



Parent Handbook

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THIS HANDBOOK IS SUBJECT TO CHANGES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SPEAK TO ONE OF THE TEACHERS.

This handbook is a revised edition as of
September 2025

Introduction

Philosophy Statement

Children are unique individuals created as a gift from God. St. Joseph's Preschool fosters a safe, caring and happy environment, allowing each child the freedom to grow at his/her own pace socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually and spiritually. We value inclusiveness, multiculturalism, and independence, and promote the dignity of all children and their families.

Staff are trained ECE educators who contribute their personal talents and attributes to the program. The environment at St. Joseph's Preschool respects and recognizes the staff's training, skills and dedication to childcare. This is demonstrated, in particular, with respectful communication and personnel policies.

The preschool's aim is to provide a Christian-centered environment. Our primary goals are to enhance the children's learning process and to meet the needs of the children in our care. We do this by providing both open-ended and structured activities and by allowing each child the opportunity to explore, to make choices, and to interact with others.

Communication

At St. Joseph's Preschool we believe that communication is key. All interactions that take place between staff, children, and their families will be dealt with in a respectful and empathetic way. It is our goal and intention to deal with conflict in a quick and efficient manner. Some issues can be dealt with on the spot; however, other issues take more time and attention. If this is the case, an appointment should be made with the appropriate teacher in order to resolve the issue. If you would like to request to speak with a teacher and class is in progress, please fill out one of the forms located on the Parent board and place it on the teacher's desk or attach it to the bulletin board and a staff member will contact you as soon as possible. If you have any further questions or concerns you may contact Mrs. Antonella MacGillivray (Administrator) at amacgillivray@sosschool.ca.

Preschool Description

Staff

St. Joseph's Preschool has staff on board that has Early Childhood Education training and experience in the field of childcare. They meet all requirements outlined in the Child Care Licensing Regulations, including a current First Aid Certificate and a criminal record check.

Eligibility

The Preschool program is open to children ages three to five years. The preschool is open to the entire community with preference to continuing students (from 3 year old to 4 year old program) and siblings of children who are currently enrolled in the preschool. **To enter the 3 year old program your child MUST be 3 years of age by December 31st of that year and to enter the 4 year old program your child MUST be 4 years of age by December 31st of that year.**

Special Needs

St. Joseph's Preschool is an inclusive center. That means we are open to children who may have special needs or require extra support. We do ask that families inform us if their child has special needs prior to registering, so that we can look into additional support for the child, family and preschool if need be.

Our goal is to have a safe and fun learning environment for all children in which all of the children's needs could be met. After accessing all possible resources with the family, and if the needs of the child, preschool, or family still cannot be met; then we may need to look at alternative programs for a child. The preschool staff is here to support and assist the families as best as we can.

Fees

Our Centre has opted into the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative (CCFRI) which will reduce the monthly fees for all parents. Fees listed below show the monthly payments after the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative has been applied. If you have any further questions, please speak with a staff member.

Two day program: (Tuesday & Thursday): \$117 per month

Three day program: (Monday, Wednesday & Friday): \$126 per month

Five day program: (Monday – Friday) \$243 per month

Starting September 2025 we will be accepting **Pre-Authorized Payments** for tuition fees. To set up pre-authorized payments, please complete the **Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) Authorization Form** and provide either your **banking information** or a **void cheque**. The PAD form can be found in your **registration package**, or you may **ask a staff member** for a copy.

Tuition payments will be **automatically withdrawn on the 1st of each month**, from **September through June**. If you need to update your banking information, please provide **at least 10 days written notice** to the staff. Refunds will not be made for illness, holidays, snow days or school closures as payment holds the participant's spot. A **\$25 NSF fee** will apply for any payments that are returned due to non-sufficient funds. **Parents who fail to pay their tuition by the 1st of the month will be contacted by one of the directors and will be subject to a late fee of \$25 (from the 2nd -15th of the month) and an additional \$25 late fee (from the 16th- 31st of the month.**

We do accept funding from the Affordable Child Care Benefit Program. If you need any further information or have any questions or concerns regarding the application process please see one of the teachers on staff.

