

Preschool Handbook



Policies and Information

St. John the Baptist School

12319 New Hampshire Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20904

WELCOME TO SJB PRESCHOOL

The SJB preschool staff and administrators welcome you to the St. John the Baptist community. We look forward to working with you and your child, and we thank you for entrusting us as our partner in the education of your child.

The handbook is your reference for our school. Please review it and contact us if you have any questions about its contents.

Philosophy

St. John the Baptist Preschool offers an early childhood program for 3-year-old and 4-year-old children (as well as 4-year-olds who turn 5 during the school year). SJB offers a safe, nurturing environment with Christian Catholic values.

The goal of the school is to promote the spiritual, social, emotional and intellectual development of each child in a developmentally appropriate environment welcoming of children of all abilities.

The program includes whole-group and small-group instruction, individual instruction, free-choice activities, play time and gross-motor development. Outside play and quiet time are scheduled each day because they are important to young children.

The program includes pre-reading, math, science, and religious education components. The children learn through a range of experiences including music, art, dramatic play, story time, and movement. Activities reflect the interests of the children, their primary languages and cultural backgrounds.

Group activities encourage being part of a community, respecting and helping one another. The school environment promotes self-worth, well-being, and self-confidence.

Admissions, Registration and Withdrawal

St. John the Baptist welcomes all children. The Archdiocese Admissions Non-Discrimination Policy is published on the website of the Catholic Schools Office of the Archdiocese of Washington: <https://www.adwcatholicschools.org>

Admission priority is as follows:

1. Siblings of enrolled students whose parents actively participate in the school and parish community
2. Children whose parents actively participate in the school and parish community
3. Children of non-participating parishioners and non-parishioner Catholics
4. Non-Catholics

Children entering the 4-year-old PreK program must be 4 years old by September 1. Birth certificates and complete health, academic, psychological, psycho-educational and behavioral records must be presented for admission. Full disclosure of a child's history is required prior to a child's admission to St. John the Baptist.

Priority enrollment for current students begins in December. Sibling and general applications will be accepted after priority enrollment. Applications are free. Upon acceptance, a registration fee is due.

Tuition may be paid in up to 10 monthly installments beginning in July and continuing through April. There is an annual fee for installment plans (\$45).

Families withdrawing students from St. John the Baptist should notify the principal as soon as possible. Records will be forwarded to the new school upon request if the parent has signed a student record release form and all financial obligations have been satisfied.

Aftercare Program

A supervised and licensed After Care Program is available for students registered in our full-day preschool. After Care is available from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on all days that the school is in full day session and from 12 noon to 4:00 p.m. on all days that the school is in half-day session. Registration is required to attend.

In the event of an emergency closing, After Care will not be available. Parents are expected to pick-up their children at the designated time, or make arrangements for the child/children to go home with another family. More information about After Care is available on the school website.

Behavior Policy

Preschool is a time to explore different behaviors. Our goal is to help children learn to make positive choices that enable them to be cooperative members of our preschool community. Children learn to be kind, considerate friends who respect others and their environment. Students are encouraged to come to their teachers to discuss problems. This allows After Care teachers to address the child's concerns and help children learn to resolve social issues.

We use positive behavioral supports and strategies with children that include:

- ⦿ modeling desirable behavior (Ex. teacher models sharing)
- ⦿ positive reinforcement (Ex. praising the child when making good choices)
- ⦿ providing choices (Ex. child given choice to sit quietly during story or find another activity)
- ⦿ using redirection (Ex. child getting upset waiting for turn to use sensory table is invited to come to the easel and paint)
- ⦿ reflection and problem solving (Ex. typically a back and forth of questions and statements between teacher and student(s) that help child articulate what the problem is and what the child might do to seek resolution)
- ⦿ clear rules and expectation (Ex. visual rules are posted in classroom and referred to often)

When children are not successful in making positive choices, they are reminded of classroom expectations. A model of good behavior may be demonstrated. The child's attention may be redirected to another activity. If these steps do not prove successful...

