



Preschool Program Parent/Guardian Handbook

School Year 2025-2026



A School System of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Erie

525 East 34th Street Erie, PA 16504 | (814) 806-2423 | www.eriecatholic.org

About Erie Catholic

Our Vision

Guided by the principles of the Catholic faith, the Erie Catholic School System will provide our students with an academically rigorous course of study while instilling a strong moral character and a zeal for service to others.

Our Mission

Anchored in the Gospel values of Jesus Christ and under the guidance of the Diocese of Erie, the Erie Catholic School System provides academically distinguished schools that cultivate every child's potential.

Our History

Founded in 2017, the Erie Catholic School System unites multiple preschool through eighth grade campuses in our region, continuing a long tradition of Catholic education. Erie Catholic partners with families to nurture children in faith, academics, and service. The school campuses offer a welcoming culture rooted in Christ's teachings, delivering curriculum at or above state standards while customizing learning to meet each child's needs. As a unified system, Erie Catholic provides leadership, resources, and accountability that strengthen all campuses while honoring their unique communities and traditions.

Campus Directory

School Campus	Address			Main Office
Our Lady of Peace	2401 West 38 th Street	Erie, PA	16506	(814) 838-3548
Saint George	1612 Bryant Street	Erie, PA	16509	(814) 864-4821
Saint James	2602 Buffalo Road	Erie, PA	16510	(814) 899-3429
Saint Jude	606 Lowell Avenue	Erie, PA	16505	(814) 838-7676
Saint Luke	425 East 38 th Street	Erie, PA	16504	(814) 825-7105

Welcome to Erie Catholic!

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is my joy to welcome you to the Erie Catholic School System. Whether your family is just joining our community or continuing your journey with us, please know how grateful we are to walk alongside you in the formation and education of your children.

At Erie Catholic, we believe that school is more than a place. It is a partnership where academic excellence meets faith formation, where values are taught not just in words, but in action. And it is our privilege to help your child grow into the person God created them to be: confident, compassionate, and deeply rooted in Christ.

This *Preschool Program Parent/Guardian Handbook* reflects our shared commitment to creating safe, joyful, and respectful school environments that support the whole child. Within these pages, you will find the policies, expectations, and procedures that guide our daily life together. They exist not as rules for rules' sake, but to uphold the kind of learning communities where our littlest students can thrive spiritually, academically, and socially.

Thank you for your trust, your partnership, and most of all, your belief in the mission of Catholic education. I look forward to getting to know your family this year and to building something beautiful together.

With gratitude and hope,

Travis Washko, President
Erie Catholic School System

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GOALS AND MISSION

Each preschool campus in the Erie Catholic School System offers a nurturing, hands-on learning environment designed to meet the developmental needs of young learners. Using the *Pocket of Preschool Curriculum*, we provide age-appropriate academics, engaging activities, and social-emotional tools that guide children in their growth. Students are also introduced to *Stories of God's Love*, a faith-based program that fosters an early understanding of the Catholic faith through meaningful activities.

Through all our programs, we aim to cultivate curious, confident, and compassionate learners who are well-prepared for the next step in their educational journey.

PROGRAM OPTIONS AND TUITION

Our preschool programs are offered at all Erie Catholic campuses. Each campus features age-appropriate facilities and a close-knit community where your child will thrive. Each campus offers three- and four-year-old classrooms. Options include:

Pre-3 Program

Students entering our Pre-3 program must be 3 years old by July 1st and fully potty trained.

- Monday through Friday Full day \$5,100
- Monday/Wednesday/Friday Full day \$3,560

Pre-K Program

Students entering our Pre-K program must be 4 years old by July 1st and fully potty trained.

- Monday through Friday Full day \$5,100

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Assessments:

The preschool program is divided into four quarters. Each year, students will participate in two formal assessments and two informal assessments. These evaluations serve as a communication tool to keep families informed about their child's progress, highlighting both academic strengths and areas for growth. A copy of each assessment will be provided to parents or guardians. The final assessment, completed in May, will be placed in your child's permanent school file.

Curriculum:

Pre-3 Program:

Our Pre-3 program is play-based, supporting each child's smooth transition into a school setting. Children develop positive peer interactions, strengthen gross and fine motor skills, and build

independence and problem-solving abilities. Foundational learning includes colors, basic shapes, and early letter and number recognition. The program also integrates the arts, music, and physical education to encourage creativity and physical development.

