



**St. Patrick Preschool**  
**Parent Handbook**  
**2022-2023**

License #376700882

## PHILOSOPHY

St. Patrick Preschool is a part of St. Patrick School and Parish Community of parents, children, teachers and clergy working together to provide a quality Catholic education. We believe that each child is a unique creation of God. We recognize parents as primary educators. Our teachers are dedicated to their role as facilitators of learning, respecting all children's natural curiosity about their world and their desire to be independent. Our early childhood professionals have prepared developmentally appropriate materials and surroundings to challenge your child's spirit of discovery and wonder.

A balanced program of child-centered and teacher-directed activities provide our children opportunities to enjoy the process of learning. When children learn in an atmosphere of acceptance and respect, they grow to trust in their own talents and abilities and ultimately in themselves. Children are encouraged to celebrate God's love through informal prayer, song and creative activities. Our program provides a solid foundation for our children's intellectual, social, emotional, physical, creative and spiritual growth. We embrace and celebrate our community's diversity and encourage mutual respect for individual's interests and talents.

Our staff is dedicated to the following goals:

- To create a Christ-Centered learning environment where each child can grow in an atmosphere of love and acceptance.
- To offer opportunities for children to learn through their own meaningful play.
- To recognize developmental stages and present appropriate materials which afford a maximum potential for growth.
- To introduce children to the Catholic traditions.
- To teach, through example, the concepts of fairness, respect and acceptance of one another.
- To provide a safe, nurturing, learning environment designed to facilitate independent, positive behavior and minimize the negative.
- To provide materials and learning experiences that will allow the whole child to develop - not just his or her body, but also his or her creative, social and spiritual self.
- To help children to develop language and social skills through extensive play opportunities, while consistently reinforcing their use of words to express feelings and needs.
- To promote family participation by providing opportunities for parents and family members to be included in classroom experiences and activities. *Due to the COVID-19 pandemic parents are not allowed in the Preschool classrooms.*
- To encourage children to explore the world around them, ask questions, experiment, and realize the joy of discovery.
- To provide resources for education, support, and referral for our families.

The Preschool follows a different calendar from the elementary school. It is open to toilet-trained children between the ages of 2½ years through Pre-Kindergarten. If a summer program is in session, enrollment ages are extended to include kindergarten-aged children.

The Preschool offers Extended Day and School Day programs. We are open from **7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**\* All teachers meet or exceed the early childhood training requirements set by the State Licensing Department. In addition to training and experience, warmth and the ability to work with children are primary requirements in staff selection.

### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of San Diego, mindful of their mission to be witnesses to the love of Christ for all, admit students of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at our school. The Catholic Schools in the Diocese of San Diego do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin in administration of our educational policies, tuition assistance, or administered programs. Although tuition assistance is not offered for our Preschool program.

### **ADMISSION POLICIES**

St Patrick Preschool serves families in the community who subscribe to the school's philosophy and agree to abide by the policies and regulations of the school.

### **Priorities of Admission**

1. Children with siblings already attending St Patrick School and Preschool.
  - a. Children of School or Preschool families who are active parishioners at St Patrick Parish.
  - b. Children of School or Preschool families who are Catholic, but not active parishioners at St Patrick Parish.
  - c. Children of School or Preschool families who are non-Catholic.
2. Children of families who are members of St Patrick Parish but do not have siblings already enrolled in St Patrick School or Preschool.
3. Children of families who are Catholic but not active parishioners at St Patrick Parish, and who do not have siblings already enrolled in St Patrick School or Preschool.

4. Children of families who are non-Catholic and who do not have siblings already enrolled at St Patrick School or Preschool.

Due to enrollment limits in the elementary Kindergarten class, St Patrick Preschool is **unable to guarantee the enrollment of your child into the elementary School Program**. Age appropriate children who have been assessed “ready” by the *Assessment and Intervention System* will be considered according to the priorities listed above.

All students attending Preschool must have self-toileting skills. Parents are required not to use diapers or “pull-ups” on their children while at Preschool, as we are not equipped for diaper changing. If it becomes apparent that a child has not yet sufficiently developed self-toileting skills, parents will be given a one-week notice to withdraw him/her from the Preschool. Re-enrollment may be sought after 1 month provided the child has acquired the necessary self-toileting skills.

### **Pre-Admission Interview**

The Director shall interview the parent(s) for the purpose of:

1. Exploring the goals and motives of the parent(s) in making an application to a Catholic School.
2. Clarifying mutual expectations.
3. Eliciting and/or confirming those attitudes and value commitments that are essential preconditions for the success of the school’s total program of Christian education.