- ⦿ The teacher will talk with the child about appropriate behavior, using positive behavioral supports and strategies.
- ⦿ The teacher may communicate with the child's family.
- ⦿ The teacher may call a conference with the child's family and principal.

If the situation does not improve and the principal believes the safety or health of others in the school will be impaired by the child's continued attendance, the principal may ask the family to withdraw from the preschool.

Birthdays

We celebrate birthdays in preschool with a simple, sweet ceremony. Each student may choose to celebrate his/her birthday by bringing a birthday treat for the class. Parents should contact the teacher in advance to plan. Snacks for the class must be free of nuts. Soda and candy are not permitted.

Curriculum & Assessments

St. John the Baptist School provides for the individual growth of the student in all phases of development. Courses meet requirements set by the Catholic Schools Office of the Archdiocese of Washington and the Department of Education of the State of Maryland. Learning materials are developmentally appropriate; accessible; promote multiple modes of exploration and learning; reflect children's interests; and support children of all abilities.

McGraw-Hill's *Wonders* series is used in the Pre-K reading curriculum. *Wonders* is used in the elementary school. [Preschool reading standards](#) guide the lessons. The small-group rotational reading plan is followed in PreK and in the elementary grades. The program is age-appropriate and supports social-emotional development and a strong foundation for a quality learning environment in which children can learn, grown and experience success.

Instruction is driven by the Archdiocese of Washington Standards and Early Childhood Essential Learning Domains: Social Foundations, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Well-being, Motor Development and Fine Arts. Maryland's Early Learning Standards guide our lesson planning process.

Lesson plans reflect the interests, skills, and cultural backgrounds of the children in the class. The developmental needs of each and every child are considered including children with special needs, special health care needs, and IEPs. Learning occurs in small reading groups, play-based activities, and activity-based activities. All activities are facilitated by supportive educators and integrated with the learning objective and theme.

Lesson plans are informed by observation of the students in the class, ongoing formal and informal assessments and information provided by the families. Observations and assessments include developmental checklist and the Early Learning Quick monitoring progress monitoring of early literacy and numeracy skills.

Preschool Assessment

Assessment

Maryland Model of School Readiness (MMSR)

Once in the fall and in the spring.

Your child is assessed in the following

7 developmental areas:

1. *Personal and Social Development*
2. *Language & Literacy*
3. *Mathematical Thinking*
4. *Science*
5. *Social Studies*
6. *The Arts*
7. *Physical Development*



Developmental Screening

Maryland State Department of Education encourages all children in regulated care and early childhood educational programs to have a developmental screening. We screen each child in our preschool program annually. Developmental screening is used to celebrate a child's achievement as well as refer them for support and services when there is an area of concern.

Developmental screenings, along with regular physical exams, dental exams, hearing tests and vision tests, are important ways to monitor a child's growth and development. The screening tool our program uses is called Ages & Stages Questionnaires 3rd Edition (ASQ-3).

St. John the Baptist families apply for admission through a password-protected TADS portal, accessed through the Admissions Page of the school website. In the enrollment process, the school requests that families submit service plans including Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs), Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and 504 accommodation plans in the secure document enrollment portal.

Field Trips

There will be several scheduled field trips for preschool classes. Parents are needed to help chaperone these trips. Since we need a parent's full attention on field trips, we cannot allow siblings to accompany you. All volunteers, including chaperones, must be in compliance with the Archdiocese's child protection policy. If there are not enough chaperones for a scheduled field trip, the trip will be canceled.

Immunizations and Health Records

The Archdiocese of Washington and St. John the Baptist School follow the Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene requirements except that the Archdiocese does not allow exemptions from immunizations. These requirements are periodically reviewed and updated, and changes will apply to St. John the Baptist School.

Immunization: An Immunization Certificate from your child's physician with the appropriate immunizations must be submitted at the time of enrollment to school.