Pre-K Program:

Our Pre-K program prepares students for kindergarten by fostering academic readiness and social-emotional growth. Classrooms provide a safe, supportive environment where children practice positive peer interactions and develop independence, building both confidence and personal success. Students engage in hands-on, center-based activities that promote auditory, visual, and interactive learning experiences. Foundational skills in mathematics, English Language Arts, and science are developed alongside enrichment in the arts, music, and physical education.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Arrival and Dismissal

Each campus follows its own arrival and dismissal procedures. Your child's teacher will provide this information, or you may contact the school directly for details. For student safety, children will only be released to parents or individuals listed as emergency contacts. Any changes to pickup arrangements or emergency contact information must be communicated to the school promptly.

Attendance Procedures

Although preschool attendance is not mandatory in Pennsylvania, in order to maintain a safe and cohesive learning environment, attendance is taken daily in all of our preschool classrooms. If your child is not attending school on a given day, you are requested to contact the school. Attendance is required of all students enrolled in the school during the days and hours that school is in session. If your child will be absent due to illness or any other reason, please contact the school office and your child's teacher.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a special occasion for children and an opportunity to build self-esteem. Students are welcome to celebrate with classmates by providing a special snack. Nutritious options are encouraged, and all treats must be store-bought, unopened, and peanut/nut-free to ensure the safety of all students. Homemade treats are not permitted due to potential food allergies.

If your child wishes to hand out invitations for an out-of-school birthday party, invitations must include all the girls, all the boys, or the entire class. Teachers will not distribute invitations to select students.

Please help us keep celebrations simple, yet meaningful, for your child. For suggestions or ideas, contact your child's teacher.

Classroom Communication

We value a strong partnership between home and school. Open and ongoing communication helps ensure each child's success. Teachers will share updates through newsletters, classroom apps, emails, or written notes, and may request meetings as needed. Parents are encouraged to reach out with questions or concerns at any time. Progress reports, assessments, and

scheduled conferences will provide formal opportunities to discuss your child's development, while informal updates will keep you connected throughout the school year.

Dress Code

Preschool is a time to play, explore, and get messy! While we do not have a formal uniform, students are expected to come dressed appropriately for active learning. Children should wear comfortable, washable play clothes that allow for movement and flexibility. Footwear must be sneakers, as they provide the best protection and support for active play.

Please ensure your child is dressed for the weather. We go outside for recess whenever possible and engage in outdoor explorations throughout the year, in all seasons.

Extended Care:

Erie Catholic School System Extended Care Programs (Summer, Morning, and Aftercare) are licensed by the Department of Human Health and Services. Our programs are designed to support families who need safe, reliable, and engaging child care before, after, or during the summer. As a licensed facility, we are committed to following all regulations to provide your child(ren) with the safest and most enriching experience. Policies and procedures of this program follow the Erie Catholic School System Student Handbook.

Meals and Snacks:

Nutrition plays a vital role in the growth and development of every child. Menus are posted monthly in each classroom, and a copy is sent home. Each campus serves breakfast and lunch. Preschool students may purchase lunch, and funds can be added to their EZpay account. Additional information about EZpay will be provided by your home school.

Children gather together at tables for breakfast and lunch. These mealtimes are designed to be pleasant social experiences and opportunities for learning. Staff will assist children only when needed, encouraging them to use proper utensils, practice good table manners, and clean up after themselves.

Parents are encouraged to pack a small snack for their child each day (for example, an extra bag of crackers or goldfish in their lunchbox to be eaten at snack time). Students may also bring water bottles to drink throughout the day; however, please send water only. Milk, juice, or other beverages should not be placed in water bottles, as they will not be refrigerated.

Nap Time:

Following lunch, preschool students have a short period to rest and recharge. Students should bring either a small blanket or a nap mat from home. Sleeping bags and pillows are not permitted.

Nap materials should be placed in a separate bag, labeled with your child's name. These items will be kept at school and sent home periodically for laundering. Please do not send stuffed animals or toys for rest time, as they can be distracting and are easily misplaced.

Parent Code of Conduct:

As a valued part of our school community, we expect all parents and guardians to model respectful, responsible, and supportive behavior that aligns with the mission and values of ECSS. A strong partnership between home and school ensures the best outcomes for every student.

General Expectations

- Support the school's mission, values, and policies.
- Communicate respectfully with teachers, staff, and other families.
- Promote a positive attitude toward education and school staff.
- Address concerns directly and constructively with the appropriate school personnel.
- Ensure students arrive on time, prepared for learning, and in compliance with school policies (e.g., dress code, attendance).

