 box of quart size Ziploc baggies

- 1 reusable water bottle, daily
- 1 healthy snack, daily
- 1 healthy lunch, daily
- Diapers and wipes, daily supply

If staying full day - travel pillow and blanket for nap will be needed.
Students can bring 1 small stuffed animal if needed to nap.

All school supplies will be stored and shared as a class. Some supplies may need to be replenished mid year.

Mrs. Hughes's Class (30-36 month olds)

- Book bag (**standard size** to fit folder and nap supplies, no wheels)
- 2 rolls of paper towels
- 2 packages of baby wipes
- 2 containers disinfecting wipes
- 1 box of crayons (16 or 24 count)
- 1 box of Crayola markers
- 1- 4pack of playdough
- 1 reusable water bottle, daily
- 1 healthy snack, daily
- Pullups and wipes, daily supply if needed

If staying full day - travel pillow and blanket for nap will be needed.
Students can bring 1 small stuffed animal if needed to nap.

All school supplies will be stored and shared as a class. Some supplies may need to be replenished mid year.

Mrs. Emly's Class (older 3 year olds)

- Book bag (**standard size** to fit folder and nap supplies, no wheels)
- 2 rolls of paper towels
- 1 package of baby wipes
- 1 container disinfecting wipes
- 1 box of bandaids
- 2 boxes of tissues
- 2 boxes of crayons (16 or 24 count)
- 10 glue sticks (purple disappearing glue)
- 2 packs of Dry Erase Markers
- 1 reusable water bottle, daily
- 1 healthy snack, daily
- Old t-shirt for painting

If staying full day - travel pillow and blanket for nap will be needed.
Students can bring 1 small stuffed animal if needed to nap.

All school supplies will be stored and shared as a class. Some supplies may need to be replenished mid year.

Ms. Coffey's Class (4 year olds)

- Book bag (**standard size** to fit folder, no wheels)
- Plastic school box (cigar box size) **label with child's name**
- 1 box of Crayola crayons (16 or 24 count)
- 2 glue sticks (purple disappearing glue)
- Children's scissors
- 1 roll of paper towels
- 1 can disinfecting spray
- 3-inch binder

-BOYS: 2 containers of disinfecting wipes
-GIRLS: 2 packages of baby wipes

-1 reusable water bottle, daily
-2 healthy snacks, daily

Some supplies may need to be replenished mid year.