The only exceptions to the required immunizations are:

- Documentation of medical contraindication(s) by a physician;
- Documentation of immunizations in progress, but up-to-date (students will be excluded if additional required immunizations become past due); or
- Proof of a medical appointment to obtain immunizations within 20 days of the enrollment date.

Physical Examinations: All students entering school are required to have a physical examination and submit a Health Inventory form. The physical examination must be completed within nine months before the start of the school year. Yearly updated health inventory is only required if there is a change in health status.

Inclusion of All Students

St. John the Baptist welcomes all children to fully participate in our school, including children with special needs and special health care needs. We ask that families provide a copy of their child's IEP. Upon receiving a student's IEP, St. John the Baptist staff will review and work with the family and early intervention or special education service providers to support that child's goals. Families should share any special health needs including information about food allergies to our school nurse. The nurse, parents and teacher will collaborate on what additional procedures and policies need to be adopted to ensure the safety and inclusion of all students.

Late Pick Up Fees

Punctual pick-up of students is important to the children as well as being fair to our staff. While we understand emergencies happen, please be considerate in adhering to this policy. If you are running late, please call the school and let us know.

The Late Pick-up Policy is: Ten minutes after class dismissal, parents will be fined \$1.00 per minute according to the classroom clock. Habitual late pick-ups will require the parents to have a conference with the Principal and fines may be assessed. Fines will be collected by the Principal and must be paid immediately upon pick up of your child.

Lunch, Milk & Snacks

Each of our preschool classes has a lunch period. Families are responsible for sending their child to school with a nutritious, balanced lunch each day. We encourage you to have your child help pack their lunch box and have discussions about healthy foods and treats. Lunches should contain fresh fruits or vegetables and limit sugar and fats. We follow the Maryland State Meal-Snack Guidelines as we monitor meals provided from home and may supplement to ensure children are receiving nutritious, balanced meals.

Hot lunch is available for purchase. Menus are sent home at the beginning of each month. Milk service is available to all students. For a small fee, your child will be served milk at lunch every day through the school year.

Parents of our Prekindergarten students are asked to send a daily snack for their child. We ask that you send a snack which is nutritious; please see snack ideas at the end of this handbook. We will provide water at snack time; please do not send juice with snack. Nutrition Guidelines are posted in the preschool.

Water is always available to children when they are thirsty.

Medication

Prescription and non-prescription or "over the counter" medication may only be administered to a student during the school day upon the written order of a physician, dentist or nurse practitioner. All medication must be delivered to the school office by the parent, and the medication must be in the original container to assure proper labeling as to content and dosage. Non-prescription medications must be in new, safety-sealed containers. Parents must sign a form acknowledging that the school medication technician or health room aide may administer the medication received by the school.

Parents must include in the student's health records any and all chronic illnesses or disorders (including psychological and/or social), as well as any maintenance medications a student may be taking. Additionally, parents are requested to provide any medications, instructions or procedures that a student might need in an emergency. Full, continued disclosure of information is required for the safety and benefit of your child.

Naps

Napping equipment must be provided by provider and approved for use by the Office of Child Care. Equipment must be in good condition and meet the standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

No soft bedding items, such as pillows, comforters, bumper pads, stuffed toys, etc.

The school must supply sheets in case of soiling or other needs.

Provider must ensure that blankets and pillows are available for children who are 18 months old or older, but parents may provide them.

Once used, only that child may use the linens and accessories until they are washed and sanitized.

Sheets must be used on the napping equipment for sanitary purposes.

Sheets must be labeled with the child's name for easy identification.

Mats must be placed at a distance of at least 3 feet apart if placed side by side or 18 inches apart, if children's head placement alternates, so that an adult or a child may move easily between them, to allow for faster evacuation in the event of fire or other emergency, to prevent injuries to napping children, to reduce the spread of germs.

All napping equipment and linens must be kept clean.

Mats must be washed regularly using approved sanitation methods.

Linens must be washed often.

Blankets and pillows provided by parents should be sent home weekly to be laundered.

Parent-Teacher Communication

There is a general orientation meeting in August that parents are asked to attend.

