

INTRODUCTION

A sincere welcome is extended to you and your child as you enter the St. Dominic Preschool program. Our purpose is to provide the highest quality preschool education in a secure, nurturing and stimulating environment. We are focused on preparing our youngest students in the development of character and intellect through our commitment to academic, social and spiritual growth. We put students at the center of learning, teaching them in developmentally appropriate ways to make choices, manage time, think critically and creatively, develop ownership for their learning, and engage others with empathy. In all of our endeavors, we seek to foster joy in learning and the importance of being a significant member of our community. A sincere welcome is extended to you.

PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

We believe that when children learn in an atmosphere of acceptance and respect, they grow to trust their own talents and abilities and ultimately trust themselves. At St. Dominic School, we are committed to the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of each individual child. Piaget, Montessori, and Vygotsky, as well as current researchers, provide the theoretical framework around which our program is built. We provide a safe, supportive, creative, nurturing environment that fosters children's learning. We strive to make each child's entry into the school world a successful, stimulating, and above all, a positive experience.

As we work toward the goal to instill a life long passion for learning, we encourage children to become divergent thinkers who have a positive attitude toward learning and school. Through our carefully planned environment and curriculum, we promote active learning, social interaction and autonomy. Materials are selected to facilitate the child's construction of knowledge. Learning is also supported through naturally occurring play that encourages exploration and experimentation. Children are active participants in an environment that encourages critical thinking and involvement.

Learning centers for writing, literature, math, construction, science, practical life skills, sensory development, art, dramatic play, large and small motor development, and social studies provide the vehicle for exploration of the child's interest. Children participate in activities that encourage them to explore, experiment, problem-solve and share ideas with one another.

We prepare materials and our environment to challenge each child's spirit of discovery and wonder. A balanced program of child-centered and teacher-directed activities provides children the opportunity to enjoy the freedom and responsibility of choice. Through play, they explore a nurturing, loving environment and are given the gift of time to experiment, discover, and think.

St. Dominic School is dedicated to serving the needs of the whole child with an education marked by academic excellence, outstanding teachers, personal attention and participation. No pupil may be excluded from St. Dominic School because of race, color, religion, national origin, or ancestry.

EMERGENCY, SAFETY, AND SECURITY PROCEDURES

Crisis Plan

St. Dominic School has emergency procedures in place, reviews the plans yearly with the faculty, and provides the appropriate information and training. For reasons of security, the plan is not published.

Fire and Tornado Drills

Monthly **fire drills** will be held during each school year. There will be directions posted in each area prior to school opening. **Tornado drills** will also be held during the spring of each school year. Teachers shall escort their classes to the area specified for each building

Licensing

Our Preschool is licensed by The Ohio Department of Education, Early Childhood Division. A copy of the Rules for Preschool Programs is available in the office. Should any person suspect a violation of the Administrative Code by the school, please phone the Ohio Department of Education at 614-466-0224.

HEALTH POLICIES

Administering Medications in School

A school nurse or principal or his/her designee may administer medication during school hours to pupils in the school according to the following guidelines.

Medications may not be kept and taken by individual students except as outlined in #7 below.

1. The medication must be prescribed by a licensed prescriber.
 - a. A written order for the prescribed medication, dosage, duration of dosage, and a statement explaining the administration of the dosage and the possible side effects, signed by the licensed prescriber, must be on file in the nurse's office before the medication can be given. A new form must be completed if a medication dosage is adjusted. In an emergency, orders may be faxed from the licensed prescriber.
 - b. A staff person may administer pills, capsules or liquid medication or may assist a child with his/her inhaler. The staff **MAY NOT** administer any medications requiring injections or the use of syringes or similar instruments with the exception of an EpiPen in the treatment of an allergic reaction. Care guidelines for diabetic students will be determined on an individual basis.
 - c. **Over-the counter drugs may be given provided they are prescribed in writing by a licensed prescriber** and all above qualifications are met.
2. A statement signed by the parent or guardian giving permission to the school nurse/principal or designee to administer prescribed medication must be on file in the **nurse's office** before medicine is given. Medication **will not be given** without this statement and the licensed prescriber's order on file.