To enrich your child's preschool experience and make yearly planning easier, we're offering an optional Annual Activity Fee. This fee covers a variety of special activities and materials, including field trips, cooking and baking projects, seasonal and holiday celebrations, special events for Mother's and Father's Day, and end-of-year festivities.

By opting in, you'll help streamline the process by reducing the need for separate payments throughout the year—creating added convenience for both families and staff.

More details will be included in the parent package sent home before school begins, and authorization forms will be provided on the first day of school.

Registration

Parents will be required to fill out a registration form and pay a non-refundable \$25.00 registration fee per program. This fee is per child, not per family. Additional paperwork will be given to you at the time of registration.

In order to register your child at the preschool, he/she must be toilet trained.

Hours of Operation

8:45 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. (Morning Class)

The preschool will be closed on statutory holidays. These include:

New Year's Day
Easter Monday
Thanksgiving Day

Family Day
Victoria Day
Remembrance Day

Good Friday
Labour Day
National Day for Truth & Reconciliation

In addition, the preschool will be closed for an occasional professional day. The preschool will also be closed for Christmas and Spring Break.

Withdrawal

A child registered in the preschool program is enrolled for the full ten months (September to June). If you choose to withdraw your child, **30 days written notice** from the first of the month must be given to the preschool. If 30 days notice is not given, then 1 month's fees will be required.

Withdrawal of Services

St. Joseph's Preschool reserves the right to withdraw services if fees are not paid or if the preschool is not able to meet the needs of a child. Every effort will be made to meet the needs of a particular child. This may include drawing from the services in the community to assist the preschool staff, or simply meeting with the parents in order to reach a mutual agreement.

Snacks

Parents are responsible for sending a healthy snack with their child every day. Nutritious foods that we suggest are:

- Fruit
- Cheese and crackers
- Yogurt
- Sandwiches
- Rice cakes

Please do not send pop, gum, chocolate and other sugary desserts, popcorn and nuts, as these are foods that children can easily choke on (some children are also allergic to these).

Outdoor Play

At St. Joseph's Preschool, it is part of our curriculum for children to have outdoor play on a consistent basis. Please make sure your child dresses accordingly. Outdoor play is an essential part of a child's growth and development.

Newsletters and Notices

Newsletters and notices will be sent home. The newsletters will let you know about upcoming events and will also provide articles for you to read and helpful hints. It is important that parents read these notices. If you have any questions feel free to ask the staff.

Daily Routine – 3 year old Program and 4 year old Program

- **8:45 am**
 - Preschool Doors Open
 - Children hang up coats, change shoes and spend time with parents
 - At this time parents can say their good-byes
- **8:45 am – 9:15 am**
 - Free Play
 - Children move freely between centers (depending on space available) demonstrating co-operation and sharing skills
- **9:15 am – 9:20 am**
 - Clean up song
 - Children learn how to keep the classroom tidy and neat
- **9:20 am – 9:40 am**
 - Circle Time
 - Provides children with real life opportunities to utilize math, socials, language arts, concept of time, duration, number patterns, sequencing, predicting, recalling information and sharing.
- **9:40 am – 10:05 am**
 - Centre Time
 - Children take part in structured and non-structured activities such as art projects, painting, alphabets, numbers, puzzles, etc.
- **10:05 am – 10:10 am**
 - Clean up song
- **10:10 am – 10:15 am**
 - Hand washing
 - Prayer (Grace)
- **10:15 am – 10:35 am**
 - Snack Time
- **10:35 am – 10:45 am**
 - Library Time
 - Children will look at books provided for them in the class library. This will further increase the child's language and sharing skills.
- **10:45 – 11:15 am**
 - Outdoor Play
 - Children have the opportunity to run, walk and move freely in the open space. This gives children the opportunity to use their gross motor skills.
- **11:15 am**
 - Closing Activity
 - Children wait for pick up person to arrive

Parent Involvement

Parent and Staff Meetings

Parents are welcome to set up appointments with the preschool staff to discuss their child's development. Concerns regarding the preschool program can be brought to the attention of any of the preschool staff. Teachers may also require a meeting with a parent regarding their child's progress in the program.

Fundraising

Fundraising is essential as it pays for equipment and materials for the children. Fundraising events will occur throughout the year. You will be kept informed about fundraising events as the year goes on and your participation will be appreciated.