Conferences will be held twice a year in November and April/May. You will receive an email with a link to sign up for a conference. Report Cards are distributed in January and June for four-year-olds enrolled in the Prekindergarten class. Students in prekindergarten will bring home a communication folder in their tote bag. Please check in there each day for notes and updates. Exact dates of meetings and conferences can be found on the school's calendar in Plus Portal and will be in the Principal's Weekly Newsletter.

If you have any questions about your child and his or her progress, please contact your teacher or the Main Office and request an appointment to meet. It is the policy of the

Archdiocese of Washington that teachers may not communicate with anyone via e-mail regarding a student's behavior, learning issues or academic issues. Parents may contact a teacher by e-mail, but the teacher may only respond about these topics by phone or meeting.

All families are required to log in and update their contact information in our Plus Portal system. School wide information including weather related closures and time sensitive messages will be distributed using Plus Portal.

Physical Activity

Outside play and physical activity are important for children's healthy growth and development. Accordingly, our preschool programs go outside every day except in extreme cold and rain. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather (jackets, hats, mitten, pants, etc.) and wears shoes that allows them to be active. On days when the weather prevents us from being outside, we will use the school's gymnasium.

Rest Time

Rest and/or quiet time are also important for children's healthy growth and development are important. Children in our full day preschool classes will have one rest period each day. During rest time, each child will be required to rest quietly on the mat. The school will provide each child their own mat. Parents will send a fitted crib sheet, blanket and small pillow. These will be sent home on the last day of the week to be washed. Rest time is approximately one hour but may be adjusted to ensure the rest periods is appropriate to the age, needs, and activities of the child.

Safety Drills

Fire safety is discussed and practiced with children. Fire drills are conducted monthly. Fire evacuation plans are posted in each room. The Archdiocese of Washington has selected the A.L.I.C.E. protocol. Preschool children are taught and practice what to do in the event that an intruder is in the building. Lesson plans regarding A.L.I.C.E. are approved by the principal and are taught in a developmentally appropriate way. Please keep all contact information up to date using Plus Portal. In the event of a situation that causes us to evacuate, you will be contacted using the information you provide in Plus Portal. Notifications are made by phone call, text and/or email.

School Hours, Arrival/Dismissal Procedures & Authorized Individuals

Prekindergarten class begins at 8:00 am. Students may arrive no earlier than 8:00am. Please see the back of the handbook for a map detailing morning drop off.

At 3 pm, an adult After Care supervisor will arrive at the preschool to accompany children who are attending After Care. All other children will wait in the shade of the preschool sidewalk as parents and guardians line up their vehicles along the top edge of the preschool parking lot. Parents must exit their vehicles and come to the adult on the "pickup post," who will provide the parent with the sign-out form for the parent's signature. The adult on the pickup post will ask the preschool teacher or classroom aide to bring the child to the post, where the child will be united with the parent. All parents must load children into vehicles using the passenger side only. Parents or legal guardians must complete and submit a [Transportation Permission Form](#) to the school principal to allow another adult to pick up a child.

Sickness

If your child has a fever or is throwing up, do not send him/her to school. He/she may return when he/she has been symptom free 24 hours. Please inform the school if your child has a highly contagious illness such as chicken pox, strep, lice or conjunctivitis. For runny noses, the general guideline to follow is: clear mucus is okay for attending, but keep your child home if the mucus is yellow/green. If your child becomes sick during school, you will be notified to come immediately to pick him/her up.

Screen Time

Screen time use is limited to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should be given the opportunity to view the same media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and to apply it to the world around them.

Teacher should talk with children about online citizenship and safety, including treating others with respect online and offline.

Technology Usage

Technology use is limited and planned in coordination with the Technology Director.

Screen time use is limited to 1 hour per day of high-quality programs. Parents should be given the opportunity to view the same media with children to help them understand what they are seeing and to apply it to the world around them.

Teacher should talk with children about online citizenship and safety, including treating others with respect online and offline.

