

St. Catherine Academy

Pre-Kindergarten Program



“Where Every Child is a Gift from God”

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

ST. CATHERINE ACADEMY

Pre-Kindergarten

Title I Facility

St. Catherine Pre-K is a **Type I Facility** certified by the Kentucky Cabinet for Human Resources.

Mission Statement

St. Catherine of Alexandria Academy is a co-educational Catholic elementary school. The primary mission of St. Catherine Academy is to assist families in the total Christian formation of their children, as well as the promotion of academic excellence in an atmosphere that creates the development of the inner self, as well as a sense of social responsibility to family, parish, and community.

What We Expect From Ourselves

St. Catherine Pre-K is a proud participant in the “Kentucky All Stars” program. The Stars program requires St. Catherine Pre-K to exceed the state licensing standards. The Stars Ratings are based on factors associated with good outcomes for young children, such as low student to teacher ratios, (our staff to child ratio is always 1 teacher to 10 students with a maximum group size of 20 students to 2 teachers), program curriculum, and staff education and training. Our Four Star Rating lets you know your child is enrolled in a high quality, developmentally appropriate center.

Our Director and Lead Teacher, is required to obtain 15 or more clock hours of approval training per year. Our Director has an Associate’s Degree in Early Childhood Education and continues to take various classes through the 3-C’s program (Child Care Council of KY) and various training seminars. Every staff member is trained in CPR and First Aid every two years.

If we enroll/accept any child with an IEP and/or IFSP we will work to support the child’s goals in the classroom.

The Pre-K Experience

We offer three-year-old and four-year-old children readiness experiences based on the age and needs of the individual child. Our teachers use the whole group, small group, and individual approach to help each child achieve success. We maintain low student/teacher ratios in order to provide quality care. We follow a structured daily schedule, yet we are sure to include fun energetic activities and the use of creative expression. We use Positive Discipline rather than strict discipline. With Positive Discipline, children learn how to use much needed problem-solving skills. The children in our program learn to “make peace” with others by using their words. With Positive Discipline, children are given the tools they need to grow as healthy, self-confident individuals. Our program promotes diversity, self-help skills, imagination, and individual interests. Parents will be given opportunity and are strongly encouraged to participate in class activities, field trips, parties, and productions. Weekly newsletters from Pre-K, as well as information from the main school office, will be sent home in a folder every Thursday or via email. A progress report is sent home twice each year (usually via email in October and at the end of the school year). Conferences will be offered at this time. An extra conference may be scheduled at any time by contacting the Pre-K. Parents are welcome to visit the Pre-K at any time, but please sign-in at the main school office first **(this is a safety precaution)**.

Message to the Parents

We offer this handbook to all families who have children in the St. Catherine of Alexandria Academy Pre-K program. In this handbook, you will find our school policies clarified. Please read this booklet and keep it as an available reference. (Our handbook and all school policies follow the Archdiocese of Louisville handbook for Pre-Kindergarten programs.) The Principal and the Director retain the right to amend the handbook for just cause. Parents and students will be notified of such change.

St. Catherine of Alexandria Academy Philosophy and Goals

Catholic Schools have been called to a renewal of purpose by the American Bishops in “To Teach as Jesus did”, a pastoral message on education.

We at St. Catherine Academy respond to their call by our efforts to implement the educational developed in this pastoral message.

The pastoral message states that a Catholic School is more than just “school” with religion added.

St. Catherine of Alexandria Academy is an integrated ministry embracing three interlocking dimensions: (1) The message revealed by God which the church proclaims, (2) fellowship in the life of the Spirit and (3) service to the Christian community and entire human community.

We help to realize the threefold purpose of education by the pursuance of the following goals:

A. Message

To provide students with an orderly learning environment and a sense of seriousness about academics.

1. To make more accessible to student's participation in the liturgy and
2. To integrate religious values with daily life.

B. Building Community

1. To learn to live community by experiencing it.
2. To build community trust, that is built by helping one another and
3. To integrate religious values with daily life.

C. Service

1. To extend service to those suffering disadvantages including those who are physically and/or mentally challenged.
2. To learn to be partners in the total American education enterprise.
3. To perform a service to society by the exemplary portrayal of the Christian values and the observances of the Christian moral code.

Achieving these goals is a difficult task and involves real responsibility. Truly, they are ideals, but little is achieved without ideals to strive for. Parents are vitally important members of the school community and should be partners in the development and in the implementations of our program which should idealistically make the recipients different - just as Christ dared to be different.