3. The parent's statement must also include a clause providing that the undersigned agrees not to file or make any claim against anyone for negligence in connection with the administration or non-administration of any medicine and further agree to save such individuals and hold them harmless from any liability incurred as a result of the administration or non-administration of any medicine. Forms for this information are available in the nurse's office.
4. In all cases, the parent must assume responsibility for the safe delivery of the medication to the school. All prescribed medication must be in the original container clearly marked by the pharmacist with the student's name, the dosage directions, physician's name, and the prescription number. The pharmacy will provide a second container for use at school if asked.
5. School's nurse/principal or designee must keep medications in a locked place.
6. Upon receipt, the school's nurse reviews each order and medication, and then assumes responsibility for the administration and monitoring of all medications given during school hours. The nurse provides other school personnel with specific instructions pertinent to the medication.
7. In order for a student to carry and use his inhaler, insulin or Epipen on his own, he/she must have a statement from the licensed prescriber and parent indicating that assistance is not required.

Allergies

In the interest of the student's safety and health, the school expects parents to inform the school nurse of any allergies, especially those that may have life-threatening reactions. Consultation with the parents and possibly the physician may be necessary to ensure that a plan is in place to properly care for the student in the event of a reaction.

The parent is responsible for keeping the nurse informed of any reactions or changes in the student's medications or plan of care for a reaction.

Emergency Medical Authorization

The Emergency Medical Authorization must be signed by a parent and on file in the nurse's office by the first day of school. It does not require a physician's signature. This form gives the school the parent(s) work number(s), as well as emergency contacts in the event of an injury or illness. If the student is receiving routine medications, it is important that they be noted on this form. In the event of an emergency, this form will accompany the student to the hospital for treatment. In emergency situations if the parents cannot be reached, the school nurse or other school personnel will call the student's physician and/or have the student transported to an emergency room if necessary.

COVID-19 Acknowledgement of Risks

We, the undersigned parent(s) and student, acknowledge and agree that, as a student at St. Dominic School and as parent(s) of that student, entering in the school or being on the premises, having personal contact with teachers, classmates, and other St. Dominic School staff, involves a certain degree of risk, namely of parent(s) and/or student acquiring a communicable disease, including COVID-19, and then potentially passing it on to others, including family members. Due to the highly contagious nature of COVID-19, the characteristics of the virus, and the close

proximity of students, teachers, and staff at St. Dominic School, there is an elevated risk of student contracting the disease simply by being in the building, on the premises, or at any St. Dominic School function. The same is true for parent(s) of a student at St. Dominic School.

By signing this Handbook below, we acknowledge and agree that after carefully considering the risks involved, and having the opportunity to discuss these risks with any healthcare professional(s) of our choosing, we voluntarily and willingly accept those risks and acknowledge that returning to in-person classes and other in-person St. Dominic School functions is the choice of each family, including ours. If student or parent(s) who visit St. Dominic School have underlying health concerns which may place them at greater risk of contracting any communicable disease, including COVID-19, we acknowledge and agree that we will consult with a health care professional before student or parent(s) return to St. Dominic School, attend any St. Dominic School function, or visit St. Dominic School. Moreover, we acknowledge that while adherence to safety and precautionary measures (e.g., social distancing guidelines, facemasks, handwashing, etc.) may reduce possible exposure to the risk of contracting a communicable disease, the possibility of serious illness and death remains. We do hereby accept and assume sole responsibility for any illness acquired by student or parent(s) while at St. Dominic School or any St. Dominic School function, including possible infection with COVID-19.

