St Patrick Catholic Preschool Handbook

2026-2027

Director: Maria Hedrick

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THREES- M/W AM; T/TH AM

FOURS: MWF AM; T/TH/F AM; M/T/W/TH PM

FIVES: M/T/W/TH/F AM

https://stpatricksgretna.org

Dear Families,

Welcome to St. Patrick's Catholic Preschool. I feel so blessed that you have joined this community and look forward to sharing my faith and enthusiasm for educating young children.

Our goal is to provide a safe and challenging environment where children simply walk out of our doors as a preschool graduate academically and socially prepared for kindergarten but most importantly to know Jesus loves them.

We work closely with the Sarpy County Health Department and Gretna Public Schools to implement any necessary protocols and best practice guidelines to keep everyone happy, safe and healthy. Our students' and staff's health are our main priority always when making decisions for our preschool.

As always, I have an open door, and I invite you to share any thoughts with me.

Many blessings,

Maria Hedrick
Preschool Director

Mission Statement

Our goal at St. Patrick's Catholic Preschool is to provide a nurturing Christ Centered environment where children are allowed to nurture their faith and become followers of Jesus while developing socially, cognitively, physically, emotionally, and spiritually through developmentally appropriate activities that promote the whole child. Our play-based preschool will incorporate the Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines to encourage academic excellence and inspire service to their community and parish.

St Patrick Catholic Preschool Goals
Love and respect God. Love and respect ourselves. Love and respect others.

Programs

THREES Students must be 3 years old by October 15th of the year they are enrolling to attend. AM: 8:40-11:10 M/W or T/TH $150/month	**FOURS** Students must be 4 years old by October 15th of the year they are enrolling to attend. AM: 8:40-11:10 M/W/F or T/TH/F $175/month ~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~ PM: 12:10-2:40 M/T/W/TH $205/month
FIVES Students must be 5 years old by December 31st of the year they are enrolling to attend. AM: 8:40-11:10 M/T/W/TH/F $235/month	**TADPOLES** This class is for our youngest students! Students must be 3 by March 15th of the year they are enrolling-This class only runs January through May of each school year. AM: 8:40-11:10 Fridays Only $85/month

*Some exceptions may apply to the age restrictions.

Registration and Admission Policy

Children enrolling in St. Patrick Catholic **Preschool must be toilet trained**.
Items and Forms below are required to be returned by the first day of classes:

- Payment Authorization Form
- Emergency Information and Medical Records Packet
- Parent Information Brochure for Licensed Child Care
- Immunization Records
- School Supplies

St. Patrick's Catholic Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarships, or any other school-administered program.

St. Patrick's Preschool Advisory Board

The Preschool Advisory Board is comprised of a group of volunteers organized to support and assist in the development of St. Patrick's Catholic Preschool. They meet monthly to advise, advertise and promote the program. They also develop and implement special projects or fund-raising activities and serve as a liaison for *the parish*. Please contact Maria if you would like to become involved in this organization. We welcome parent input and look forward to working with you.

Licensing

St. Patrick's Catholic Preschool is licensed by the State of Nebraska through the Department of Health and Human Services. All regulations pertaining to childcare centers (from the Nebraska Department of Social Services, the Fire Marshall's Office, and the Douglas County Health Department) are followed.

Attendance and Illness

Attendance is expected and a wonderful habit to establish in these formative years. Please notify the school if your child will be absent due to a family vacation or illness. This helps with planning.

If your child is overly tired or not feeling well due to illness, it is necessary for him/her to stay home. Those symptoms include fever, chills, muscle aches, headaches, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, new cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing. If your child becomes ill during the school day, we will call parents or the emergency number on the child's emergency forms for immediate pick up. **All students must be fever free, diarrhea free and vomit free for 24 hours before returning to school.**

If your child is healthy, we appreciate timely arrival. The teachers begin their day promptly when they arrive inside the classroom. A routine is set, and tardy students may struggle establishing that routine if chronically tardy. If this becomes an issue, the director will set up a meeting to discuss.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Toilet Training

All children enrolled in St. Patrick Preschool must be potty trained. Although the staff understands an occasional developmental accident, a policy will be presented to families if there are multiple consistent accidents that occur during our preschool day. Students are not allowed to wear pull ups during our school day.

Security

All doors to the "school" area will be locked during preschool class hours. If you arrive during those hours, please ring the doorbell on the south side of the parish center or the doorbell at the bottom of the stairs by the narthex for access. If there is someone other than the "regular" pickup person at dismissal, the staff will be required to check their ID before releasing the child. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

Volunteer Opportunity

Parents are a child's first and most important teacher and we are looking forward to collaborating with you.

