



**Preschool Handbook
2014/2015**

ST. AMBROSE PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

The preschool handbook includes information that will help each family learn about preschool and function comfortably as a preschool family during the child's preschool experience at St. Ambrose Catholic School. This is a supplement to the St. Ambrose Catholic School policy book that each school family receives.

Preschool Mission

It is the mission of the St. Ambrose Catholic Preschool to provide a loving, secure environment in which three and four year old children will be invited to develop spiritually, physically, emotionally, intellectually, creatively, and socially.

Preschool Philosophy

The first years of life are very important to a child's growth and development. Foundations are laid that influence the ability of a child to accept him/herself, relate to others, and respond positively to the environment. Family relationships provide a young child with the best model for developing attitudes, values, and appropriate behavior. Interactions with other adults and children are important and promote ways for a child to relate to others. Preschool provides a transition from home to school environment. The St. Ambrose Catholic Preschool provides a positive learning environment for each child in an atmosphere of Christian love and concern.

Preschool Objectives

Through a cooperative relationship with our preschool families, we hope to provide learning experiences and play activities that encourage spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, creative and social growth, self-reliance, and self-knowledge. These learning experiences and play activities will incorporate the objectives below in such a way (games, songs, drama, dancing, etc.) that the experience of the child will be enjoyable.

Spiritual

Children will learn that:

1. God is a loving and personal God
2. We belong to a very special church
3. We speak to God through personal and memorized prayers
4. We live according to Christian values
5. We celebrate many different feasts and seasons
6. We have a parish church that is a very special place in which Jesus is present in a special way
7. The Bible is a special book that tells us about God and God's people

Physical

Children are provided with opportunities that help develop:

1. Gross motor skills (running, walking in a straight line, walking backward, walking up and down stairs, walking one foot after another, jumping, hopping, standing on one foot, throwing, bouncing, catching and kicking a ball, climbing, swinging, sliding, clapping)
2. Fine motor skills (pasting, molding, opening and closing buttons, snaps, zippers, stacking, putting together puzzles, drawing with a pencil, coloring with a crayon, painting with a

brush, copying simple shapes and letters, cutting with blunt scissors, picking up small items, screwing jar lids off and on, lacing shoes, and threading string through large beads)

Emotional

Children will have opportunities to mature emotionally by learning to:

1. Follow rules
2. Respect authority
3. Control their tempers
4. Be patient
5. Stick with and finish tasks
6. Understand that others have rights and feelings
7. Take responsibility for their belongings
8. Respect others' property
9. Tell the truth
10. Share their things

Intellectual

Children will have a variety of experiences that will prepare them for further intellectual growth in school.

1. Reading (listening, recalling facts, telling what is happening in pictures, knowing what an alphabet letter is, understand that words are made of letters, recognizing first name in print, printing first name)
2. Speaking and listening (communicating thoughts, needs, and feelings, speaking clearly, relating simple personal experiences, asking questions, answering questions, following directions, putting simple events in order, recognizing sounds, recognizing dissimilar sounds, recognizing rhyming sounds repeating, completing a sentence, enjoying music)
3. Math and Science readiness (counting to ten or more; understand more or less, same or different, empty or full, all or none; understand similar and different; matching objects by color, shape, or size; recognizing biggest, smallest, longest, shortest; arranging objects in order by size; recognizing basic shapes; basic understanding of time; understanding that money buys items)

Creative

Children will have opportunities to explore and create by:

1. Retelling stories
2. Pretending (costumes, masks, stories)
3. Free play
4. Centers for exploration of themes and inquiry
5. Free drawing, painting, coloring, collage development
6. Musical expression through movement and dance

Social

Social development is emphasized at all times during preschool but more emphasis is placed on socialization in the three-year old program. Children are encouraged to:

1. Explore and try new things
2. Play quietly alone for a time
3. Play with other children
4. Get along with peers
5. Work with other children and adults
6. Take part in group activities
7. Share
8. Take turns
9. Sit quietly and pay attention
10. Respect another's space

Self-reliance

Children will have opportunities to learn and practice self-reliance skills such as:

1. Handling toilet needs without help
2. Washing hands
3. Putting on coat, hat, and mittens
4. Handling utensils
5. Picking up after self
6. Carrying food on a plate and carrying a drink in a cup
7. Pouring, stirring, and spreading
8. Turning a faucet on and off
9. Using a tissue properly
10. Asking for help

Self-knowledge

Children will have a variety of opportunities to know themselves better to include:

1. Knowing their own full name
2. Knowing their age and gender
3. Knowing the full names of parents and siblings
4. Knowing their home address
5. Knowing their telephone number
6. Knowing basic body parts

These objectives will be realized age-appropriately over time during the preschool years. Each child is an individual who will develop individually in each area. We will celebrate achievements and work with challenges until they become achievements.

Preschool Registration

Children who will be three or four by September 1, 2013, may register for preschool. A minimum of ten children will be needed for each program. A tuition agreement will be mailed once preschool tuition is set (usually in March/April). A supply fee is also charged.

Preschool Staff

In the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, preschools with an elementary school are administered by the school principal. Each class will have a teacher and possibly an aide.

