



Saint Stephen

CATHOLIC CHURCH & SCHOOL

Preschool & K-Prep Parent Handbook

**Saint Stephen Catholic School
740 Gladstone Avenue SE
East Grand Rapids, MI 49506**

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MISSION STATEMENT

To partner with parents in the whole-person formation of their children, who are made in the image of God and destined for communion with Him.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Saint Stephen Preschool is a developmental program serving children ages 3-5. We think of each child as a unique individual and base our curriculum on the developmental level of the children in each particular session. We teach through themes to expose the children to many concrete experiences and learning activities related to their growing awareness of the world around them.

Our main goal is to build each child's self-concept and self-esteem. We do this by creating a positive environment and building upon successful experiences. A Christ-centered environment promotes love, cooperation, trust and respect.

The curriculum includes both individual and group activities to teach social skills such as problem-solving, decision making and deductive reasoning. Through music, art, cooking, creative dramatics, stories, large and small motor activities, field trips, games and finger plays the children grow and learn in many ways.

ADMISSION

Three-Year Olds: Students must be three by September 1st, of the current school year

Monday through Thursday from 8:00 -11:00am

Four-Year-Olds: Students must be four by September 1st, of the current school year

Monday through Thursday from 8:00 - 11:00am

K-Prep: Students must be five by January 1st, of the current school year.

Monday through Thursday from 12:00pm - 3:00pm

Classes are filled on a "first-come, first-serve" basis.

Parents may enroll children to start at the beginning of the school year or at the January start, if there is room available in the requested session. A registration fee of \$200.00 per family is required.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ENROLLMENT

- 1) Written parental permission to seek emergency medical care for the child when parents

cannot be reached (Child Information Card), due in the school office by the first session attended.

- 2) A signed record of the minimum immunizations required by law due in the school office by the first session attended.
- 3) Green health form signed by a physician (within the past year) due in the school office prior to the start of the first session attended.
- 4) A copy of your child's birth certificate.

STAFF

St. Stephen Child Care is a state licensed center. Our highly qualified staff have Early Childhood training and are certified in CPR and First Aid. All staff submit to a screening process which includes criminal background checks, VIRTUS training (Protecting God's Children,) electronic fingerprinting, and the Michigan Public Sex Offender Registry. In addition, each staff member has been carefully screened for their love of children and their ability to positively interact with children on a daily basis.

Preschool program and Child Care staff continue to receive training including, but not limited to, CPR and First Aid, Child Abuse and Neglect, Emergency Evacuation Procedures, health and administration of medication, supervision, outdoor play and communication with parents, and good practices when working with preschool and school-age children. In addition, staff will complete 16 hours of professional development annually.

CLOTHING

Please dress your child in comfortable clothes for play. We provide paint shirts for our hands-on projects. We encourage parents to dress their children in comfortable clothes for indoor and outdoor activities. Please choose clothing that your child can manage themselves when using the bathroom. Each child needs to have a complete change of seasonally appropriate clothing, including socks. We are not equipped with diaper changing facilities. A parent will be called to pick up their child when a potty-accident beyond our ability to clean up happens.

COMMUNICATION

The school office is open every day from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. If you need to speak with the director, please call 616-243-8998, ext. 204 or email mdavison@ststephenparish.com.

A school calendar of events will be provided and posted on our website. Notes concerning updates, permission slips and reminders are sent home frequently. Your child will have a weekly folder that will go home each Thursday and is asked to be returned each Monday. A weekly newsletter, called the Monday Buzz is sent out from the School Office each week and can be located on the school website.

We utilize a Class Dojo account to share stories, photos, and special events with parents. You will receive an email to join and to see all the great experiences your child is having at school.

If a difference of opinion occurs between a parent and the director, a conference should be held between the parent and director. If further action is necessary, the principal will meet with all concerned persons.