There will be opportunities to become involved with St. Patrick Preschool. Please watch monthly newsletters for updates or needs in our preschool and/or parish.

Safe Environment is mandated training for any volunteer or paid employee that wishes to assist with any group of children in the archdiocese of Omaha. If you wish to substitute teach or get involved with preschool or parish activities, teach Religious Education and/or supervise an individual group of students, **safe environment training is required**. Certification is valid for 5 years. **Safe environment training is now required to assist in classrooms and/or chaperoning on preschool field trips.**

Please contact Shane, our religious education director at (402)332-3454 to register for a training here at St. Patrick's. Other dates at various parishes are also available.

Snacks

All children will be offered a peanut-free snack during their day here at preschool. Parents are asked to provide a snack for their child's class on designated days, each month a snack calendar will be sent home which includes the number of students in your child's class.

The State Licensing Department requires that all snacks must be store bought, peanut free and healthy.

If a child has a particular allergy, parents can bring a bulk snack for their child to store at school to accommodate special dietary needs.

Birthdays

Each classroom teacher celebrates the students in their own individual way. It is allowed to send a special peanut-free treat for your child's class if a parent so desires. Please discuss options and day for treat with the classroom teacher. Please be sure all items are prepackaged.

Evacuation Procedure

In the case of student evacuation from the St. Patrick Catholic Preschool, it is our procedure to safely exit the building from the west doors and proceed around the building to the parking lot across Angus Street. This parking lot is located south of the old entrance to the church. The teachers will collect the student binders, any necessary medication (EpiPens, inhalers, etc..) and their cell phones. Parents will be notified when we reach the destination. An evacuation plan with any special needs students will be discussed upon enrollment.

Tornado or Lock-down Drill

In the event of a tornado or lock-down, the doors will remain locked for everyone, including but not limited to parents of our students until the situation is deemed safe by the director or acting director and/or emergency personnel.

Termination

In the rare event that your child is unable to adjust to the routine of a preschool day or displays physical aggression toward staff or other students, St. Patrick Catholic Preschool reserves the right to terminate the child from their program. If a child is struggling in one of the above areas a conference will be called with parents to discuss a plan of action for the child. If improvement goals are not met, the child will be asked to find an alternative educational placement.

Communication

A monthly newsletter will be emailed to each family. Your child's teacher will send out daily/ weekly notes through the app Seesaw. **It is important that we have an accurate email on file and that you install the app. If you do not have access to an email/mobile phone access, please let the Director know and other arrangements can be made.**

Please let us know if you are not receiving seesaw notifications or emails & texts.

Please contact your child's teacher if your child is undergoing any changes in their routine due to a move, separation or divorce, death in the family, etc. We strive to help our students and parents with a warm heart and the power of prayer during difficult times.

For emergency phone calls during the preschool day, please call the Preschool office at 402-332-3050 or parish office at 402-332-4444 and the message will be transferred to the director. Any parent grievances, questions or concerns should be communicated with director, Maria Hedrick.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parent teacher conferences will be scheduled during the preschool day in February for students in our 4's and 5's classesl. There will be no conferences for our 3's, however, if you have any questions or concerns regarding your child's milestones or development, we are happy to meet with you. Please watch our monthly newsletter for more information. A progress note will be sent out in early November and May for all students and a detailed progress report will be sent in January. Informal or formal visits that pertain to the positive growth and development of each child are always encouraged.

Snow Days

Please note that in the event Gretna Public Schools have a late start or are closed due to inclement weather, we will be closed for the day. Listen to your local radio (KFAB is the official station for Gretna Public Schools) or television station for information on school closings. Following Gretna Schools cancellation notice, an email and text will be sent to all preschool parents with a subsequent cancellation for St. Patrick's Preschool. There may be a rare instance that we decide to close when Gretna Schools remain open in order to not endanger our families by having them out in the elements**. If this occurs, you will receive an email and text.**

Arrival

We ask that on your child's first week of school, you park and walk your child into the classroom. Walking your child into the classroom during the first week will help you and your child become acquainted with the teachers, parents, facility, and the routines. It will be an essential part of the transition from home to school. A calm quick exit is easiest for the children if they are having difficulty separating on the first day. We are fully prepared for a little anxiety from our little ones at the beginning of the year.

Starting the second week of school, our staff will be available daily from 8:35-8:40 for AM classes and 12:05 to 12:10 for PM classes, for curbside arrival. A procedure for curb side arrival was included with the new year welcome letter and forms.

If you arrive later than 8:40 for AM classes or 12:10 for PM classes, you will need to ring the doorbell on the south entrance to the parish center and wait for a staff member to let you in, please bring your child to the bottom of the stairs and we will walk them to class.