Communication with the School

- Use appropriate channels (email, phone, in-person meetings) to address concerns.
- Avoid engaging in confrontational or inappropriate behavior on school grounds or during school events.
- Understand that teachers and staff will respond to messages during school hours within a reasonable timeframe. (no more than 48 hours)

Social Media and Public Behavior

To preserve the dignity of our school community and protect students and staff:

- Parents are expected to use social media responsibly and respectfully when referencing the school, staff, or other students.
- Publicly posting negative, defamatory, or misleading comments about the school, staff, students, or programs is not acceptable and undermines the school-parent partnership.
- If a concern arises, it should be addressed directly with school administration before being shared publicly.
- Parents should not use the school's name, logo, or any school-affiliated imagery for personal, commercial or critical purposes on social media without permission.

Disparaging or harmful online behavior may result in restrictions from school events, meetings with administration, or further action.

We believe that a respectful and united school community starts with shared responsibility. By upholding these expectations, we work together to provide an

environment where students can thrive academically, socially, and spiritually.

Toys and Items from Home:

We understand that toys can help make the transition from home to school easier and that it can be hard for children to leave them behind. However, when toys are brought to school on a regular basis, they can create challenges. Children may become overly attached to their toy, find it difficult to share, or become distracted during class. Additionally, toys may be lost or broken, which can cause unnecessary upset.

To support a focused and cooperative learning environment, personal toys should remain at home unless otherwise specified by the teacher. Teachers may schedule special "Show and Tell" days when children can bring a favorite toy to share with classmates. These opportunities will be noted in the monthly calendar or newsletter.

Volunteer Information:

ECSS enjoys significant volunteerism by parents and alumni. Parent/Grandparent volunteers may serve as "Room Parents." Other volunteer activities may include, but are not limited to, coordinating class parties, assisting as field trip chaperones, helping in the classroom, and assisting with a variety of other activities and projects for the schools.

All volunteers need to possess the appropriate paperwork which can be obtained in the school office or on the ECSS's website. [Volunteer Clearances | Erie Catholic School System](#)

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Outdoor Play:

Outdoor play is an important part of a child's development. Weather permitting, children will frequently go outside for playtime or walks. Please dress your child appropriately for the weather each day.

Students will go outdoors following state guidelines for outdoor gross motor activity and temperature. Indoor gross motor activities will be provided under the following conditions:

- Wind chill below 25°F or blizzard conditions
- Temperature above 90°F or high winds
- Rain or icy conditions

Restorative Discipline Policy

At all of our Erie Catholic campuses, we believe that children learn best in a safe, respectful, and caring environment. Our approach to discipline focuses on teaching children how to understand their feelings, make good choices, and take responsibility for their actions.

Our Goals:

- Help children develop self-control and positive social skills.
- Encourage children to recognize the impact of their actions on others.
- Support children in making amends and learning from mistakes.
- Foster a classroom community built on respect, kindness, and empathy.

How We Handle Challenges:

1. **Gentle Guidance:** Teachers guide children toward understanding appropriate behaviors and making positive choices.
2. **Discussion and Reflection:** Children are encouraged to talk about their feelings, explain what happened, and think about how their actions affect others.
3. **Problem Solving:** Teachers help children identify solutions, make amends, and practice alternative ways to respond in the future.
4. **Consistent Support:** Children receive reminders and reinforcement for positive behavior, helping them learn and grow in a safe environment.

When More Support Is Needed:

If a child engages in behavior that is harmful to themselves or others—such as hitting, kicking, biting, pinching, physical aggression, eloping, using vulgar language, or throwing objects—further action may be taken to ensure safety. This may include temporary removal from a situation, additional support from staff, or parent involvement to develop strategies for improved behavior.

If a child struggles with repeated challenges, the teacher may reach out to parents to collaborate on strategies to support the child's social and emotional growth. If incidents escalate to the point of a conference being warranted, a behavioral plan and contract will be signed and implemented. If the terms of the contract are not met by the family or the child, the child may be dismissed from the program. These cases will be determined by the principal and central administration.

Potty Training and Bathroom Independence:

All students in the 3- and 4-year-old classrooms must arrive fully potty-trained. Children must be able to use the bathroom independently, communicate their needs clearly, and wear regular underwear. Pull-ups and diapers are not permitted.