We further acknowledge, understand, and agree that we have obligations to St. Dominic School, its faculty, students, and others to take certain precautions and make certain disclosures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Specifically, we agree that neither student nor parent(s) will come to St. Dominic School or attend any St. Dominic School function in person, if in the 14 days prior to coming to St. Dominic School or any St. Dominic School function, student or parent(s) has had any of the following: new cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fever of 100.4 °F or higher (intermittent or constant), chills, new muscle pains or body aches, headache, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, new loss of taste or smell, or gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. This does not apply if these symptoms have been affirmatively diagnosed by a healthcare provider as being caused by some non-contagious illness or condition. In such case, we agree to obtain supporting documentation from our healthcare provider and share such documentation with St. Dominic School. Additionally, we agree that neither student nor parent(s) will come to St. Dominic School or any St. Dominic School function if in the last 14 days, student or parent(s) has had prolonged (more than 10 minutes) close contact (within 6 feet) with anyone, including a family member, diagnosed with or suspected of having COVID-19.

Health Regulations Regarding Absences

St. Dominic preschool follows the guidelines for the management of communicable diseases established by the Ohio Department of Education. A person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease or other illness shall observe each child daily as he or she enters the room.

Signs or symptoms we will look for include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose stool within a 24 hour period);
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound;
- Difficult or rapid breathing;
- Yellowish skin or eyes;
- Conjunctivitis;
- Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit taken by the auxiliary method when in combination with other signs of illness;
- Untreated infected skin patches;
- Unusually dark urine and/or grey or white stool;
- Stiff neck;
- Evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation;
- Unusual spots or rashes;
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing;
- Vomiting.

Any child with any of these signs or symptoms of illness shall immediately be isolated from other children. Decisions about whether the child should be sent home immediately, or at some other time of the day, shall be determined by the teacher and the school nurse along with the parent.

Please notify the office if your child will not be attending school for any reason. All illnesses and communicable disease (such as chicken pox, strep throat, scarlet fever, etc.) must be reported to school immediately. Parents will be notified of a communicable disease that occurs in your child's class. A standard form will be posted or sent home with your child notifying you that your child has been exposed to a communicable disease and what symptoms to watch for. A communicable disease chart is posted in the preschool hallway. A child may return to the classroom when he/she is free of the disease. Any case of head lice must be checked by the school nurse or trained staff before readmittance.

Illness

In the interest of other students and staff, parents should keep the child home if they have any of the following: fever, vomiting, diarrhea, a rash of undetermined origin, or symptoms of a cold such as frequent coughing or nasal drainage that is not clear in color or the student is unable to take care of him or herself. ***A student should be free from fever, vomiting and/or diarrhea, without the assistance of medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.*** Notify the school immediately if your child develops a communicable disease. If any restriction of activity is necessary upon returning to school after an illness, please send a note to the classroom teacher with the specific details.

Management of Communicable Diseases

Preschool staff members are trained in first aid prevention, recognition and management of communicable disease, child abuse recognition and prevention, and CPR. All training shall be given by approved health organizations and trainers, and all training shall also follow an approved curriculum. Initial training will be a six hour course, with a three hour review to be taken every three years for each staff member. The trained person shall observe each child daily as he/she enters the classroom or a group.

An ill child shall be sent to the school nurse in the health room. The nurse is on duty in the health room Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The procedure for sending a student home is:

- a. Contact parents to see who is available to come to school
- b. If parents cannot be reached, the directives on the child's Emergency Medical Authorization Form will be followed.

Upon returning to school after an illness caused by a communicable disease, a student may be required to present a release card from the doctor. Any questions can be directed to the health room at 251-1276 ext. 430.

A mildly ill child who is sent to the school nurse will be offered crackers and/or an appropriate drink. The goals will be to get the student feeling well enough to return

to class. Any child exhibiting elevated temperature, vomiting, diarrhea, or unusual spots or rashes will be sent home.

In the case of children being exposed to a diagnosed communicable disease, a letter will be sent home to parents as soon as possible. A fact sheet will be included with an explanation of signs, symptoms and recommendations for treating the disease.

Potty Training

All incoming preschool students must be toilet trained before admittance to the St. Dominic Preschool Program. Students will be permitted to use the restroom at any time during the school day. Students will also use the restroom immediately before and after nap time. At no time will a child ever be disciplined for a toileting accident. Preschool students may not wear "Pull-Ups" or similar style disposable undergarments.

