



Pre-K Program Family Handbook

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FOREWORD

This handbook has been designed to acquaint students and families with the necessary rules, regulations, and procedures of the school. It is believed that you can contribute much to the success of the school's program if you understand what the school is trying to do. The education and training of our children must remain the joint responsibility and cooperative program of the home, school, and parish.

It is hoped that you will read the entire handbook, familiarize yourself thoroughly with its contents, and keep it so that you may consult it for the assistance it is designed to give.

Suggestions for improvement of this handbook, as well as suggestions for the improvement of the instructional and spiritual formation programs, in order to provide better learning opportunities for our children, will be appreciated.

The contents of this handbook are subject to alteration or modification by the school, as circumstances may require. Official announcements will be published through the school.

Nothing contained herein is intended to, or shall be construed to, create any contractual obligations, expressed or implied, on the part of the Diocese of Harrisburg or St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School.

CODE OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT

The Catholic Church and this Catholic School recognize families as the primary educators of their children and that the education of students is a partnership between families and the school. The students' interest in receiving a quality, morally based education can be served if students, families, and school officials work together. Our school is committed to providing an environment that educates, nurtures, and supports students according to the basic Christian principles of charity and love of neighbor. Everyone involved in the development of children and youth – parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, family and friends – is expected to behave in accordance with these principles.

It shall be an expressed condition of enrollment that the students behave in a manner, both on and off campus, that is consistent with the Christian principles of the school. These principles include, but are not limited to, the policies, principles, or procedures set forth in our school's handbooks.

It shall also be expected that the parents/guardians of a student follow the standards of conduct that are consistent with the Christian principles of the school. These principles include, but are not limited to the policies, principles or procedures set forth in our school's handbooks.

Our codes of conduct for members of our school community were developed to promote a learning environment based on reverence, respect, discipline, responsibility, and excellence. As a partnership, we all need to understand the importance of a good working relationship.

In most cases, differences can be resolved. In some rare instances, however, if, in the opinion of the administration, the partnership is irretrievably broken because of the severe nature of the conduct, the school reserves the right to disenroll a family.

The purpose of this policy then is to provide a reminder to all members of the community of the expected conduct, so that we may continue to thrive, progress, and achieve in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect.

Our Christian principles provide that all members of our school community:

- Work courteously and cooperatively with the school to assist the student in meeting the school's academic, moral, and behavioral expectations
- Communicate and respectfully express concerns about the school operation and its personnel in a constructive and Christian manner within an appropriate setting

In order to support a Christian and safe school environment, the following behaviors are inconsistent with the Christian principles of the school and, therefore, are unacceptable:

- Physically or verbally intimidating a member of the school community
- Defamatory, offensive, or derogatory comments regarding the school or any of the students/families/staff at the school on any social media sites (any concerns are to be addressed through the appropriate channels)
- Abusive and/or threatening electronic, written, or verbal communication
- Disruptive behavior which interferes or threatens to interfere with the operation of the classroom, office, or any other area of the school property

CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENTS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

As a parent/guardian of a student in a Catholic School, I understand and affirm the following:

- The primary purpose of a Catholic school education is to form students in the values of Jesus Christ and the teaching of the Catholic Church.
- Catholic schools are distinctive religious education institutions operated as programs of the Catholic Church; they are not private schools but as administered and supported by the sponsoring parish(es), and the diocese.
- Attending a Catholic school is a privilege, not a right.
- While academic excellence and involvement in extracurricular activity (i.e. sports, clubs, etc.) are important, fidelity to the Catholic identity of the school is the fundamental priority.
- The school and its administration have the responsibility to ensure that Catholic values and moral integrity permeate every facet of the school's life and activity.
- In all questions involving faith, morals, faith teaching, and Church law, the final determination rests with the diocesan bishop.

As a parent/guardian desiring to enroll my child in a Catholic school, I accept this memorandum of understanding. I pledge support for the Catholic identity and mission of this school and by enrolling my child I commit myself to uphold all the principles and policies that govern a Catholic school.

Welcome to St. Teresa of Calcutta's Pre-K Program

Our faculty is committed to providing a developmentally appropriate, creative, and enjoyable learning experience for your child, based on educational research, developmental psychology, and Diocesan guidelines. We hope this family handbook will serve as a handy reference for your questions and our Pre-K policy.