Gradual Entry

Gradual Entry is a gentle method of introducing a child into a childcare program and is strongly recommended for all children. It simply means that a child will enter the program over a period of 2-3 days, each day staying a little longer than the previous day. Eventually the child will stay for the whole class. Depending on how your child is doing, you may be asked to stay for a period of time.

Gradual Entry provides:

- Opportunity for the separation between the parent and child to occur in a gradual and positive way
- Opportunity for a positive relationship to develop between the teachers and the child
- An introduction to the activities, routines and rules of the preschool

Birthdays

Parents are welcome to bring goodies to the preschool to help celebrate their child's birthday. Please see staff prior to your child's birthday to discuss food allergies that some children in the group may have. Some food allergies are very serious and can be life threatening.

Policies and Procedures

Guidance and Discipline

At St. Joseph's Preschool, we believe that teachers must guide and redirect children to help them learn to cooperate with their peers and have positive experiences which facilitate growth and development.

Our goal is to encourage children to become self disciplined and learn appropriate and acceptable behaviour. This will be carried out through establishing clear, consistent and simple limits, modeling acceptable behaviour, reflecting feelings and reinforcing positive behaviours.

When problems arise, teachers will redirect children's behaviour, offer appropriate choices, model problem-solving strategies and use natural and logical consequences. Very rarely, but persistent refusal to abide by rules of safety for one self, others, or the environment may require a child to be removed from a situation. They will be redirected to another activity where they are able to manage.

At times a child's behaviour may become challenging for the staff and other children. If this should occur, the staff will keep in regular contact with the child's parents. Community resources will also be accessed in order to help the preschool and the family provide positive and on going support and intervention for the child.

If the needs of the child, family or preschool are not being met after all other resources have been used, then withdrawing from the center may be necessary.

Please be advised that any hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, humiliating or frightening treatment is against our philosophy and **will not** be tolerated at our preschool.

Child Abuse

It is our legal duty to report child abuse to the Ministry for Children and Families as outlined in the Child Family and Community Services Act. Child abuse is physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, emotional harm (a child is emotionally harmed if they demonstrate severe: anxiety, depression, withdrawal, or self-destructive or aggressive behavior as a result of emotional abuse) and neglect.

If abuse is suspected to have occurred at the preschool (i.e. Involving staff, volunteers or a household member) it is the staff's responsibility to report to the Fraser Health Community Care Licensing at 604-587-3936. If abuse is suspected to have occurred outside of the preschool it is the staff's responsibility to report to the intake worker for the Ministry for Children and Families at 604-514-2711.

Arrival/Attendance

Staff will open the door at 8:45 A.M. for the children to enter the Centre. The children will enter the classroom on their own and hang up their coat and put their inside shoes on. Attendance will be done at 8:50 A.M. Please try to have your child dropped off within the first fifteen minutes of the class so they do not miss out on any part of the program. **Parents are asked to please depart promptly after dropping off their child so we can start the program on time.** If a situation arises where you will be more than fifteen minutes late, please inform the staff to ensure clear and open communication. If your child is going to be absent on any given day, a phone call to the preschool would be greatly appreciated.

Health Policy

For the protection of staff and children, we are unable to accept children when they appear ill. The teaching staff reserves the right to refuse admittance of a child if they appear too ill to attend. If you are in doubt of your child's health, please keep him/her home and notify the Centre of their absence. After an illness, they should return only when they can fully participate in the program.

Children with the following should be kept home and may require a doctor's note to return:

- Suspected or known measles, mumps, rubella or chicken pox
- Communicable disease – generalized rash and fever
- Fever over 38.30 C (100 F)
- Vomiting or diarrhea **within 24 hours** of coming to preschool
- Any open/exposed sores or wounds
- Red runny eyes
- Earaches
- Flu like symptoms: Runny Nose with green/yellow discharge
- Congested cough
- Shortness of breath

The preschool staff will call for someone to pick up a child if they are ill. If a child (or another family member) has a communicable disease, please contact the preschool so that the Health Department can be notified. The information will be shared with the other preschool families. The child's name will be kept confidential. If families require information on any of the above illnesses, please ask the preschool staff.