**Parents who enroll their children in the Preschool program thereby agree to these expectations and commitments. No person shall be admitted as a student unless the person and his/her parents/guardian subscribe to the school’s philosophy and agree to abide by the educational policies and regulations of the school and the Diocese.**

### **New Students**

A non-refundable registration fee will be due each enrollment year. Immunization records must be presented at the time of registration. Prior to the first day of class, all registration forms and fees must be submitted to the director of the Preschool.

1. Identification and Emergency Information
2. Emergency Medical Consent.

3. Preadmission Health History
4. Physician's Report.
5. Parents and Personal Rights.
6. Admission Agreement
7. Photo Release
8. Field Trip Policies
9. Copy of Immunization Record
10. Registration Form, half sheet

### **Tuition, Fees and Other Charges**

Please keep in mind our financial responsibilities continue whether or not your child is in school. If your child is absent due to illness or vacation, the tuition amount due will remain the same. Please see the separately provided school year calendar for days the Preschool will be closed. The Preschool will be closed during Christmas break and part of Easter break. Monthly tuition will remain the same during these months.

Parents who voluntarily withdraw a child from school must give a written thirty-day notice to the Director. **Failure to give such notice will obligate payment of your usual monthly tuition for a minimum of two full months in addition to the remainder of the month in which you withdraw, allowing time to fill the vacancy.** Exceptions may be made on an individual basis (i.e. prolonged illness, emergencies such as permanent change of station orders, etcetera).

**FACTS set-up/re-set and Fee:** FACTS account set-up/re-set details are provided under separate cover during enrollment or re-registration in the spring. If your set-up/re-set is done by the given deadline each year then the Preschool will pay the required annual \$50 FACTS Enrollment Fee otherwise this \$50 FACTS Enrollment Fee is paid by you at the time of your first auto payment. All payments are made through FACTS Management. An exception to this is the Non-refundable Registration Fee for new families. But this fee will be recorded, when paid, once your FACTS account is set-up.

It is important that every family is aware of the following details related to the payment of Fees, Tuition, and Incidental charges as the FACTS late fees and FACTS returned payment fees are strictly applied.

**Tuition:** All Tuition is auto paid to your financial institution per your instructions unless alternate arrangements are made with the Business Manager. You will receive email notifications from FACTS any time charges, payments or credits are applied to your FACTS account.

**Incidentals:** These are charges for the following; non-refundable Registration Fee, Field Trips, Lunch program IOUs, FACTS Fees and other miscellaneous charges incurred throughout the

Preschool program. These charges will also be set up as auto-pay unless you de-select this at the time you set-up/re-set your FACTS account. If auto-pay is not de-selected for Incidentals then the amount due will be charged to your chosen financial institution on the due date entered when the charge is invoiced.

For New families; the non-refundable Registration Fee is due by cash or check along with your enrollment paperwork to confirm your child's enrollment.

For returning families; the non-refundable Registration Fee is billed at re-registration and due before the first day of the new school year but your Registration form and Parent Agreement are due before the last day of the present school year. The non-refundable Registration Fee can be paid manually in partial monthly payments or in full anytime between initial invoicing and the first day of the new school year.

For all families: with the payment of the non-refundable Registration Fee your child's place will be held until the first day of the school year (or September 15 if a late start is requested).

**Delinquent Payment or Returned Payment Tuition Policy:** Keeping your tuition account paid current is very important. The Preschool operates with a very tight cash flow. Delinquent accounts inhibit the Preschool from fulfilling, in a timely manner, our financial obligations. The FACTS late fee is \$35 and is applied when a payment is not made within 30 days of the assigned invoice due date. The FACTS returned payment fee is \$30 and is applied whenever an auto payment is rejected by your financial institution. FACTS will process two more attempts to collect a rejected payment but the \$30 fee is non-refundable.

Please be aware of the following consequences of habitually delinquent Preschool Tuition payments:

- Parents may be asked to withdraw their student(s) from Preschool (see Agreement for terms)
- Re-registration may be put on HOLD or advance payment of Tuition may be required for the following school year

**COVID-19 addendum:** Because there can be no "distance learning" option for Preschool, should the Preschool be closed **for a week or more** due to COVID-19, Tuition will be adjusted accordingly or refunded, if already paid. Registration Fees are always non-refundable.