Toilet Use

Children must be toilet trained. The use of disposable undergarments is not allowed.

Tote Bags

Children usually have several items to transport home each time they come to class, and their small hands often have trouble holding their many treasures. We will provide a tote bag for your child to carry back and forth to school. This open shopping bag type is preferable to a backpack, as often the treasures are an odd size. Be sure to bring it to school every day. You can also decorate it or attach something to it that will help your child to recognize it as his/her own!

Tuition Policy

St. John the Baptist School establishes a per-pupil rate of tuition. St. John the Baptist School reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of any student whose family fails to satisfactorily meet the tuition payments during the preceding semester, or to require payment of full tuition prior to the start of the next semester.

The school reserves the right to withhold a student's school records when the family fails to satisfactorily meet the tuition payments. Tuition may be paid in full prior to

the start of classes, or families may enroll in an installment payment plan. Generally, installments will be a plan for pre-authorized, electronic transfers to cover periodic payments. There is normally an annual fee for participation in the installment program.

Visitors

For the safety of the children of St. John the Baptist School, and to minimize interruption of the classroom schedule, all parents, guardians, and visitors are asked to report to the school office. identify themselves, sign the visitor's book, and visibly wear a nametag. All adults who have not completed the Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection Policy requirements must be accompanied by a compliant adult while in the school. Under no circumstance should adults go to the classroom without the permission of the principal or teacher.

Parents should be aware that students are instructed not to open doors to admit anyone to the building. Students are instructed to alert a staff member if someone is waiting to enter. This is a safety policy, and should not be considered a matter of disrespect.

Volunteers, Child Protection & Privacy

It is always interesting to see a classroom in action and to see your own child interacting with other children away from home. Each family is encouraged to assist and participate in the preschool program and our school community. The school uses volunteers for field trips, classroom parties, coordinating parent socials, hospitality at our school programs, etc. Parents with special skills, talents, hobbies or places of work suitable for field trips are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the teacher.

Any parent (priests, deacons, members of religious communities, school employees, youth ministers, and directors/coaches of children's activities) who has any contact with the children must be in complete compliance with the Archdiocesan Child Protection Policies. Volunteer requirements include an electronic background check, completing an Application for Volunteer and attending an Archdiocesan Child Protection Workshop. Parents may not participate in class activities (including class parties and field trips) until this process is complete. Our goal is that every parent in our school is in full compliance with the child protection policy.

If you choose to volunteer, we must remind you that each child comes to school with his or her own unique personality and we ask that you respect all children and families by not discussing individual children or classroom behaviors outside the classroom. We owe the children and their parents this courtesy and privacy.

Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather, St. John the Baptist School follows all the directives given for Montgomery County Public Schools. These announcements are made on local radio and television stations, on social media, and on the MCPS website. If Montgomery County Public Schools are not scheduled to be in session, the Archdiocese of Washington will make decisions about Archdiocesan Schools in Montgomery County.

- ⦿ When Montgomery County Public Schools close schools for inclement weather, St. John the Baptist School is **closed**.
- ⦿ When Montgomery County Public Schools have a two hour delay, the PreK class will begin at 10:00am.
- ⦿ When Montgomery County Public Schools close early due to inclement weather, the PreK class dismisses early, as well. Please stay tuned to MCPS decisions.

St. John the Baptist School will use the Plus Portal system to make notifications when the school schedule is adjusted due to weather. Please make sure that you have logged onto Plus Portals.

SNACK IDEAS

Orange Slices

Bananas

Grapes

Apple Slices

Strawberries

Raisins

Carrot or Celery Sticks

Yogurt

Apple Sauce

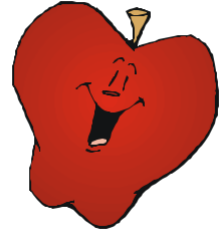
Pretzels

Goldfish or Animal Crackers

Graham Crackers or Sticks

Cheese and Crackers

String Cheese



*If your class has any allergies, please avoid those foods completely.
The teacher will make this information available in advance.

