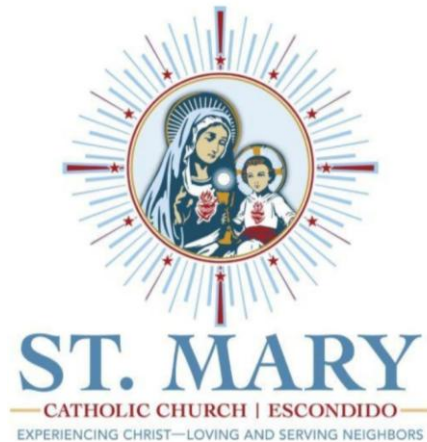


ST. MARY PRESCHOOL

Parent Handbook

2026 - 2027



St. Mary Preschool

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Stmaryp.org/st-mary-preschool

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ST. MARY
—CATHOLIC CHURCH | ESCONDIDO—
EXPERIENCING CHRIST—LOVING AND SERVING NEIGHBORS

St. Mary Parish Mission Statement

St. Mary Parish in Escondido, CA, welcomes everyone to enter God's Covenant of love, forgiveness and healing and, in turn, follow His Will manifested in Revelation [Scripture (The Bible), His life (The Sacraments) and Apostolic Tradition (The Church)]. As such, our Parish provides followers of Jesus Christ, who alone is Savior, the practice of Roman Catholicism witnessing in faith the one true God in the three persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Initiated into the life of God through grace by baptism, we are brothers and sisters in the mystical body of Christ, united in professing the faith in One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church established by Jesus and steadfast in our pursuit to know, love and serve God.



St. Mary Preschool

Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Mary Preschool!

We are truly blessed that you have chosen to share this special chapter of your child's life with us. We are delighted to welcome your family into our preschool community and look forward to a year filled with faith, learning, and joyful memories.

At St. Mary Preschool, we are more than a school. We are a faith-filled community rooted in the love of Jesus Christ. Together, as children, parents, teachers, and parish members, we strive to create a Christ centered environment where every child feels known, valued, and loved. Our mission is to nurture each child's heart, mind, and spirit while fostering a lifelong love of learning.

We recognize that parents are the primary educators of their children, and we are honored to partner with you in this important role. Through purposeful play, meaningful relationships, prayer, and hands-on learning, we help children build confidence, kindness, and the skills they need for kindergarten and beyond.

This Parent Handbook has been prepared to provide important information about our policies, procedures, and expectations. We encourage you to read it carefully and refer to it throughout the year as we work together to maintain a safe, respectful, and faith-centered learning environment.

Thank you for entrusting us with your precious child. We look forward to growing together in faith, friendship, and learning throughout the year.

God bless,

Ariana Marquez
St. Mary Preschool Director

Mission Statement

St. Mary Preschool's mission is to provide a Christ-centered environment where each child can develop a love for the Lord and learning.

Philosophy

St. Mary preschool students are immersed in a Christ-centered learning environment, grounded in the Catholic faith, which supports the development of the whole child, spiritually, intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally. We acknowledge that parents are the primary educators of their children, and we partner with parents to provide an outstanding Catholic education. We encourage students to develop their God-given talents by fostering an atmosphere of dignity and respect for all.

Values

We value family and encourage parents and teachers to work together to create the best possible experience for each child.

Commitment

We provide a safe and loving Catholic environment of love, acceptance, and belonging through scripture and prayer. We assist parents in their role as the primary educators of their children by extending, enriching, and encouraging the work they have already begun. We encourage growth in self-awareness and build self-esteem through our dynamic education approach, which prepares each child for a successful transition into kindergarten.

Priorities for Admission

- Students of families in good standing already enrolled at St. Mary Preschool or school.
- Students of families in good standing at St. Mary Church.
- Students of families in good standing at other Catholic parishes.
- All other families who accept the St. Mary Preschool Philosophy.

Age for Admission

All children must be utilizing independent toileting; no assistance is needed. No diapers or pull-ups.