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Our Pre-K Program

4 Year Olds

Monday/Wednesday/Friday: 8 AM - 2:35 PM

Monday through Friday: 8 AM - 2:35 PM

3 Year Olds

Tuesday & Thursday: 8 AM - 11 AM

Monday through Friday: 8 AM - 11 AM

Our Pre-K Philosophy

The Pre-K program at St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School is characterized by a holistic approach to growth and development of young children. This includes the spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs of each child. Because our children are active learners, we focus on providing “hands on” experiences that promote your child’s overall development.

We teach a reverence for life based on the fact that we are all “created in the image and likeness of God.” As teachers, we strive to model God’s love for children, to create an environment that celebrates cultural diversity, and to respect God’s creation.

Mission Statement

St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School provides a Catholic education, rooted in the teachings of the Gospel, for the whole child. Modeled after the life and virtues of St. Teresa of Calcutta, our students mature as active disciples of Christ who lead and serve their communities by “doing small things with great love.”

Registration Requirements and Fees

- Pre-K3 Class - Students MUST be three on or before September 1st to attend
- Pre-K4 Class - Students MUST be four on or before September 1st to attend
- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Baptismal Certificate (if applicable)
- Current Immunization Record needed
- Proof of Custody (if applicable)
- To be eligible for the Pre-K program, your child MUST be completely toilet trained before the first day of school.

Due to a commitment to the quality of our program, registration will be limited to a class size recommended by the Diocese of Harrisburg, Offices of Early Childhood Education. When all spaces have been filled, we will establish a waiting list and contact you if an opening becomes available.

Registration Fee: \$75 for new families and during the first two weeks of enrollment; \$150 afterwards

All registration fees are non-refundable.

****Registration:** Preference will be given to families with older siblings already enrolled at St. Teresa of Calcutta, first. Then, members of Sacred Heart Basilica, Annunciation, and Immaculate Conception followed by other parishes in our community. Lastly, if space is available, registration opens to the general public. It is important that families with current students or parish members be aware that in order to be guaranteed a spot on a classroom roster, registration must occur during the open window (typically mid-January).******

Getting Ready

Pre-K Important Dates

- **STC Back to School Bash:** This is typically held the weekend before the K-8 first day of school. This is an opportunity for students, families, and staff to celebrate the beginning of the school year.
- **Pre-K Back to School Night:** This is a brief parent/family member only informational evening to meet the classroom teacher, see the classroom, gain information about the school year, ask questions, and drop off supplies for the school year.
- **Take a Peek at Your Seat:** This is a brief time for students to meet the classroom teacher, see the classroom, and drop off supplies for the school year. There will typically be a morning and an evening option offered so that families can choose what best fits their schedule to visit.

First Day

Try to be positive, firm, and reassuring if it is hard for your child to separate from you. On the first day of Pre-K, the classroom teacher will do their best to be in the gymnasium to greet your child and be a familiar face. Each day after, an STC staff member will be in the gymnasium to ensure the Pre-K students are able to make it to their classroom safely. Assure your child you will be back when the school day is over. If your child remains inconsolable, a staff member will contact you.

Drop Off/Pick Up

Pre-K students will arrive at the school using the Drop Off Line at the bottom entrance to the gymnasium.

Families will turn onto Basilica Drive, drive past the side of the gymnasium, and join the Drop Off Line. There will be a faculty member waiting for the children if they need assistance getting out of the vehicle, escorting them to the gymnasium, and walking them to their classroom. This is also where the rest of the children at St. Teresa of Calcutta are dropped off for school.

Pre-K3 Dismissal

- At the end of the school day, classroom teachers will dismiss students from the Main Entrance of the school.
- Students will be dismissed one by one to an authorized pick up person.
- Photo identification will be checked at the beginning of the school year to ensure students are being dismissed to the appropriate party. Once the classroom teachers feel comfortable in who they are dismissing students to, photo identification will not be needed. Please note if someone new is picking up or has not picked up before, classroom teachers will ask for photo identification. While this may be slightly inconveniencing, we want to ensure the safety of each and every student.

Pre-K4 Dismissal

- At the end of the school day, students will be dismissed from the Main Entrance of the school.
- Families should access the whole school car line using Wappler Drive and turn left onto Basilica Drive.
- Families will be given a sign containing the child's last name prior to the start of the school year.
- Last name signs should be displayed so that faculty are able to see it clearly to call for your student.
- Faculty members will direct you to pull up to an orange cone.
- Each orange cone will have a faculty member who will aide your student in getting into the vehicle.
 - Please do not get out of your vehicle for any reason as this could create a safety issue and inhibits the flow of the car line process.
 - If you child needs assistance in buckling, please pull forward in front of the church to properly secure your child.