## **PRESCHOOL CLASSES**

### **Please Be On Time**

Preschool classes begin promptly at 8:15 AM. Our teachers work very hard to create learning circles and experiences for their students. Please help us by arriving on time as to not disturb the

learning in progress. We worry about our children when they do not attend school. Please contact the preschool @ **619-487-9538** or **619-297-1314** if your child will be absent.

## **Late Pick Up**

Morning Preschool classes begin at 8:15 AM and the School Day session ends at 3:00 pm. It is extremely important to be on time to pick up your children. Be sure to call the Preschool if an emergency delays you. The late pick-up fee is billed at \$1.00 per minute after a 5 minute grace period. Continuous “School Day” late pick-up will result in being moved to “Extended Day”, which ends at 5:00pm and being billed the corresponding increased tuition. Our Preschool closes **promptly at 5:00 pm**. Continuous late pick-up after closing will be grounds for dis-enrollment.

## **Health**

Our goal is to maintain a healthy environment for the children and staff. Children who are ill will not be allowed to remain at school. As a general rule, your child should remain at home if he/she has:

1. A temperature over 99 by mouth or 100 rectally. Children must remain at home **24 hours after** temperature becomes normal.
2. Nausea or diarrhea within 24 hours. Sore or discharging eyes or ears, or profuse nasal discharge.
3. Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye): Until the yellow/green discharge from the eye clears.
4. Head Lice: Until all nits have been removed from the hair, and hair has been treated with a special medicated shampoo. The preschool maintains a NO-NIT policy.
5. Chicken Pox: Until all sores are healed and completely closed, and there are no new sores.
6. An unidentified rash.

***Please let us know if your child should develop anything that your physician deems contagious so that we can notify the other parents.***

***Due to COVID-19 the requirements for children remaining or being sent home have been altered to align with the most current protocols as outlined by the Diocese of San Diego, the San Diego County Office of Education and the CDC.***

For our staff to administer prescription medication or food supplements the parents must fill out an Individual Health Plan while meeting with the teacher and director. Medicine/Food Supplements must be in the original labeled container including the doctor's prescription. **Medicine/Food Supplements are to be kept out of reach of children.**

### **Safety**

Our children are part of helping us establish our safety rules at school and we enforce those rules consistently. Teachers are trained to help Preschoolers stop dangerous actions toward themselves and others. We explain and practice safety procedures such as fire, earthquake and lockdown drills using language best understood by the children.

### **Parent Authorization**

Your child will be released **ONLY** to the adults listed on your authorization card Please list all family members, including husband and wife who are allowed to pick up the child. Upon the teacher's discretion, a picture ID may be required. We are sure you will appreciate our strict adherence to this rule. Please notify the Preschool, in writing, of any changes that become necessary.

**\*\*\* California law requires children be signed IN and OUT each session.**

### **School Emergencies**

If your child becomes ill or is injured at school, you will be called and asked to come and pick him/her up as soon as possible. While sick children are kept comfortable and apart from the group in the director's office, home is where they want to be when they don't feel well. Please set up a plan for another family member or friend to be available to pick your little one up if you are not available.

Be sure to keep emergency information up to date. If the illness or injury is serious, and the parents cannot be reached, the Preschool will refer to the emergency card and arrange for the authorized treatment therein.

### **Emergency Procedures**

The City of San Diego routinely inspects our facility for compliance of safety regulations. The Preschool is required to test the fire alarm system monthly. We also inspect our playground equipment for wear and structural problems twice a day. Our Preschool is equipped with smoke detectors, a fire alarm system, an intercom system connecting Preschool to the main office, and a bell alarm system.



In case of a natural disaster, our facility and staff have been prepared to care for our students. During a disaster, all children will remain at school, under the supervision of a teacher, until a parent, guardian, or authorized individual arrives. If it ever became necessary to evacuate the St Patrick Preschool site, our planned alternative sites are St. Patrick Church, St. Patrick Parish Hall or St. Augustine High School located at 32<sup>nd</sup> and Nutmeg. The Elementary School and Preschool have a disaster preparedness plan in place. Each staff member has an assigned task, communication tools, and instructions have been given; survival materials have been purchased and stored. Emergency evacuation and lock down drills are practiced as necessary.

Up-to-date family emergency information is the key to our ability to reach you during an emergency. If you change your phone number or contact people, please inform us as soon as possible.