Enrollment Policy

Non-discriminatory Policy

St. Catherine Pre-K will not discriminate against otherwise qualified applicants on the basis of sex, race, disability, national or ethnic origin, in the administration of their educational policies or admission policies. St. Catherine Pre-K will admit to full participation all applicants, provided we feel we can meet their needs. St. Catherine Pre-K reserves the right to require appropriate testing to see if there are concerns regarding our ability to meet the needs of the child. Enrollment into St. Catherine Pre-K does not guarantee enrollment into St. Catherine Academy. Children are enrolled first by considering parish membership.

Requirements for Entry

Any child entering the Pre-K program must be at least three (3) years of age upon entering the program. **They must also be fully potty trained.** We will accept students throughout the year if there are openings. Fees and tuition must be paid and maintained in order to enter and stay in the program. Students enrolling in the Pre-K program must meet all Kentucky regulations regarding physical exams, immunizations, emergency forms, birth certificates, and all other forms in your registration package. The school must receive all documentation on or before the first day of school. No child will be allowed to stay at school without meeting these regulations. (*A checklist of regulation documentation that is needed is included in your orientation package for your convenience*).

Records/Confidentiality

Student records, immunizations, and all other personal information will be kept on file and confidential. Only St. Catherine faculty, staff, and assistants will have access to these records. These are **NOT** public information. Staff members are expected to adhere to this policy. Breaches in client confidentiality will be subject to disciplinary action.

Quarterly screening will be conducted of your child(ren), these results will be sent home. All results are confidential. School staff and parents/guardians only will have access to files and assessments.

Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, or Neglect

Reporting Procedures for Suspected Child Abuse

As stated in KRS 620.030, “any person who knows or has reasonable cause to believe that a child is dependent, neglected, or abused shall immediately cause an oral or written report to be made to a local law enforcement agency, or the Kentucky State Police, the cabinet or its designated representative, or the Commonwealth’s attorney by telephone or otherwise.” The Archdiocese complete book on sexual abuse policies titled, “Restoring Trust: The Sexual Abuse Policies of the Archdiocese of Louisville”, can be obtained from the school office upon request.

Priority of Admission to St. Catherine Pre-K

1. Parish families that already have children enrolled in Pre-K or St. Catherine Academy will be given first priority.
2. Parish Families that have the oldest child reaching Pre-K age.
3. Non-parish (Catholic or Non-Catholic) members who already have children enrolled in St. Catherine Pre-K or St. Catherine Academy.
4. Non-parish (Catholic or Non-Catholic) families.

School Fees Agreement/Commitment Form

At the start of every school year, each family is given a copy of the School Fees Agreement/Commitment Form. This signed form shows a parent’s true sacrifice and commitment to St. Catherine of Alexandria Academy. This agreement sets forth the method of payment and commitments for Pre-K for the budget year beginning July 1. Please read carefully, complete, and return this form.

Pre-K Fee Payments

It shall be the policy of St. Catherine of Alexandria Academy families to keep their accounts current. Pre-K fees need to be pre-paid each month. Payment is due by the 1st day of the month. A 10% late fee will be charged if payment is not received by the 1st. Fees are calculated based on a daily rate and for convenience we will use a 10 month payment schedule with fees beginning August thru May.

Fees will be tracked and recorded through the school office via FACTS. Parents should not drop payments in the church collection. This will prolong the posting of your fees payment. Fees payments can be paid automatically via FACTS, dropped in the mail drop box in the front door of the school building, sent into school with your child (*please put payment in an envelope and hand it to the pre-k teacher*), or mailed to:

St. Catherine of Alexandria Academy
Attention: Pre-K Fees
413 N. First Street
New Haven, KY 40051

A \$25.00 return check fee will be charged for all checks returned to the school. This includes checks for fees, lunch, scrip purchases or any other school related functions. Like other businesses, returned checks can become a problem. Therefore, if two or more checks are returned from the same individual, the school reserves the right to require that individual to make payments in the form of cash or money order.

The price per child is the same no matter how many days per week your child attends. We offer a full-day schedule, however a child can attend half-day at the same rate. Remember, that your Pre-K fees are tax-deductible. You may also apply for **financial aid through the Child Care Council office by contacting Julie Ritchie at 348-9282**. All monthly payments are due as long as your child is a member of St. Catherine Pre-K. Sickness, vacations, or failure to attend school does not waive your payment. The cost was calculated with consideration of missing days of school including breaks and intercessions. The lack of payment is grounds for dismissal from the program.