Parents should provide extra underwear, a full change of clothing, and a spare pair of shoes. Children should wear “child-friendly” clothing that is easy to remove, such as shorts or pants with elastic waistbands. Please avoid tight clothing, pants with snaps or zippers, onesies, and overalls, as these are difficult for children to remove quickly.

In some classrooms, toilets are located directly in the room; in all cases, a bathroom is nearby. Classes take frequent and consistent bathroom breaks throughout the day. While staff are sensitive to student needs, teachers and aides are not required to clean up after a student uses the

restroom. In the event of an accident, parents may be called to assist or, if necessary, pick up their child.

If a child is found not to be fully potty-trained after enrollment, they will not be allowed to attend until they demonstrate independent bathroom use. Tuition will remain due in these circumstances.

School Cameras and Security:

The Erie Catholic School System's school campuses each have installed video cameras throughout the school for the purpose of enhancing school safety and security. The goals are to promote and foster a safe and secure teaching and learning environment for students and staff, to ensure public safety for community members who visit or use our school property, and to diminish the potential for personal and school loss or destruction of property.

Camera Placement:

The security camera system is installed in public areas only. These areas include, but are not limited to, grounds, parking lots, exterior/interior entrances or exits to the school building, gymnasium, cafeteria, lobby, and main entrance. Security cameras will not be used where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy, including but not limited to restrooms, changing rooms, private offices, nurse's offices, or locker rooms.

Sick Policy:

The Erie Catholic School System is committed to providing an environment that promotes student health - physically, mentally, academically, and spiritually. Proper nutrition and education, along with physical activity help students develop a healthy lifestyle and promote overall well-being. The Erie Catholic School System in conjunction with the Diocese of Erie maintains a student wellness policy.

Allergies:

To maintain the health and safety of the students, first aid or emergency care may be administered by an officer, employee of the school, or volunteer. Parent/guardians are responsible for informing the school, coaches/activity sponsors and bus drivers of any allergies that a student may have that would cause a severe allergic reaction. This information is to be submitted in writing at the start of each school year or upon initial diagnosis.

For students with severe food allergies, an Emergency Medical Plan should be written and available in case of an extreme reaction. The Emergency Medical Plan (Appendix A) must include which, if any, peers need to be notified due to lunch seating, locker location, and/or field trips.

Communicable Diseases:

The following are Pennsylvania Department of Health requirements regarding school attendance and communicable diseases. If you suspect that your child has one of the following diseases/illnesses, please consult a physician before sending him/her to school. If your child has been diagnosed by a physician as having one of the following conditions, your child must be kept home for the required period of time. The school will require a doctor's note/excuse before your child is permitted to return to school.

Covid-19/Flu	Follow current guidelines
MMR	Diagnosis and recommendation by physician
Chicken Pox	Return 6 days after last crop vesicles
Scarlet Fever	Return after 7 days of onset or 24 hours from the institution of antibiotics
Pink Eye	Must be excluded from school until the eye is clear or has received a doctor's clearance that it is no longer contagious
Impetigo	Diagnosis and treatment by a physician May return to school with doctor approval
Tonsillitis	May return 24 hours from the institution of antibiotics
Strep Throat	May return 24 hours from the institution of antibiotics
Scabies	May return 24 hours after treatment
Ringworm	May return to school with doctor approval

Emergency and Crisis Procedures:

A Critical Incident Plan (CIP) for each campus covers a wide range of incidents, such as bomb threats, gas leaks, weapons, hazardous spills, intruder situations, etc. Each campus school has a specific plan to follow in each case scenario. In the event of such an emergency or crisis, parents/guardians would be notified via text, email and your child's class's communication app as to how to proceed in order to keep our students safe.

Emergency Drills:

The following drills are conducted throughout each school year: Tornado and Fire Drills, Gas Leak Evacuation, and School Lockdowns. These drills are to ensure the safety of our entire school family. Each of our six school campuses has specific locations within and outside of the building to make sure that our students are safe from any inherent dangers. Critical Incident Plans are in place and are used by each campus. These plans were developed in cooperation with the Diocese of Erie and the Catholic Schools Office.

Medical Emergencies:

In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called if deemed necessary and the parent(s) of the student will be contacted immediately.