If a child becomes ill during preschool, the parent(s) will be contacted and ask to come for their child immediately. Parents should make sure that they have an alternate person who is available to come in their place if they themselves are unavailable. In the event of an emergency, the child will be taken to the nearest emergency service and parents will be notified. Every attempt will be made to contact the child's physician.

Hygiene

Please make sure that your child always has a change of clothes while at the preschool as accidents can happen. Please be advised that if your child regularly has accidents we may need to call you in order to change him/her as we do not have the appropriate changing facilities. In addition, supervision of the entire group is of utmost importance and is very challenging when one staff member is removed from the group in order to assist a child in the washroom for a long period of time.

Departure

Parents must pick-up their child at their regular time. Parents are to wait outside until one of the teachers opens the door. If the parent or designated pick up person is waiting outside, then the teacher will release the child.

Please contact preschool staff if you are going to be late picking up. If we have not heard from you approximately fifteen minutes from pick up time, the procedure is as follows:

- Staff will phone your home or place of employment. If there is no answer, or you are unreachable:
- The alternate person on your registration form will be called. If no one is available and no alternate arrangements have been made, then the child will come with the teacher to St. Catherine's Elementary and will be in the office. After sixty (60) minutes, we reserve the right to:
- Contact the Ministry Of Children And Families. They will pick up your child and you may call them to learn the whereabouts of your child.

The Ministry of Children and Families (604) 514-2711

Late Pick Up

If for some reason you will be unable to pick up your child by the end of class, please notify the centre. In these circumstances, alternative arrangements should be made. If a parent/caregiver is late more than two times a letter to the parent/guardian will be handed out and will be charged accordingly:

5 minutes grace: N/C

6 – 10 minutes: \$5

10 – 15 minutes: \$10

Fees will increase by \$5 after every 5 minute increment.

Child Pick Up & Release Policy

When enrolling a child in the program, parents are asked to list on the registration form, by name, those people who have permission to pick up their child. Please keep staff informed of any changes to this list. Any adult not named on the form by the parent is not allowed to take a child from the preschool without the parent speaking directly with the preschool staff. Please make sure your alternate pick up people are aware that they may be required to show identification to the preschool staff. There may be a substitute (or regular staff) working one day who has not met a parent or alternate pick up person and will need to verify identification. Please also make preschool staff aware when anyone different than the regular pick up person will be picking up your child, even if they are on the alternate pick up list. Persons who pick-up children must be 14 years old. Any person under the legal age of nineteen should have written permission from the child's parent or guardian before staff will allow children to leave the premises with them. **If the pick up person is deemed incapable of picking up the child, the child will not be released and a person on the child's alternative pick up will be contacted.** This is all for the safety and well being of the child. In the event that an adult (parent/caregiver) authorized to pick-up the child is suspected of being intoxicated or under the influence of narcotics, he/she will be discouraged from leaving the premises with the child. The staff at St. Joseph's will make every effort to make alternate pick up arrangements with another authorized pick up person who is not under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. If the parent or alternate refuses to have alternate person called to pick up the child and we feel that the child is not safe, we are required to report this to the Ministry of Children and Families. If the intoxicated person still leaves the premises, the staff at St. Joseph's has the legal obligation to notify the police, and provide them with the necessary information.

Please inform the preschool staff of any custody agreements.

Reportable Incidents

If an incident of a serious nature occurs or the preschool has disease outbreak we are required to fill out an incident report and send it into our Licensing officer. Some reportable incidents include aggressive behavior, choking, disease outbreak (chicken pox, H1N1, etc.) or a fall that requires emergency care. If you would like a list of all reportable incidents please see a staff member and we will give you a copy of Reportable Incidents (Schedule H).

Medication

Medication can only be administered to your child by the staff if the appropriate medical forms are filled out and if a doctor prescribes the medication. Forms are available from the staff (prescribed medication must come in its original container). Please note that medication cannot be administered if the child's name is not present on the medication. If your child must receive an over the counter medication, then please attach a note from the child's doctor stating when (reason and time) to give the medication and the dosage. The doctor must sign this note. All medications will be stored in a locked box.