****Any amount paid for fees in excess of the amount due for the year, will become a donation to St. Catherine Academy. St. Catherine of Alexandria Academy will not issue refunds or carryover credit balances into the next school year.**

Breakfast, Lunch, and Snacks

St. Catherine Pre-K offers breakfast and lunch through the St. Catherine Academy cafeteria program. St. Catherine Academy operates the school cafeteria according to the Federal Breakfast and Lunch Program guidelines and the Food Service Director of the Office of Lifelong Formation and Education.

Breakfast and lunch menus are sent home each month and you may also view the menu hanging up in the Pre-K near the sign-in book. Applications for Federal Programs for free or reduced breakfast and lunches are sent home in the school communication folder at the start of the school year. Forms may be obtained at any time during the school year when there is a serious change in income for the family. The Food Services Office, Archdiocese of Louisville, does complete documentation. All students must eat from either the cafeteria menu or home packed. Follow guidelines for nutrition when packing your child's lunch. **NO SOFT DRINKS OR CANDY ALLOWED.**

Pre-K parents take turns providing the snack and drink for snack time. The number of children enrolled determines the amount you must bring and the number of times you will be asked to bring the snack. Usually, a family must bring snack and drink two or three times throughout the school year. Snacks should be healthy in nature, store bought, safe, and appealing to young children. Due to state regulations, we are NOT allowed to accept any homemade snacks. You may ask for suggestions from the Pre-K Director.

Breakfast is served at 7:15 a.m. and is over at 7:50 a.m. Please avoid arriving past 7:50 a.m. and expecting breakfast. The school day begins by 8:00 a.m.

Drop off and Pick up

Pre-K children may be brought to school and signed in **no earlier than** 7:15 a.m. The instructional day begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends with dismissal at 2:50 p.m. A staff member will remain in the pre-k classroom until 3:30 p.m. for pre-k students. All students must be picked up by 3:30 p.m. This is the latest our staff members can stay. **Any child not picked up by 3:30 p.m. will be placed in the After School Care Program and all applicable After School Care Fees will be charged beginning at 3:30 p.m.** All children **must** be signed in and out by their parent, guardian, or designated person that has been pre-approved and documented (on your Pre-K application for admission). If a different person than usual is picking up your child they must be on the "Permission for Pick-up list." You must send a note or call, and we will request to see (photo) identification for verification.

Please try to make sure your child goes to the bathroom before they leave your house in the morning. There is usually only one Pre-K staff member in the room from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 am. The mornings can be hectic with everyone dropping off and kids eating breakfast. Making sure they go potty before coming to school helps cut down on our number of trips to the bathroom before everyone is done eating.

Attendance & School Calendar

St. Catherine Pre-K will operate on the same calendar as the school. We will follow the Nelson County calendar of 175 days or 35 weeks in session. St. Catherine will mainly follow the Nelson County alternative calendar and observe the vacations and intercessions noted, (a calendar may be included in your orientation package or given at the beginning of the school year). Occasionally, there will be days that vary from Nelson County. Be sure to read both the Pre-K and the school newsletters for information regarding schedule changes.

DAILY SCHEDULE

7:15am - 7:50am	FREE CHOICE - Breakfast Available, wash hands in room
8:00am - 8:30am	CIRCLE TIME - Prayer, Pledge, Peace builders Pledge, group activities
8:30am - 9:45am	FREE CHOICE - small group and individual activities available
9:45am - 10:40am	FREE CHOICE - Outside or in the gym
10:40am - 10:50am	Walk back from gym, wash hands, get lunch
10:50am - 11:30am	LUNCH
11:30am - 12:00pm	Outside (summer only), Restroom
12:00pm - 12:20pm	Storytime, Restroom
12:20pm – 2:15pm	NAP TIME
2:15pm - 2:45pm	Restroom/Wash Hands - Snack/Story
2:45pm - 3:15pm	FREE CHOICE - Music and Movement available. DISMISSAL

We attend Mass on scheduled Tuesdays at 8:45. We will try to visit the public library once per month as scheduled. Other field trips and activities will be scheduled as the opportunity arises.