Office Dismissal:

If your child has a fever of 100.4 degrees or above, becomes sick and vomits or has diarrhea, please keep them home. ***They should be free from fevers, vomiting, or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school, without fever-reducing medication.*** This is to ensure the health and well-being of our students and faculty/staff. If your child becomes ill at school, he/she will be seen by the school nurse (if available) or the office staff (and/or principal). If your child has a fever above 100.4 degrees, becomes sick and vomits or has diarrhea, we will notify the parent(s) and the child will be sent home. If the parent(s) cannot be contacted, we will contact the person(s) listed on your Emergency Data Form.

Visitor Procedures:

For the safety of all students and staff, all visitors—parents and non-parents alike—are asked to enter the school by being buzzed in and proceed directly to the Office. Visitors should sign in at the Office, stating the purpose of their visit. Unfamiliar individuals may be asked to provide identification. A Visitor Badge will be issued and should be worn while in the school building or on school property. Once your visit is complete, please return to the Office to sign out and return the badge.

To ensure a focused and uninterrupted learning environment, we encourage parents to schedule appointments with teachers in advance by phone or email. This allows for meaningful and productive meetings. Scheduled appointments help maintain safety and minimize classroom disruptions.



Emergency Medical Plan – Allergies
Erie Catholic School System
Appendix A

Campus Logo

Emergency Information for _____ School Year: _____

Life-threatening allergies to:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peanuts
etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> All nuts from trees (pecans, walnuts, |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Milk | <input type="checkbox"/> Eggs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fish | <input type="checkbox"/> Shellfish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soy | <input type="checkbox"/> Wheat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sesame seed/sesame oils | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: (indicate) _____ |

The following action must be taken **immediately**.

STEP 1. Determine how to treat reaction promptly.

<u>Symptoms:</u>	<u>Give Checked Medication**:</u> **(To be determined by physician authorizing treatment)
<input type="checkbox"/> If a food allergen has been ingested, but <i>no symptoms</i> :	<input type="checkbox"/> Epinephrine <input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamine
<input type="checkbox"/> Mouth: Itching, tingling, or swelling of lips, tongue, mouth	<input type="checkbox"/> Epinephrine <input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamine
<input type="checkbox"/> Skin: Hives, itchy rash, swelling of the face or extremities	<input type="checkbox"/> Epinephrine <input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamine
<input type="checkbox"/> Gut: Nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhea	<input type="checkbox"/> Epinephrine <input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamine
<input type="checkbox"/> Throat Tightening of throat, hoarseness, hacking cough	<input type="checkbox"/> Epinephrine <input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamine
<input type="checkbox"/> Lung: Shortness of breath, repetitive coughing, wheezing	<input type="checkbox"/> Epinephrine <input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamine
<input type="checkbox"/> Heart: Weak or thready pulse, low blood pressure, fainting, pale, blueness	<input type="checkbox"/> Epinephrine <input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamine
<input type="checkbox"/> Other† _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Epinephrine <input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamine
<input type="checkbox"/> If reaction is progressing (several of the above areas affected), give:	<input type="checkbox"/> Epinephrine <input type="checkbox"/> Antihistamine

DOSAGE

Epinephrine: inject intramuscularly (circle one) EpiPen® EpiPen® Jr. Twinject® 0.3 mg
Twinject® 0.15 mg Other _____

Antihistamine: give _____

medication/dose/route

Other: give _____

medication/dose/route

STEP 2. Call 911 and request a paramedic with epinephrine. If epinephrine has already been given, state that more is required.

Emergency Contact Information:

Mother: Emergency cell phone: (_ _ _) _ _ _ - _ _ _ _
 Home telephone: (_ _ _) _ _ _ - _ _ _ _
 Work telephone: (_ _ _) _ _ _ - _ _ _ _

Father: Emergency cell phone: (_ _ _) _ _ _ - _ _ _ _
 Home telephone: (_ _ _) _ _ _ - _ _ _ _
 Work telephone: (_ _ _) _ _ _ - _ _ _ _

**EVEN IF PARENT/GUARDIAN CANNOT BE REACHED, DO NOT HESITATE
TO MEDICATE OR TAKE CHILD TO MEDICAL FACILITY!**

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

Date _____

Doctor's Signature _____

Date _____



Handbook Acknowledgement and Sign Off
Erie Catholic School System
Appendix B

Campus Logo

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have received and read the Erie Catholic School System Preschool Handbook. I understand the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in the handbook and agree to support the school in following them.

I understand that it is my responsibility to review the handbook and ask questions if clarification is needed. I also acknowledge that the handbook may be updated periodically and that I will be notified of any significant changes.

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the handbook and agree to comply with its guidelines.

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____