Clothing

Pre-K students have the option to wear the St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School gym uniform. Gym uniforms are sold through Weavers Screen Printing. Additionally, these uniforms may be available at our used uniform store. The uniforms are a gray or orange shirt with either blue shorts or sweatpants (seasonal). For shoes, they must wear sneakers or similar rubber soled shoes. No light up shoes, no crocs, no boots, no sandals, no high heels or dress up shoes.

If your child does not wear the gym uniform, please dress them in clothes that allow them to move, run, jump, and climb. Our Pre-K students will inevitably get dirty! Please be aware that we do our best to have them wear smocks, etc, but despite our best efforts, markers, paint, playdough, food, etc. may dirty their clothes.

There may also be special dress down/dress up days as designated by your child's classroom teacher or principal.

All removable garments, such as sweaters, coats, gloves, etc. should be clearly marked with your child's name. Please send an extra pair of shorts/pants, shirt, underwear, and socks in a gallon Ziploc bag labeled with your child's name. This change of clothes will be kept in your child's classroom in case of a spill or accident and will be returned at the end of the school year.

Supplies

Families will provide a backpack (large enough to fit a folder (Pre-K3)/ 1" black binder (Pre-K4) and water bottle for their child. Students will bring the folder/black binder to and from school each day. These allow for easy distribution of papers in the classroom and provide children with easy access to their belongings. This also fosters independence and self-help skills. Classroom teachers will check the folder/black binder each day for notes from home. In turn, families should check the folder/black binder daily for notes from school and projects.

Each classroom teacher will also share a list of other supplies your child will need to have a successful school year.

Toys

Occasionally, your child may want to bring a toy to school. This can create problems of sharing, breakage, loss, and/or distraction from daily learning activities. Please have your child leave toys at home/in the car with you. Classroom teachers may have special sharing days where bringing something to share with the class would be more appropriate.

Emergency Contacts

We must have an emergency contact phone number in your child's file in the event that a parent/guardian cannot be reached. Please keep this information up-to-date by informing the school in writing of any changes.

Health/Illness

A Health Assessment Form with an up-to-date immunization record is required before registration. Please reach out to the school if your child is ill or if your child contracts a communicable disease (i.e. measles, chicken pox, pink eye, head lice, etc.)

Your child should remain at home if he/she has:

- Temperature of 100.4 or above
- Severe cold with fever, frequent sneezing, or coughing
- Unidentified rashes
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Ear or throat infections, bronchitis (unless medicated for over 24 hours)
- Other contagious diseases (i.e. impetigo)

If your child will not be attending school, please call the school phone number to leave a message or send an email to your child's classroom teacher as well as Mrs. Poist (spoist@stck8school.org) and Mrs. Hussle (bhussle@stck8school.org) before 8 AM that morning.

Nursing services are available daily during school hours. The school nurse, or in her absence the principal or designee, will determine if a student's complaint of illness while at school warrants contacting the parent(s)/guardian(s). Please do not send a child to school if he or she is ill.

Any student with inhalers, epipens, etc. must have a completed medical form on file with the school nurse. Mrs. Hussle can be reached via the school phone number or email (bhussle@stck8school.org).

If your child has had a fever, he/she should remain at home until his/her temperature has been normal for at least 24 hours without the aid of fever reducing medications. The phone number of your private physician can also be important in an emergency situation so please be sure to list on the information sheets.

Please keep your child at home if he/she is not feeling well. Germs spread easily in the Pre-K classroom setting. Children must be kept home if they have a fever, vomited, or had diarrhea within the past 24 hours.

Snow Days

The Pre-K program will follow the decision of Conewago Valley School District, as does St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School, concerning school closings and delays. All school closings and delays will be sent through text, automated phone calls, and emails. A 2 hour delay will necessitate changes to the Pre-K times and/or no school that day.

Pre-K3 Class - No school on a snow delay
Pre-K4 Class - 10 AM to end of the school day

In the event of an early dismissal, families will be contacted to pick up their children at the time specified for the dismissal.

Snacks

Families are asked to provide a nutritious snack for their child each day. Some suggested snacks are, but not limited to, cheese cubes, fresh fruit, vegetables, applesauce, yogurt, and crackers. Each child is asked to bring a refillable water bottle (filled with water only) with them to school daily. This water bottle will be used at snack and lunch (Pre-K4) time. Please label water bottle with your child's name.