- 2 years old by September 1st, of the academic year
- 3 years old by September 1st, of the academic year
- 4 years old by September 1st, of the academic year

Enrollment Process

- Parents complete the enrollment contract, and all licensing forms, register for FACTS and pay the registration fee at the time of registration.
- Acceptance is finalized upon Director Approval after a one-month probationary period. If determined, anytime throughout the year, that the child's needs cannot be met, the Director will request parents withdraw their child from the program.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of San Diego, mindful of their mission to be a witness to the love of Christ for all, grant admission to students of any race, color, and national and/or ethnic origin. Each is given all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the schools. The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of San Diego do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and/or ethnic origin, age, sex, or disability in the administration of educational policies or programs.

Financial Requirements

An annual, nonrefundable registration fee is due at the time of enrollment for each child.

St. Mary Preschool partners with FACTS Management to process tuition payments. FACTS allows families to pay tuition in convenient monthly installments through automatic withdrawals from the account of their choice. A one-time FACTS enrollment fee of \$55.00 applies. Please refer to the current tuition schedule for applicable tuition rates.

Financial Requirements

- Tuition is paid in monthly installments through FACTS, with payments scheduled on either the 10th or 20th of each month.
- All FACTS policies, including fees associated with returned or failed payments, apply.
- Tuition credits or refunds are not provided for absences due to illness, vacations, holidays, or other reasons.

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- Parents who pick up their child after the designated dismissal time will be charged \$1.00 per minute. This policy also applies to noon dismissal days. Late pick-up fees will be added to the family's next monthly FACTS payment.

Delinquent Tuition

Families are expected to keep their tuition account current. If a tuition payment becomes more than 30 days past due, St. Mary Preschool may require that the outstanding balance be brought current before the child may continue attending school. Families experiencing financial hardship are encouraged to contact the Preschool Director as soon as possible to discuss their situation. We are committed to working with families whenever possible while ensuring the financial stability of our preschool.

Our Program

St. Mary Preschool program builds your child's self-esteem, confidence, and independence as well as promotes a positive school experience. We balance our academics with each child's developmental stage.

All students will learn about the Holy Mass, become familiar with the different parts of the church, and develop an understanding of reverence and appropriate participation during worship. Beginning in September, students will attend the weekly school Mass held each Wednesday morning.

On mass day students wear navy blue polo's and khaki bottoms. Please have students at school by 7:45 am and attend to their restroom needs prior to the service at 8:00 am. Students will walk to mass with their class. If the student arrives late, please sign them in at the preschool and bring them to the church. We utilize the cry room area in church and all outside doors except for the main entrance are locked promptly at 8:00 am.

Program Description/School Hours

St. Mary Preschool follows the St. Mary School calendar, with a few minor exceptions. Lunch bunch is an extension of our half-day program, which allows students to eat lunch with their peers and spend additional time developing social skills. Hours of operation are as follows:

Parents may choose one of the following schedules:

- 2 Half Days per week or 2 Full Days per week- Tues/Thurs
- 3 Half Days per week or 3 Full Days per week- Mon/Wed/Fri
- 5 Half Days per week or 5 Full days per week- Mon-Fri

Please bring all items labeled on the first day. Recommended items:

- Water bottle
- Snack (one for half-day students, two for full-day students)
- Lunch
- One complete change of clothes to leave at school (does not have to be uniform)
- Cot sheet and blanket (for full-day students)

***Please note we are a peanut-free school. *Our staff cannot wake up your child from rest time per licensing**

Lunch Bunch

We will utilize this extra time in the day to play outside and eat lunch.

Policies to be aware of:

1. Lunch bunch is offered M-F, 12:00-12:30. Students must be picked up by 12:30. After 12:30 we will charge a late fee of \$1.00 per minute as our afternoon kids start rest time immediately following lunch.
2. Lunch bunch fee is \$10 per session. Fees are added to FACTS at the end of each month.
3. Once your child is signed up for a spot, they are expected to attend. If they do not please note that you will be charged the session fee of \$10.
4. Please pack a healthy lunch/drink for your child. We are a peanut-free school.

Drop Off/Pick up Procedure

The preschool driveway is located on 13th Avenue.

- The gate will be closed and locked during St. Mary School class and extension time.
- The gate will be open in the morning until 7:55 am.
- It will reopen again from 2:45 pm -3:20 pm, with the exception of Wednesday when it opens from 11:45 am-12:20 pm.