Preschool Procedures

Arrival

Preschool will begin at 8:00 a.m. for all students. Parents may drop off their **four-year old** in the gym beginning at 7:45 a.m. **Three-year olds must** come in the school with a parent or caregiver beginning at 7:45 a.m. Elementary school siblings must be dropped off in the gym first.

Dismissal

Teachers will walk **half-day** children to the lower parking lot at 11:00 a.m. Teachers will walk **full-day** children to the lower parking lot at 2:35 p.m. If there is inclement weather, teachers will walk the children through the gym to the gym door where parents may come to get their preschool children.

Absence

If a child will not be in school, parents are asked to call the school prior to 8:00 a.m. to report an absence. The voice mail system may be used to report an absence. Refunds are not provided for missed days. A note of explanation regarding the child's absence should be sent upon returning to school.

Emergency

If there is inclement weather, parents should check WBGZ (radio) or TV channels 4 or 5 to get information about school closings at St. Ambrose-Godfrey. If school is closed for the day, the login page of Fast Direct will also be updated to reflect the closing.

Calendar

The preschool will follow the same holiday and vacation schedule as the elementary school.

Class Size

The preschool classes will be limited to twenty students with one teacher and an aide when more than ten children are present.

Health Information

A recent physical exam report with proof of immunization must be on file before the child attends his/her first day of school. Parents should advise office personnel of any special concerns such as allergies, physical limitations, etc. on the school Emergency form.

Illness

Children who are ill or not feeling well should be kept at home. A child who has had the stomach or intestinal flu or who has had a fever should not return to school for **twenty-four hours** after the symptoms have disappeared.

Children with Special Needs

If a child has special needs that the faculty/staff at St. Ambrose preschool are unable to accommodate, school staff will discuss this with parents and work with the family to find a setting that does meet the child's needs.

Guidance

Preschool is often a major adjustment for children. The preschool staff will guide the children as they learn appropriate behavior in a group setting. Guidance will be by example and positive reinforcement. Should a child have particular difficulty with cooperation, a time-out may be given. Parents will be notified if the teacher becomes concerned with a child's behavior during preschool.

At no time is corporal punishment of any kind used at St. Ambrose Catholic School or Preschool.

Clothing

Children should wear play clothes to school. Many of the activities involve supplies that may come in contact with shoes or clothing. Part of learning involves avoiding and cleaning up after the "messes" that occur from time to time. At the beginning of the year, each child will be asked to bring a change of clothing in a Ziploc-type bag. **Shoes:** Since children will be participating in gross motor skill activities, it is advisable that students wear shoes/sneakers.

Treasures and Possessions

The preschool is fortunate to have a large variety of toys and manipulatives with which your child can play and learn. **Parents are asked not to bring toys and personal play items from home because of the possibility of loss or breakage.**

"Show & Tell" will provide an opportunity for your child to bring something to share. These items should be labeled with your child's name and taken home at the end of the day.

Play guns, weapons and other toys that encourage aggressive play are never welcome in our classroom. Building cooperation and concern for one another are working principles in the Preschool. Items that promote aggression, competition and hostile feelings are not permitted in the Preschool.

Toilet Training

Children **MUST** be toilet trained in order to attend Preschool. Occasionally accidents will occur and the Preschool staff will do their best to discreetly assist your child with cleaning up and changing clothes.

Field Trips

Parents will be given advance notification for planned field trips. A permission slip and any fee must be returned prior to the field trip. Any child without their permission slip signed will not be permitted to participate in the field trip.

Allergies

If your child has a special allergy, please inform your teacher. Children's allergies will be posted in the classroom to better inform Aides, substitute teachers, and cooperating teachers. It is also helpful to have a written statement about the child's allergy and how/when to administer any medication if necessary.

Snack

Children will rotate responsibility for snack. A calendar will be provided. State law requires that snacks be pre-packaged/store bought.

Lunch

All day Preschool children must bring a packed lunch to school clearly labeled with his or her name. This lunch should contain everything needed for that child's lunch, including silverware. We prefer a well-balanced, nutritious lunch. Please do not send in glass containers of any kind.

In case of forgetting a lunch, your child will be provided with a simple balanced lunch. However, if your child has an allergy we may not be able to meet his or her needs.

Children will be able to purchase milk from the school. A request form will be sent out semi-annually. Those who do not want milk may pack a drink in lunch, but no soda.

Special Treat Days

The preschool classes will celebrate special holidays with a special treat and/or favor. Special days include Halloween, Thanksgiving, St. Nicholas Day, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and the last day of school. Parents will be invited to help with these special days. Birthdays will be celebrated also.

Birthdays

You are welcome to send in a special treat for your child's birthday. We suggest that this treat be small, and not candy. Please talk with your child's teacher about how many treats will be needed and which day you would like to bring something in.

Supply List

A supply list will be provided each year.

Fast Direct Information System

Many forms and other school information can be found on the St. Ambrose Fast Direct information system (<http://fastdir.com/stambrosegodfrey/>). At the beginning of the school year, parents will be given an access code to a family account. Communication with teachers can also be accessed through this system.