Physicals

Each student must have a medical record on file in the nurse's office by the first day of school. All new students must have their immunization record on file within two weeks after the start of school and their medical record completed by a physician within 30 days of the first day of school. If the student is new to Hamilton County from outside the continental U.S., documentation of tuberculosis (TB) skin test is required within 90 days of the first day of school. For students in preschool, a physician must annually update this medical record. Every student must have a current list of immunizations, meeting state requirements, on file in the nurse's office.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is recorded each day by the classroom teacher and the data and is kept in the school office. Parents are asked to call the office before 9:00 am to report an absence. If a parent does not call to report an absence, the office will call to check on the child's whereabouts before 11:00 am.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Our School day begins at 8:10 a.m. Children should be brought to their classroom each morning. An alternative choice is to use the preschool morning drop-off, located at the Music Room, which is available daily from 7:50-8:00 a.m. Morning Preschool dismissal is at 11:00 a.m. Full day Preschool dismissal is at 3:00 p.m.

To ensure your child's safety, and in order to have an organized dismissal, we ask that you inform the teacher, in writing, if there is a change in your child's usual transportation arrangements.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

If you wish to share birthday treats with the class, please let us know in advance. Store bought individually factory sealed treats may be brought in. Classrooms with children who have food allergies will send home an acceptable snack list.

CLOTHING

Preschool experiences require many hands-on activities. While these are very meaningful to the children, they may also become very messy. We ask that you please have your children wear clothes to school in which they are able to explore, play and even get dirty! Gym shoes are best for preschool. Please, no open-toe or backless shoes. Also, please make these clothes easy to get into and out of for toileting purposes. You will also be asked to provide an extra set of clothes that are seasonally appropriate in case any changes need to be made during the school day. The child's clothing should be marked with their name in permanent marker. Finally, please make sure your child is dressed for the weather. We will go outside frequently. Winter clothing should include heavy coats, boots, mittens and hats. Spring weather may still require boots or mud shoes, as the playground may be muddy.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our goal for discipline is to empower each child to make wise choices and develop socially acceptable behavior. It is an interactive process between teacher, child, and parent. We allow children choices while setting realistic limits for their safety and growth. Limits and controls will vary for individual children, as well as for a group; but the underlying principle is that there are reasonable, well-established rules that children can understand that provide the security of knowing that adults are there to be supportive and helpful.

Children are expected to behave in a safe, acceptable manner, and are encouraged to be kind and respectful at all times. Throughout the day, teachers will give verbal

acknowledgement of appropriate behavior and use other means of positive reinforcement as a way to encourage each child's positive conduct.

Teachers recognize children are just beginning to work toward the goal of self-discipline and mistakes are sometimes made. No child will be disciplined for failure to eat, sleep or for toileting accidents.

Teachers handle the child's discipline as a learning process and teach conflict resolution skills with patience, fairness and understanding. The teacher's role is to be supportive and to intervene when necessary. Prevention and redirection, as well as positive reinforcement, are used to change undesirable behaviors. Children are encouraged to be involved in the problem-solving process, which allows them to build the inner-monitoring systems of self-control. We encourage children to solve problems on their own in a positive way. When a child needs assistance in solving conflicts, teachers will act as facilitators, modeling and encouraging positive means of communication and understanding. Children are helped to express their frustration or anger by developing a language to express their feelings. If inappropriate behaviors continue to occur, a child may be separated from the situation so the teacher can talk to the child to help him/her resolve the conflict in a positive way.