*Please note if you arrive outside the times listed above you may enter the pedestrian gate by the driveway utilizing your code.

Sign In:

- Sign-in with full signature on the sign -in/sign-out binder
- Take the child to the bathroom
- Drop off the water bottle, snack & lunch (placed in the fridge)
- Walk students into their classroom or playground to meet class
- Please be sure that your child is under the supervision of a teacher before you leave

Sign Out:

- Sign out with full signature on the sign-in/ Sign-out binder
- Pick up students and items from the classroom or playground
- Check student folders
- Please make sure the teacher sees you and your child leave

***Please sign in and out. Your signature acts as a transfer of responsibility from you to the preschool and the preschool back to you.**

- Check the top of your child's sign-in sheet and confirm that it says his/her name.
- We cannot have your child here if he/she is not signed in.
- Starting in September, or after your child's first 2 weeks, we charge \$10 per missed signature, to your FACTS account at the end of the month. If we are fined by licensing the parent will be responsible for that fee.
- Students are released only to those listed on the emergency form and will be required to show a picture ID if we have not met them before.

Communication

- A yearly overview will be provided, including important dates, school closures, and scheduled noon dismissals.
- Please check the parent bulletin boards located near each classroom entrance and by the sign-in area for important announcements and updates.
- Each month, a calendar will be sent home with the latest details about the upcoming event.
- Every Friday the Director will send a weekly newsletter with reminders and highlights.
- Staff and the Director use ClassDojo to share classroom updates and photos.
- To ensure student safety and supervision, please do not approach teachers for meetings while they are with students.
- We are happy to schedule an appointment at a convenient time to discuss your child's progress.
- For questions, comments, or concerns, please contact the Preschool Director.

Discipline and Guidance Policy

Discipline is used to teach, not punish. Our discipline policy states that children may not be disruptive to our teaching or to the student's learning, safety, or development. As a Catholic preschool, we include the teaching of kindness and gentleness. It is our goal that the children will learn to be kind, gentle, and respectful in their behavior, accept boundaries and develop self-control.

1. Positive Guidance

- All children have off days and are learning right from wrong. It is the job of teachers to help them learn, provide positive guidance, and help them to understand how to make safe and healthy choices.

2. Redirection

- Teachers will redirect a child's attention, offering a different age-appropriate activity than the one they are struggling with, or having trouble cooperating with peers on.
- Children feel empowered when they make the right choices, and this encourages them to keep on trying.

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3. Break time

- Taking a break can be an effective preschool discipline policy when re-directing a child or offering positive guidance fails.
- Children who need a break will be supervised at all times.
- Children will only sit for about one minute per their age in years (three minutes for a three-year-old, for example).
- Before being reintroduced to the group, the teacher will have a conversation with the child to brainstorm on ways to do things differently.

4. Communication policies

- Parents will be notified in the case of major or reoccurring behavioral challenges.

Aggressive Behavior Policy

Our program is committed to maintaining a safe, healthy, and supportive environment for all children and staff. We recognize that young children are developing social and emotional skills, and our goal is to guide them toward positive behavior, problem-solving, and self-regulation. Any behavior that poses a safety risk to others (including biting, hitting, kicking, pinching, or pulling hair) will be addressed as follows:

Step 1: Initial Incident

- The child will be redirected and, if necessary, removed from the immediate area to ensure the safety of all children.
- Staff will support the child in calming down and practicing appropriate behavior.
- An incident report will be completed, and parents/guardians will be notified.

Step 2: Second Incident

- All Step 1 procedures will be followed.
- In addition, the parent/guardian will be required to pick up their child.
- A conference will be scheduled to develop a behavior support plan and to review expectations and next steps.

Step 3: Third Incident

- All Step 2 procedures will be followed, including immediate parent/guardian pick-up. The behavior support plan will be reviewed and adjusted as needed. Due to the ongoing safety concern, the child may be suspended from care for a designated period. Continued on next page

- If the unsafe behavior continues or does not show sufficient improvement, a final conference will be held. At that time, the program will determine whether continued enrollment is appropriate. The preschool reserves the right to terminate enrollment if a child's behavior continues to compromise the safety, well-being, or learning environment of others.
- Staff will continue to communicate and collaborate with families throughout this process to support each child's success.
- A parent meeting will be held at the beginning of the school year to review behavior expectations and program policies.