Non-Custodial Parent

St. Catherine Pre-K will abide by the provisions of the Buckley Amendment, commonly known as the Family Educational Privacy Act. St. Catherine requires that in the case of separation or divorce, the school be furnished with a notarized copy of the divorce decree or other court documents pertaining to the custody and access to the child. This will enable the Pre-K staff to act in accordance with the legal requirements. St. Catherine cannot, by law, withhold any child from one parent just because the other parent asked us to do so. We must have court documents stating what the arrangements are.

Safety

Kentucky State law requires monthly fire drills, quarterly tornado drills and quarterly emergency earthquake drills be conducted in the Pre-K classrooms. All students participate in these drills. Proper procedures and evacuation maps are posted in all areas occupied by students. The staff will instruct children in these procedures and evacuations, and practice with them. For the safety and well-being of the child, parents should arrange similar drills at home and instruct their child in the safe evacuation of their home. This helps children remain calm when drills are conducted and lessen anxiety over safety.

All staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR. The staff maintains weekly and monthly safety check lists indoors and on the playground to insure safety. First aid kits are kept updated and stocked. Parents are notified if their child is injured. Accident reports are completed and a copy is given to the parent.

The state has mandated that all pre-k schools have an emergency evacuation plan. Each family will receive a form at the beginning of the year with information telling about this plan. This must be kept on hand at home in case of emergency.

Biting/Spitting Policy

Our staff strongly disapproves of biting and spitting. The staff's job is to keep the children safe. When an incident occurs- parents will be notified privately. If the child continues to bite and/or spit routinely the Director will call the parent to pick up the child for the remainder of the day. After (3) three occurrences the program may require the child to be suspended from enrollment. The child may return to the program one week after suspension. If the child returns to the program and continues to bite, the child may be terminated from the program.

Health & Illness

St. Catherine Pre-K will strive to provide and maintain a physical environment that is conducive to the health and safety of all students. Pre-K students must have a current immunization certificate and a complete physical exam upon entrance to the program. Medical records must be completed prior to the student's admission. St. Catherine Pre-K will maintain a health record throughout the child's attendance. If there is any specific medical information relevant to the student's well-being, parents must inform the staff and the school office to insure that proper care is given.

In the event of minor injuries, all staff members are trained in First Aid procedures and will administer appropriate treatment. All staff members are also certified in CPR every two years. Emergency medical forms are kept in the Pre-K office and are taken on all field trips. Parents should make sure the information on the emergency medical forms stays current. Inform the Pre-K office of any change of address, phone numbers, or emergency contact names. The emergency contact people on the emergency medical form should first be asked if they are willing, able, and available to be an emergency contact for your child. You should have at least three emergency contacts listed in the order in which you wish them to be contacted. (The emergency medical form is located in your orientation package). In the event that a child must be picked up from school early due to sickness or injury, they should be picked up within the hour after being contacted. You should discuss the time necessary to get to school in an emergency in advance with the Pre-K staff. The child will be kept comfortable, away from other children, and under the personal care of a staff member until parents, guardian, or emergency contact arrives.

Children will **not** be allowed to stay at school if they have a **temperature** reading **over 100 degrees Fahrenheit**, if they have diarrhea, vomiting, any contagious sickness or contagious rash. If a child stays home sick or leaves the school day sick the child must be **24** hours free from fever, diarrhea and vomiting before returning to school.

In order that medication can be administered at school you must have permission for prescribed or over the counter medication on file, send the medication in its original bottle with its original label, send a note with specific instructions and fill out Permission to Administer Medication form. Give the medication to the teacher on duty so that she may lock it in the medication cabinet. PLEASE do not give your child a pain reliever to mask illness and reduce a fever over 100 degrees in order to send them to school sick. If you need to give your child a pain reliever for a fever, they should be staying home and resting. If a child is sent to school sick the result is often that child waking up from nap feeling terrible and having a fever. They are then sent home and the entire class has been exposed. We understand that children often have runny noses and coughs that can go

on for quite some time. If you give your child antihistamines or pain relievers in these cases, please let us know. This is important for safety, as well as helping to understand why he or she may be tired or over-excited that particular day. If your child misses more than two days due to illness, we reserve the right to ask for a “may return to school” doctor’s note.

No staff member will be allowed to stay if they have a temperature reaching 100 degrees Fahrenheit or if they have any contagious symptoms of illness. All employees are required to take a physical exam upon hire and must have a TB skin test every two years or a physician’s note stating they do not have tuberculosis every two years.