Each child is asked to carry a **full-size** backpack for important papers and projects. Please check the bag daily for important communications from the school.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers of Saint Stephen Child Care must submit to criminal background checks and VIRTUS training (Protecting God's Children,) before having contact with children in the care of Saint Stephen Child Care. Documentation shall be on file at the center that a volunteer has not been convicted of child abuse/neglect and/or a felony involving harm or threatened harm to an individual. A search of the case as the perpetrator of child abuse or child neglect shall and the Michigan Public Sex Offender Registry must also be on file at the center before having unsupervised and unsupervised contact with a child in care.

Volunteer opportunities are determined on a per event basis.

CONFERENCES

We encourage on-going communication between home and school. Therefore, we welcome calls throughout the year as the need arises or problems develop. Problems with preschoolers must be attended to immediately and not be put off until a formal conference time. Conferences are held in the spring for both preschool groups. Progress reports will be sent home before winter break. Please call the director at any time with questions and concerns.

DISCIPLINE

Saint Stephen School staff will use positive methods of discipline, which encourage self-control, self-direction, self-esteem and cooperation. Our objective is to help the child learn rather than forcing her/him to conform to adult standards. Our preschool is a unique educational institution in which the spirit of Christ-like charity, respect for authority and mutual cooperation are essential to the learning situation. Each child will have freedom and encouragement to express individuality as long as her/his conduct does not intrude upon and endanger the freedom of others, especially upon the freedom of her/his peers to receive instruction.

EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PROCEDURES

On days when it becomes necessary to cancel our school and preschool sessions, announcements will generally be broadcast on television, news websites and Infinite Campus communication emails and text alerts.

Tornado Watch: In case of a tornado watch during a session, children will remain in the school building. A parent/guardian may pick up the child during a tornado watch if she/he so wishes.

Tornado Warning: If a tornado warning is issued, children will take shelter in the lower level of the school immediately and will not be released until the warning expires.

We have regular fire drills, tornado drills, and lockdown drills and explain this procedure to the children. The drills follow our school policy and are documented on our school website.

FIELD TRIP TRANSPORTATION RULES-

School Requirements:

- 1) The preschool shall obtain and keep on file written permission from the parent prior to the child's participation in field trips.
- 2) The preschool shall provide notification to each parent prior to each field trip. This information will be part of the monthly newsletter.
- 3) Field trips for the preschool will be at a minimum and used as an extension to classroom learning.
- 4) We utilize bussing from Catholic Secondary schools.

HEALTH

A green health appraisal form from the Health Department must be completed and returned to the school office prior to the beginning of the school year and prior to your child starting in class. This form is good for 2 years from the exam date. Immunizations must be current and updated annually.

Please watch your child closely and keep them home if they seem ill or very tired. School presents a change in activity level for your child so try to see that they get enough sleep.

A child who is well enough to be in school is well enough to take part in all activities, including playing outside." (Kent County Health Department)

Communicable Diseases: Occasionally it may be necessary for your child to be sent home from school if there is a possibility that (s)he has a communicable disease. The child will be permitted to return to school when the condition has cleared and your child is no longer contagious, or if (s)he is under a physician's care and the doctor authorizes the return to school.

In the case of communicable disease, an email will be sent home informing the parents of symptoms to watch for. Due to the contagious nature of these conditions, it is important that the caregiver notify the school when the child is diagnosed with a communicable disease.

*The Kent County Health Department must have a record of all diseases.

Absence: Please notify the school attendance line if your child will be absent the day of her/his class. Let us know if the child will be absent longer than one session no matter what the reason.

Illness: If your child becomes ill at school, we will keep the child as comfortable as possible away from the group and will call you or your designated emergency number. That is why filling out each part of the Child Information Card is so important.

Please keep your child home if (s)he has:

- Fever above 100.4
- Vomiting
- Unexplained rash, blisters or sores on skin with pus/liquid drainage
- Cough that disturbs normal activity
- Diarrhea
- Unexplained shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Yellow or greenish discharge from nose, ears and/or eyes
- Chills
- Unexplained stiffness in neck or back
- Requiring one-on-one care for any reason

A child may return to school once they are symptom free for 24 hours, fever free for 24 hours without the assistance of fever-reducing medication or with a doctor's note.