Dismissal

During the first week of school, we ask that you come and pick up your students from the reception area of the Preschool downstairs. This will help you and your child get acclimated to the routine. Car curbside dismissal will begin the second week of school. A procedure for curbside pickup was included with the new year welcome letter and forms.

The staff at St. Patrick has the right to refuse dismissal of one of our students with someone that may be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Police will be notified in this event.

Please make every effort to be punctual in picking up your child as the time after class is important for teachers as they clean up and plan and prepare for the very best preschool experience. A late fee of $10/family per occurrence will be implemented after written warning if needed. If your child is picked up after 11:20 (AM) or 2:50 (PM), this will be considered a late pickup. Thank you for your understanding in this matter. It is not our desire to implement this policy but is necessary to ensure the respect of our teachers' time.

Each family will receive a CAR ID tag to put in the side/front window of the car to help us recognize cars. Your child will only be released to the people listed in the Emergency Form that you complete prior to the start of school.

Be patient and do not pull around another vehicle

Staff will escort the child to the vehicle and help into the car. Once your child is in the vehicle, please pull forward into a parking space to buckle up. Our goal is to be efficient, yet safe.

Curb side dismissal will begin at 11:10 for AM classes and 2:40 for PM classes. After all cars are loaded, the staff will depart for the preschool rooms to clean and prepare for the following day. Any child who has not been picked up will come down to the reception area to wait for their parents. Please ring the doorbell on the south side of the parish center entrance and a staff member will bring your child to you when you arrive.

TUITION

Payment for tuition will be withdrawn on a monthly basis from your account that is set up through our Parish Soft program ***or*** paid in full at Open House with a check. In the unusual circumstance tuition is not charged due to a mandated closure for indefinite periods of time, payment will be stopped. If you pay for tuition in full, please understand refunds will not be issued until May of the current school year.

For anyone wishing to have their tuition withdrawn monthly, please return the authorization form to the office at Open house. ***Please take special notice that the expiration date on your card is dated May of the current school year or after.***

Tuition is prorated on a nine- month basis so that your tuition rate will remain the same each month regardless of how many preschool days are in the month.

We are excited about our extracurricular activities such as Jemima's Playhouse and Amazing Athletes. We also look forward to both in house and out of building field trips that will enhance our learning.

If for any reason you choose to withdraw your child from our preschool program, you are responsible for tuition for 30 days from the date of withdrawal.

If you wish to make your entire cash payment for the school year, you will receive a 3% discount. Because of incurred fees, credit cards are exempt from this discount.

Field Trip Participation & Chaperone Guidelines

To ensure the safety of our students and maintain proper supervision ratios, the following requirements must be met for parent participation in field trips:

- **Mandatory Training:** All chaperones must complete the **Safe Environment Training** conducted by Shane Fagan prior to the trip date.

- **RSVP:** Attendance must be confirmed with the Director in order for you to join the group.

- **Transportation:** To ensure all children are accounted for, **all students must ride the bus** to the destination. Parents are welcome to meet the group at the location, and if parents wish to take their child home from the destination they must sign their child out with the teacher.

- **Sibling Policy:** To maintain adequate supervision and state mandated ratios, it is required that **no siblings (older or younger)** attend the field trip.

Daily Schedules

THREES

8:40-9:00/12:10-12:30 – Opening: Prayer/Circle Time

9:00-9:15/12:30-12:45 - Small Group Activity

9:15-9:30/12:45-1:00 - Religion

9:30-9:45/1:00-1:15 – Bathroom Break

9:45-10:00/1:15-1:30 - Recess

10:00-10:15/1:30-1:45- Snack

10:15-11:00/1:45-2:30- Large Group/Centers

11:00-11:10/2:30-2:40 – Pack-Up and Dismissal

FOURS

8:40-9:00/12:10-12:30 – Opening: Prayer/Circle Time

9:00-9:15/12:30-12:45 - Small Group Activity

9:15-9:30/12:45-1:00 – Bathroom Break

9:30-9:45/1:00-1:15 – Recess

9:45-10:00/1:15-1:30 – Snack

10:00-10:15/1:30-1:45- Religion

10:15-11:00/1:45-2:30- Large Group/Centers

11:00-11:10/2:30-2:40 – Pack-Up and Dismissal

FIVES

8:40-9:00/12:10-12:30 – Opening: Prayer/Circle Time

9:00-9:15/12:30-12:45 - Religion

9:15-9:30/12:45-1:00 – Small Group Activity

9:30-9:45/1:00-1:15 – Bathroom Break

9:45-10:00/1:15-1:30 - Snack

10:00-10:15/1:30-1:45- Recess

10:15-11:00/1:45-2:30- Large Group/Centers

11:00-11:10/2:30-2:40 – Pack-Up and Dismissal