Attendance Policy

If a student will be absent from class, please notify the Preschool via email or phone by 9:00 am the day of the absence. The office will notify the teacher of the absence. Please include the reason for the absence- illness, personal, out of town. For illnesses please provide information if they have experienced any of the following:

- A fever of 100 or higher in the past 24 hours
- Vomit or diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- Persistent, congested or productive cough
- Colored nasal discharge
- Colored discharge from eyes or eyes are red or swollen
- Are unusually tired, irritable or do not seem like themselves
- Evidence of head lice
- Any medical diagnosis if seen by a professional

We ask that you keep him/her home for a **full 24 hours after vomiting, significant coughing and runny nose, or after the temperature has returned to normal and your child is symptom-free.** There is no tuition credit given due to absences or illness.

- *Please note that instructional hours begin at 8 am and the teachers would appreciate it if your child arrived on time each day to not miss an important part of the day.

Communicable Disease

Parents must notify the preschool when their child has a communicable disease. The child will be sent home and able to return once treated and cleared by a medical professional. The school must notify parents if other students have been exposed to the disease.

First Aid/Emergency Procedures

- All emergency forms will be kept in school files, and copies will be in each classroom binder available for immediate use.
- Ouch/incident reports shall be filled out for any accident. Occurring at school. Reports will be completed and signed by the staff member who witnessed the incident and reviewed by the director. The original will be sent home with the child and a copy is kept in school files.
- First aid kits are in each classroom and school office shall include necessary, basic items are recommended by the Red Cross

Birthdays

We thank and praise God for all the children in our care. We would like to join you in celebrating your child's birthday. If you would like to bring a special treat, please let your child's teacher know in advance. The treat must be store-bought and peanut free.

Uniforms Policy

Students are required to wear the school uniform each day in accordance with school policy.

Uniform Requirements:

- Navy blue or khaki pants, shorts, skirts
- White/Navy/or Light Blue collared shirt/blouse
- Any color closed-toed shoes and socks (no sandals of any type)
- Any color sweaters or jackets

Free Dress Fridays

- Students may wear free dress on Fridays. Clothing must be school-appropriate and comply with the school's dress code including closed-toe shoes and socks are required at all times.

Requirement to Report Suspected Child Abuse

All preschool teachers and staff are mandated reporters and required to comply with the suspected child abuse reporting requirements as stated in the Department of Social Services Community Care Licensing, Title 22 Handbook.

Staff

Our school maintains high standards which are met by each individual member of our staff. Each teacher has a genuine interest and love for children and is experienced in working with children during their most formative years. Our staff all meet the State of California licensing requirements, are mandated reporters and are CPR and first aid certified.

School Holiday Schedule

St. Mary Preschool Holidays are:

- September- Labor Day, Diocese Professional Development Day
- October- Columbus Day
- November- Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Week
- December- Christmas Break, Staff Advent Retreat
- January- Martin Luther King Day
- February- Presidents Day
- March- Staff Lent Retreat, Easter Break
- May- Memorial Day

Emergencies

If the school is closed due to an emergency situation that occurs after school hours, (fire, earthquake, etc.) you may call the Elementary School Office at (760) 743-3431 to obtain a daily pre-recorded message about when classes will resume or any other information, we feel parents will need to know. Information may also be available on the local news stations. St. Mary Preschool will follow the same emergency schedule as the Escondido Union K-8 School District.

When an emergency occurs during school, all children will remain at school and parents will be called immediately to come pick up their child. If St. Mary campus becomes unsafe, parents will be notified of the relocation site. Staff will remain with the children until all parents arrive.

*The Preschool Director and/or Pastor reserves the right to make changes or adjustments to this handbook as deemed necessary and appropriate. Any questions or discrepancies regarding the interpretation of the handbook will be resolved by the Preschool Director and/or Pastor, whose decision shall be final.