St. Catherine Pre-K has a “NO NIT” policy. Early signs of lice can include itching of the head, matted, foul-smelling hair, swollen lymph nodes and/or rash on trunk. Head lice leave oval, grayish nits that cannot be shaken loose. They spread through shared clothing, hats, combs and brushes, as well as through casual contact. Special shampoo can be purchased through the pharmacy to treat infected heads. If a child becomes infected a note will be sent home to all parents regarding checking your child for Lice.

Allergies

At the beginning of the year you are asked to fill out a parent questionnaire. One section asks you to list any allergies. If your child has allergies, please explain in detail and also alert the teachers verbally.

Sunscreen

Each child must have his or her own sunscreen. We are required by state law to put sunscreen on your child on days when the weather would require the protection. As a precaution, if your child is allergic to PABA and has PABA-free sunscreen, please let us know.

Pre-K Dress Code

Please dress your child in weather appropriate play clothes. Many of our activities are messy. That’s why Pre-K is so much fun! Unless it is raining, extremely hot, or extremely cold we will go outside every day. Even in the winter we try to take a 15 minute walk if it’s too cold to play on the playground. Please send a jacket on chilly days. The weather may feel okay to walk from your car to the building, but we stay outside for an hour. Please send your child in tennis shoes or other comfortable shoes and socks. We DO NOT ALLOW crocs, sandals, or cowboy boots. This is for your child’s safety. If your child is wearing a dress, please try to put a pair of light weight knit shorts underneath. It is hard to be “ladylike” when one is running and playing.

Spare Clothes

All children must have at least one pair of weather appropriate back-up clothes at school. Please put the clothes in a zip-lock baggie with your child's name. Please include **two pairs of underwear and a pair of socks** with the outfit.

Toys

Please do not allow your child to bring toys from home. The toys in our classroom have been deemed developmentally appropriate. Sharing toys from home can be difficult and cause upset and hurt feelings if broken or lost. If at all possible, do not send special "blankets" or toys that they sleep with every night. It can be a very long night, weekend, or vacation for you if your child should happen to leave his or her bedtime buddy at school. One helpful idea is to let them pick out a special blanket or stuffed animal just for school. If you start this at the beginning of the year, it helps for a smoother transition. However, if you feel your child needs that special "blanket" or sleep toy to be able to relax at nap-time you can send it. Each child's comfort is our main concern.

Nap-time Items

Please send nap-time items each Monday in a plastic container (file size work the best). All items must be in the container. You may send a blanket and sheet (crib sheets work well or just a flat sheet). All items will be sent home on Fridays to be washed. Please wash and return the items on Monday.

Visitors

All visitors are required to report to and sign in at the school's main office. Visitors will not be permitted to loiter on the school premises or in the school building. Parents are welcomed to visit and volunteer in their child's classroom but must sign-in first. If you are coming to do a special presentation, prior communication and arrangements should be made with the staff, as to date, time, and nature of the visit. All volunteers in the classroom and on field trips must have their background checks completed and attend "Safe Environment" training. The available dates for this training will be given at the beginning of the school year.

Field Trips and Educational Programs

Field trips and educational programs are designed to enhance the child's experiential background and knowledge. Pre-K students will be given opportunities for these activities along with the school population. Pre-K staff may arrange for visitors to come to the Pre-K to share job experience, educational messages, or entertainment. Parents will be informed and invited to attend these offerings. Permission forms may be sent for parents to give permission for the child to attend the presentation. Field trips are planned to correlate with thematic units of study, holidays, or entertainment. For Pre-K field trips, plenty of parental participation is necessary to provide for the safety of the children. No siblings or children other than Pre-K students may attend field trips sponsored by the Pre-K. This is to insure the safety and adequate supervision of the students. The school cannot assume liability for children other than St. Catherine Pre-K students. Any parent or guardian wishing to attend a field trip must have a background check on file and have attended the Safe Environment Training.

Church Services and Fundraisers

1. All parents are expected to attend Sunday worship with their children each week. Children will attend school mass weekly.
2. All parents are asked to support all fundraising projects, including working their scheduled time at the Autumnfest and donating any items required for the fundraiser.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HANDBOOK RECEIPT

I, _____, have read and understand the St. Catherine
Pre-K Handbook.

I agree to abide by the procedures and policies noted in this handbook.

Signature

Date