Field Trips

From time to time, the staff and children will go on field trips (you may be asked to pay a minimal fee). Parents are responsible for dropping off and picking up their child (carpooling is recommended). **If you are unable to attend the field trip, you must ensure that you make arrangements with another parent, relative or friend to accompany your child.**

Parents should ensure they have appropriate car insurance and sufficient coverage for transporting children other than your own. In addition, no child should ride in the front seat of a vehicle equipped with an airbag. Please ensure children are adequately restrained according to legislation using child safety seats and seat belts. If carpooling, please ensure that the teachers are aware of which children you are responsible for on the field trip if volunteering.

These field trips are meant for the enjoyment of the preschoolers, therefore we strongly recommend that siblings not attend preschool fieldtrips. In addition it becomes more challenging for parents and teachers to adequately supervise the children.

Children's Records

In order to keep information accurate in your child's file please keep staff updated with personal information i.e. Address, phone numbers and emergency contact, pick up person(s) etc.

Clothing

Preschool activities can be messy and wet at times. To ensure your child's comfort please dress them appropriately for both indoor and outdoor activities. Also ensure that your child has a full change of clothing and that appropriate footwear is available.

Toys

Toys from home, apart from being of value and causing distress if lost, can also create problems amongst the other children. We will however have specific days for show and tell to allow your child the opportunity to share their special toy with the group.

Health Checks

Community personnel will visit the preschool periodically to check the immunization forms and observe the general development of the group. Community health personnel may contact parents if necessary.

Power Outages

The teachers will assess whether or not it is safe and or comfortable for the children to be at the preschool if a power outage should occur. If we are in class when a power outage occurs we will wait approximately 30 minutes before deciding our course of action. If we determine that it is not safe/comfortable, you will be contacted to pick up your child or informed that class will not take place. If you cannot be reached, we will phone your emergency contact.

School Closures

In the event of school closures due to weather conditions, emergencies, utility disruption (heat, hydro etc.), and outbreaks. Families will be notified by email or by a phone parent. Announcements are posted as close to 7 a.m. as possible.

If St. Catherine's is CLOSED – St. Joseph's Church Preschool will be closed as well.

The following local radio stations/media sources will provide updates: CKNW 980, News 1130 Global and City TV.

If school is open, the staff will attempt to arrive in a timely manner to the Centre. However, employee's ability to arrive on time can be affected in adverse weather conditions. We encourage parents to call the Centre to ensure staff has arrived prior to leaving your residence. Should a decision be made during the school day to close schools, the staff will contact parents to give notice to pick-up their child as soon as possible. No refunds or credits will be issued for these closure days.

Screen Time

Preschool will be limited to less than 1 hour of screen time during the calendar month. Screen time includes iPads and movies during the Preschool session. Preschool programs that are 3 days/week will be able to use the iPads on Fridays for no more than 10 minutes. There will be no iPads for children in the 3 year old program. Some of the apps available are to help with letter recognition, sorting, coding, early literacy and colours. Movies will not be watched for more than 30 minutes per month for each class.

Active Play

At least 30 minutes of physical activity will be led by an early learning practitioner per Preschool session. These activities will focus on gross motor activities such as running, jumping, hopping, throwing, catching and kicking. In the case of inclement weather, these activities will be implemented inside with scarf dancing, freeze dance, games, songs, etc.

Emergency Procedures

At St. Joseph's Church Preschool we do fire drills on a monthly basis and earthquake drills on an annual basis.

In the event of an emergency, the staff at the Preschool will evacuate all children from the building. Our meeting place is on St. Catherine's property in front of the tree by the fence on the west side of the property. Our alternative meeting spot is the goal post just south of the Centre. If need be, we may use St. Catherine's School as an alternate building to take shelter in. All efforts will be made in order to reach the parents for pick-up. If a parent is unreachable, we will phone the individual who is listed as the emergency contact to come and pick-up your child. In the case of an earthquake, local phone lines may be jammed so the Centre has an out of province contact number in Alberta. A staff member will contact this person and let them know if everyone is safe and where the children will be for parents to pick up. A business type card will be given out to parents at the beginning of the school year with all of the contact information & our earthquake procedure. Please keep this card with you at all times. If you need an extra card, please see a staff member.

Earthquake kits are mandatory for every child to have in the Preschool. Please see a staff member if you have not received a list of everything you need in your child's earthquake kit. The kits are kept in the Centre in a large Tupperware bin. The Preschool also has enough food & water stored in our shed for a 72 hour period.