Medical Problems: It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the teacher(s) and principal if a student has a medical problem that may need attention while at school. A child that requires a medical procedure must be approved by the principal. Saint Stephen school does not employ a school nurse. If it is necessary for a student to take medication, prescription and/or over the counter during the school day, a parent must fill out the appropriate paperwork, giving explicit instructions for administering medication and releasing the school from any liability. A physician's signature is required for all prescription medications and must be in the original containers. All administered medications are documented when given. No expired medications will be permitted.

Serious illness, accident or injury: The director will call 911 immediately, followed by calling the child's parents or the emergency contact person if the child's parents are unavailable. One staff member will remain with the child, providing medical assistance to the child as needed until the emergency medical staff arrives and takes over the child's care. If a child needs ambulance transportation to a hospital and no parent or emergency contact arrives, a staff member will go with the child. Our teachers are trained in CPR and First Aid and these certifications are kept current.

Strategies to Protect Children from Infection:

Part of preschool is helping your child become more independent. With this goal in mind, please help us by encouraging your child to use these healthy habits.

We teach the children to use the following steps when washing their hands:

- Turn on warm water to a comfortable temperature.
- Wet hands and apply liquid soap
- Rub hands together vigorously for no less than 15 seconds, covering all the areas of hands and wrists
- Rinse hands under warm water until soap and dirt are rinsed away. Leave the water running while you dry your hands
- Dry hands with a disposable paper towel
- Turn water off using a paper towel

To safeguard the health of the children, all staff follow these hand washing guidelines:

- Upon arrival to the center
- Before and after snack time and before handling any food
- Before giving medication to a child
- After using the toilet or assisting a child
- After handling garbage
- After handling body fluids from sneezing, coughing, wiping or blowing noses, or from open sores

Children must wash their hands:

- Before snack time
- After sneezing or coughing into hands
- After playing outside
- After using the restroom

We teach the children proper use of a tissue to blow their noses and to cough into the inside of their upper arm. With this simple change of habit, children and caregivers lessen the chance of infecting others with their germs.

Our staff receives education about blood borne pathogens training in universal precautions when attending to an injured child or where blood, urine, vomit or stool is present.

When spills of blood or bodily fluids occur, the procedure to clean the area effectively is as follows:

The staff person handling the situation must first put on gloves.

Use disposable paper towels to wipe up as much of the visible material as possible, and then place the soiled towels and any other soiled materials in a plastic bag that has been securely tied or sealed. If the spill occurs on a hard surface, the entire area must be disinfected immediately with a solution of ¼ C. bleach to 1 gallon water solution.

If the spill occurs on carpeting, blot the area with a paper towel immediately and spot clean the area with a detergent-disinfectant. Additional cleaning with a steam cleaner may be necessary. When the cleaning of the area is completed, put contaminated gloves into a plastic bag and securely tie and discard.

CLEANING AND SANITIZING OF TOYS AND CLASSROOM SPACES

Tables are cleaned after each use using a 3-step process:

- First clean the tables with soap and water
- Rinse with clear water
- Follow with a bleach solution and allow to air dry

Toys and equipment are kept clean and in good repair. Cloth toys and dress up clothes are washed by machine. Others are put through the dishwasher. Some are cleaned and sanitized using a bleach solution. This is done yearly and as needed with use.

FACE MASK/FACE COVERING POLICY

The Diocese of Grand Rapids follows CDC, State of Michigan, and the Kent County Health Department's face covering regulations. We are required to follow the following guidelines. Masks are optional and at the parents discretion.