Lunch (Pre-K4)

Full day Pre-K4 students will eat lunch in the gymnasium/cafeteria. Families may choose to pack a lunch for their child or their child may purchase a school lunch and milk. School lunches will be a well-balanced meal. School lunches are ordered a month in advance using the MealManage program. MealManage can be accessed online and/or in an app that can be downloaded on a phone or electronic device. The cost of a school lunch is \$3.75. Milk is also available to purchase.

Rest Time (Pre-K4)

Full day Pre-K4 students will participate in rest time during the afternoon part of the school day. Each student will need to bring their own rest mat to use during rest time. This is a quiet time in the classroom where the students must stay on their rest mats. Rest mats will be sent home periodically to be washed. Please be mindful of sizing when purchasing a rest mat. Rest mat sizing recommendation: 46 in. x 35.5 in x 0.50 in.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a special time to celebrate your child. If you would like to send in a special treat for your child to share with their classmates, please contact the classroom teacher ahead of time in order to verify if any allergies are present. When choosing a treat to send in to share, please be mindful as certain options can be harder for Pre-K children to manage. An example of this would be cupcakes: mini cupcakes are easier for the children to handle versus a regular size cupcake.

Party invitations may be handed out through your child's classroom. Please keep in mind that invitations must be sent to every child.

Field Trips

The Pre-K classes take appropriate walking trips to various school areas and the church. School areas include the gymnasium, parking areas for recess, and the field (grassy area across the road from the church cemetery).

Each class may participate in off-site field trips that are not mandatory to attend. If you choose not to attend, your child will not have school that day. A parent/guardian must drive their child to/from the field trip and remain onsite as a chaperone for the duration of the trip.

Keeping Informed

Calendars: Our school calendar is posted on the school website with all of the important dates. Classroom teachers may also provide a monthly calendar showcasing important days/events happening within the classroom.

Website/Emails: The St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School website can be found at www.stck8school.org. Any information that is needed can be found on the school website. Classroom teachers have a school email that is used and checked daily for communication with families.

Conferences: A mandatory Parent Teacher Conference is held in the month of October. Invite only conferences are held in the month of February. A family or classroom teacher may request a conference at any point in the school year.

Concerns: Notes to classroom teachers can be sent in your child's folder/black binder. Emails may be sent to classroom teachers at any time. Classroom teachers have 24 business hours to respond. Any further concerns, or nonresponse, please email Mrs. College (school principal) at any time at lcollege@stck8school.org. Please do not approach a classroom teacher during dismissal to discuss concerns. Instead, reach out to the classroom teacher via email to schedule a time to meet.

Family Involvement

Families are great source of enrichment to our school. If you wish to volunteer, please reach out to the school office to obtain information on acquiring necessary clearances. Clearances must be on file before volunteering. All volunteers must sign in at the office before proceeding to the classroom.

Three Month Probationary Period

The first three months of school is a probationary time for every child. As leaps and bounds occur during early childhood development, we pay particular attention to the readiness of each child as regards to their emotional, intellectual, behavioral, and social needs. After the probationary period, if a child's needs are too great to be met in the Pre-K classroom, the faculty and/or administrator will discuss with the child's family the child's needs and the school's recommendation. The administrator will make the decision whether the child will need to wait until the following school year, or switch from Pre-K4 to Pre-K3 (if the child is enrolled in Pre-K4).

Withdrawal

If you must withdraw your child from St. Teresa of Calcutta during the school year, please inform the school advancement office 30 days prior to your child's last day. Less than a 2 week notice of withdrawal will result in being billed for the next month's tuition.

Toileting

All students in Pre-K3 and Pre-K4 must be completely toilet trained before beginning school. Pull ups are not permitted. Students must be able to remove clothing/redress themselves, use the toilet (including wiping), and wash their hands independently. Faculty members are not permitted to help students dress or wipe after using the restroom.

To make using the restroom easier for students, elastic waistbands are encouraged. Clothing with buckles, belts, overalls, etc. should be avoided.

Occasional accidents are anticipated. Frequent accidents may result in pausing your child's enrollment until toilet training has been mastered. For Pre-K3 students, more than 3 accidents in 2 months will result in a 2 week at home retraining period. For Pre-K4 students, more than 3 accidents in 2 weeks will result in a 2 week at home retraining period.

Family Handbook Acknowledgement Form

After you have read this handbook, please complete this acknowledgement form and return it to the St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School on or before your child's first day.

I acknowledge that I have received and read the St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School Pre-K Program Family Handbook. I agree to adhere to the policies set forth in the handbook. I have had an opportunity to clarify any questions, which I may have concerning the contents of this handbook.

Parent/Guardian Full Name _____

Child's Full Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____