

**St. Matthew Preschool
125 24th St. N.E.
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402**

Parent Handbook

Admission to St. Matthew's Preschool Program

The following procedure will be followed concerning admission:

1. Children already in program
2. St. Matthew's Parishioners with children in St. Matthew's School
3. St. Matthew's Parishioners
4. Other Parishioners
5. Non-Catholics

General Information

Goal: St. Matthew Catholic Preschool

Our goal is to work in cooperation with the student's parents and family in providing educational experiences within a Christian atmosphere which will contribute to the child's spiritual, emotional, intellectual, physical and social development.

We hope attain this goal through the following objectives.

The students will be provided the opportunities to:

1. Interact and play within a program of learning activities.
2. Use and explore materials freely and constructively in order to enhance creativity, independence, motor coordination and initiative.
3. Develop gross and fine motor skills through the use of large and small materials and equipment.
4. Develop language (expressive and receptive) and social skills through self expression, music, art, stories, play materials, equipment and activities.
5. Develop emotional skills and be introduced to religious concepts which will enhance the students' feeling of belonging, the ability to share with others' and live cooperatively in the world and Christian community.

Staff

The director is a certified teacher with training in child development and early childhood education. Each teacher is required to take advantage of workshops, college courses, special conferences, etc, during the school year.

All persons who will be working with your child are mandated to have a criminal and child abuse check clearance before contact.

Snacks

We ask you to provide the snack and beverage on your assigned day to bring treats. We will let you know the number necessary which will depend on class size. We strongly suggest simple, ample, nutritious foods such as raw vegetables, fresh fruits, crackers with peanut butter, raisins, crackers or small sandwiches with cheese, or stuffed celery, rather than sweets. We believe this greatly assists satisfying the children's very real mid-morning hunger and is an important message to children about appropriate snacking choices. Please NO CAKES OR CUPCAKES, ESPECIALLY CHOCOLATE.

Please do not feel that snacks must be elaborate or fancy. KEEP THEM SIMPLE!! Include your child in choices and preparation whenever possible as this is an important learning situation for him/her. Ask us for simple, yet imaginative ideas, as we see what it is that the children enjoy.

Birthdays and Half Birthdays

We do have a special recognition for the birthday child. A date on or near your child's birthday will be the day you provide snacks. We must request that the treat no be cake or cupcakes. (see section on snacks). Half-birthday children will celebrate their day during the school year too.

Holidays

Special holiday parties, activities and snacks are planned for the special days throughout the year. These include Halloween, Valentines Day, Christmas, etc. You will receive a note before each party with more details.

Preschool Hours 8:30-11:00 A.M. and 12:30-3:00 P.M.

Class begins at 8:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. We suggest that you avoid long lingering goodbyes. Separation of parent-child can be difficult for everyone. IT is our hope that a quick loving goodbye and a busy start to the school day will help alleviate this problem. The children should not arrive before 8:15 a.m. or 12:15 p.m. This is an important time for teachers to return phone messages or to get ready for the day.

Departure

Please try to be prompt in picking up your child at 11:00 and 3:00. Our staff has other preschool related duties to fulfill at this time and will not be available for supervision of children after that time. If your children are left after 11:00 and 3:00 on a consistent basis, a fee will be charged to you in order to reimburse the staff member for his/her time.

Car Pools

Please notify the teacher if someone else will be picking up your child other than those listed on your emergency card.

Parent Conferences and Meetings

We will have an orientation meeting for the parents prior to the opening of preschool. This will be an opportunity for you to peruse the facility and get to know the staff.

If we feel there is a problem at any time throughout the year that we need to discuss, we will contact you for a personal conference. Please feel free to do the same. A short conversation can often prevent a small problem from becoming a big one. There are scheduled conferences for the children in the three day classes.

Field Trips, Guests and Special Projects

Field trips provide a special learning situation for preschoolers and we plan to provide them throughout the year for the 4/5 year old classes. Sample trips might be a trip to an apple orchard, a pumpkin farm, a city bus ride or the nature center. You will be informed of all the details well in advance of the trip.

Visitors

Parents have unlimited access to their children during the preschool programs' hours of operation, unless parental control is prohibited by a court order.

If Your Child Is Sick

If your child is sick, please call the school office (362-3021) and leave a message, especially if the child will miss more than one session or has a contagious infection or illness.

If you are unsure if your child is well enough to come to school – PLEASE KEEP HIM/HER HOME!!!! Sickness is no fun for anyone and if the child is uncomfortable, your best discretion is a must. If in the teacher's opinion your child is too ill to participate or may be infectious to the others, you will be called immediately to come and pick up your child. A normal temperature for 24 hours is a good rule of thumb to follow.

Emergency Messages

Emergency messages may be called to the school office and the school secretary will notify the teachers.

What to Wear???

Please dress your child in comfortable PLAY CLOTHES. The paints and other craft activities can be pretty messy and your child will enter in and be more at ease if he/she does not have to worry about spoiling good clothes. Much play occurs on the floor and further necessitates play clothes. Please dress your child appropriately for seasonal weather. Being wet or cold is no fun. Please mark coats, caps, boots, scarves and mittens clearly with your child's name. Please send an extra set of clothing for your child (set of pants, shorts, etc.) "Accidents" can and do happen, it is best to be prepared.

Organization

St. Matthew Catholic Preschool is sponsored by the St. Matthew Parish Board of Education which sets general policies and guidelines. The preschool staff develops and is responsible for the program and daily activities.

License

We are licensed by the State of Iowa Department of Human Services. A copy of the state laws which apply to the licensing of a preschool are available to answer questions you might have. The telephone number of the Department of Human Services is 398-5070, ext 197.

Enrollment

A child must be 3 by September 15th to enroll in the 3 year old class and 4 by September 15th for the 4 year old class.

Bad Weather

We follow the Cedar Rapids Community School decisions regarding closing due to weather. This decision is announced on local radio stations and bears repeating: If the Cedar Rapids Public Schools are cancelled, SO ARE WE!!

Arrival – Drop Off

Please enter via only the 24th street entrance

We ask that the parent/guardian bring their child to the classroom each day. We realize that you may have younger children in the car with you at this time, so in order that you need not park the car, remove all children from car seats etc., while bringing your preschooler to the classroom, we suggest you pull up to the main office door entrance where one of our staff persons will be available to monitor your car/passengers while you accompany the preschool child to the classroom.

Exit – Please use the 1st Ave. Drive or the 24th St. Drive

We ask that you do not drive through the playground area or near the primary wing of the school. Students who attend St. Matthew School report to this area of the playground before school. Even though you are cautious drivers, our K-5 students do not always think to look before they go dashing after a playground ball or run to see a friend. Therefore, we request you exit via the 1st Avenue drive or turn around and exit through the 24th street drive.

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