If a child is having reoccurring behavioral issues, teachers will work closely with the child and his or her parents, as well as the school psychologist and principal, to resolve these issues in a positive, nurturing way. The following policies will also apply:

- I. Students who are not able to control themselves, including but not limited to temper tantrums, will face the following consequences:
1st offense: Phone call from teacher to parent or guardian; discipline form completed and put in child's file.
2nd offense: Phone call from preschool director to parent or guardian; child must be picked up immediately from school; discipline form completed and added to child's file.
3rd offense: Phone call from school; child must be immediately picked up; a meeting will be called to discuss the student's future in our program, which may result in an abbreviated schedule for the student (i.e. full day to half day) or dismissal from the program.
- II. Students who pose a physical threat either to themselves or others will face the following consequences:
1st offense: Phone call from preschool director to parent or guardian to pick up child immediately; discipline form completed and put in student's file.
2nd offense: Phone call from school to parent or guardian to pick up student immediately; a meeting will be called to discuss the student's future in our program.

St. Dominic Preschool strictly adheres to the discipline guidelines set forth by the Ohio Department of Education Licensing Code. That code requires us to publish all

the restrictions regarding discipline. The Ohio Department of Education Preschool Discipline code restricts the following:

There shall be no cruel, harsh corporal punishment or any unusual punishment such as, but not limited to, punching, shaking, spanking, or biting.

- No discipline technique shall be delegated to any other child.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined to an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or similar cubicle.
- No child shall be humiliated or subjected to profane language, threats, and derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or any other verbal abuse.
- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
- Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age or circumstances and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a teacher or staff member in a safe, lighted, well-ventilated space.
- The preschool shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuses and neglect while in the schools care.

NAPS

Children staying for the full-day program will participate in a rest/nap time. We recognize that each child has individual sleep and activity levels. After lunch and outdoor play, children will rest on cots in a quiet, nurturing setting with dimmed lights and peaceful music. Each child is expected to rest on his or her cot for about 1 hour. Children who do not fall asleep during that hour, and those who sleep and then wake before the others, will be taken into another classroom where they will participate in quiet activities, as well as small group activities. Children who fall asleep during naptime will be gradually awakened after one and one-half hours of sleep.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Formal conference days are scheduled in November and February. Written progress reports will be given at the end of school in May. Besides our formally scheduled conferences, you or your child's teacher may request a conference at any time during the school year. We also encourage an open line of communication throughout the year.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Please be aware that the Archdiocesan Decree on Child Protection requires all school volunteers to attend the Virtus child protection program and have a BCII criminal background check. These two items are required if you want to volunteer in any capacity during the school year. A letter is sent home at the start of the school year detailing how to enroll in a Virtus program and obtaining a BCII report. Please call Deacon Mark at 471-7741 ext. 481 with questions.

Continued

We welcome family members to become involved in their child's preschool experience as much as possible. There are many ways to become involved—

sharing your talents such as music, crafts, and gardening, just to name a few. The list is endless, and you can be creative in how you are involved. We love parent involvement and will provide many opportunities for parents to participate in our classroom activities this year.

SNOW DAYS & SEVERE WEATHER OR EMERGENCY EARLY DISMISSAL

St. Dominic Preschool will follow the Oak Hills schedule for weather related closures, delays, or early dismissals. This is announced over all major radio and TV stations. **Do not call the school or parish office.** When school is on a 2-hour delay, school will begin at 10:10 a.m. instead of 8:10 a.m. for full-day students. **There is no morning Preschool.** The Before School Program will begin at 6:30 a.m. Dismissal time on these days remains at 3:00 p.m.

If a serious reason causes school to be closed early, the following procedures will be followed:

1. We will place the information on the area radio and TV stations as soon as possible.
2. Parents are expected to pick up their children as soon as possible and may only take home their own children and those whose parents have filled out an Emergency Dismissal form designating them as the responsible party. Parents are responsible for completing a form at the start of the school year and updating the form throughout the year. This form may not be changed the day of the early dismissal.
3. The Before and After School Program will not operate when the school dismisses early for emergency and/or weather-related reasons.

TRANSPORTATION AND FIELD TRIPS

Transportation to and from school is not provided for Pre-K children. Preschool does not leave the premises for field trips. We do provide enriching experiences here at school, however, by bringing in community visitors. Typically, this includes our local fire and police departments, as well as dentists, farmers, etc.