POTTY TRAINING AND TOILETING POLICY

Our licensing requires that your child is fully potty trained. While there are many indicators of readiness for preschool, this is a key factor. We understand that accidents do happen and we have some extra clothing available, but we are not equipped for more than occasional mishaps. Our expectation is that your child does not have regular potty accidents and pull ups are not permitted for any part of the day, including nap time. Please send in a complete change of season appropriate clothing in a plastic bag marked with your child's name. This will be stored in your child's cubby at school. We are not equipped with diaper changing facilities. A parent will be called to pick up their child from a potty-accident beyond our ability to clean up.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are very special, and we encourage you to send store-bought treats. Summer birthdays can be celebrated on the day of your choice during the school year.

SNACK

Please provide a healthy snack during the school day and if they are staying for childcare. We ask that your child also brings a non-spillable water bottle each day.

SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

Before school starts you will be given a supply list of materials needed for the school year which will include a **full-size** backpack. Newsletters and other important communication will come home in this bag as well as your child's artwork. Small or mini sized bags will not always accommodate our art projects.

TUITION

There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$200 per family per school year. Tuition is set in the spring of the previous year. If tuition payment is not current, your child will not be able to continue in our program. Tuition contracts and payments are handled by our Business Office.

Communication concerning contracts and tuition must be directed to businessoffice@ststephenparish.com.

WITHDRAWAL

Parents are welcome to withdraw their child from the preschool program at any time. We just request notification, in writing, to the school office. As a courtesy we request a 2 week notice for withdrawal.

Every childcare and/or preschool program is not able to meet the needs of every individual child. Although we will do our best to provide a quality, individualized program for each child enrolled in Saint Stephen Preschool, we reserve the right to request placement elsewhere in situations where we believe we are not able to meet a child's individual needs.

Please Note:

You will be asked to withdraw your child from our program for the following reasons:

- 1) Failure to show evidence by the first class attended of an up-to-date immunization record or failure to fill out a waiver form
- 2) Failure to turn in the green health form signed by a physician or health professional by the first day of school
- 3) Failure to pay tuition when due
- 4) Inability to meet child's extraordinary special needs

School Calendar Year

Be sure to read the Monday Buzz email bulletins that will be sent from the school office. We follow the same schedule as the school unless we notify you otherwise in our preschool newsletter. A copy of the school calendar can be found on our school website.

SMOKING AND VAPING

State regulations prohibit smoking and vaping on Saint Stephen School property. We encourage everyone participating in Saint Stephen activities, to refrain from smoking and vaping.

PRESCHOOL DROP-OFF PROCEDURES

- Preschool hours: 8:00am-11:00am
- Lunch Bunch for Preschool & K-Prep students: 11:00am-12:00pm (available for additional fee)
- Child Care: 12:00pm-5:30pm (available for additional fee)

Drop off will take place at the Church entrance facing MLK Jr. Street (Franklin Ave), closest doors

to the school. You will be greeted by a staff member and your children will be escorted to their classroom at 8:05am. Late drop-offs interrupt our educational experience so please arrive on time. If a child will be late, you must report their arrival time on the school attendance line and come through the main school office.

K-PREP DROP-OFF PROCEDURES

- Lunch Bunch: 11:00am-12:00pm (available for additional fee)
- K-prep hours: 12:00pm-3:00pm

Drop off for Lunch Bunch will be on the preschool playground, weather permitting, otherwise drop off will occur at the main school door, where you will be greeted by a staff member.

CHILD PICK-UP PROCEDURES

- Preschool runs from 8:00am-11:00am. Unless you have arrangements for After School care, please arrive promptly at 11:00am. Your child will be picked up on the preschool playground (located on Gladstone Dr. SE), weather permitting.
- Lunch Bunch pick up will occur at 12:00pm at the main school doors.
- Pick up outside of those two main times will occur at the school main entrance doors at the top of the stairs. Please ring the doorbell and a member of our staff will escort your child(ren) to you.
- Parents will not be permitted to enter the main school area of the building to pick up their child.
- A late fee will be charged after 5 minutes past your pick up time unless arrangements have been made.

K-PREP PICK-UP PROCEDURES

- At 3:00pm your student will be escorted to the pick up line on Reed Street.
- A late fee will be charged after 5 minutes past your pick up time unless the school has been notified in advance.