### **Lockdown Procedures**

St. Patrick Preschool has a lockdown procedure in place. We have been instructed by the San Diego Police Department on safety precautions, and we regularly practice lockdown, fire, and earthquake drills. Please be advised that a lock down will be ordered if our Principal/Director is directed by the Police Department or he/she assesses the need to secure the campus at any time.

During a lockdown, the campus will be closed. The Preschool doors will be locked. No one will be admitted in or out. This will be strictly enforced. The best way for the Preschool to ensure the safety of your child is to gather the children, lock all doors, and keep those doors locked until an all clear is announced.

If children are in the playground at the time of a lockdown, teachers and children have practiced responding to the teachers and coming immediately to a safe area. The important thing for you as a parent to note is that during a lockdown, no one comes in or out. The doors will be locked and you will not be allowed to enter or leave the Preschool during this time. **No exceptions.** We know that this can be scary. We pray we will never need to lockdown for a real emergency; but if we do, we will be prepared. We will care for your children and through practice and preparation we will be ready.

### **Guidance**

We respect our children's ability to solve many of their own problems if given the time and opportunity. Our teachers are trained to help them express themselves and communicate their needs in words. We believe children should be redirected in positive language when necessary, and to suggest an alternative appropriate behavior in lieu of the inappropriate one. Aggressive or dangerous behavior, however, will not be tolerated. Our staff will respond immediately with

parent communication if a child's behavior places another child's safety in jeopardy. **If a child's behavior continues to disrupt the teaching environment or endanger other children's safety, the Preschool maintains the right to dis-enroll that child.**

## **Discipline**

Developing a learning environment is an on-going process. It requires cooperation among all involved: parents, child, and teachers. If children are to achieve their full potential, we must expose them to a disciplinary system that stresses the responsibility the child has to himself/herself and others. We must help the child to develop self-discipline and self-direction. The basic structure of our disciplinary system fosters respect for self and others. It requires staff to be consistent, understanding, and fair. Inappropriate behavior must be addressed and age-appropriate consequences applied. Supervised timeouts, removal from a specific activity, calm and direct verbal responses would be the most common consequences. Parents will be informed of inappropriate behavior and the consequences administered to their child. When necessary, staff will supply parents with a weekly report of their child's behavior.

If staff are unable to control a child's inappropriate behavior, parents will be notified immediately. The director may require the parent to come to the Preschool and take their child home for the remainder of that day. St. Patrick Preschool is a "No-Bite" zone. Should a child bite another (regardless of the reason) the child's parents will be called and will remove the child for the remainder of that day. If a child bites 3 times he/she will be dis-enrolled.

St. Patrick Preschool staff respects the dignity and person of each child. The teacher respects the rights of all children, treating them equally and with empathy. Therefore, the following types of consequences are not a part of the discipline process at St. Patrick Preschool:

- Corporal punishment,
- Sarcastic tone or language,
- Unusual punishments,
- Sending a student to any area lacking immediate supervision,
- Depriving a child of positive, friendly, adult interaction.

## **Clothing**

Children should feel free to explore the environment without too much concern about keeping clean. Please send them to school in comfortable, **very washable** clothing that they can manage themselves when using the bathroom. We recommend that girls wear shorts underneath their dresses for more freedom of movement during play. Backless, slick-soled shoes or sandals are

inappropriate. Socks are always a must. Each child is assigned a small personal cubby space. Please bring a complete change of clothing, (underwear, pants/shorts, socks, and top/shirt) for your child to keep in his/her cubby. Please remember a sweater in the cubby is strongly recommended, especially during times of the year when the weather can be cold in the morning and/or afternoon. All belongings should be marked with your child's name and placed in a zip-lock bag.

### **Things from Home**

Sharing among the children is encouraged in each classroom. We welcome things of interest from home to share, including science and natural materials, books, pets with **prior notice please**. It also helps greatly if the items to be shared are small enough to fit into their own cubby. We ask your assistance in screening the items that come to school. No guns, weapons, swords, war toys or other toys of destruction! Share days will be posted by the teacher for each classroom.

### **Allergies**

Your child's registration packet included a Pre-Admission Health History — Parents Report Form (Lic 702), which should indicate any allergies you have observed. It is imperative our staff be made aware of any contact or food allergies, so that we may do our best to protect your child while here at school. ***We currently are NOT a peanut-free facility, IF we become a PEANUT-FREE FACILITY*** we will plan snacks that do not include any peanuts or peanut products, and we will require parents to exclude peanuts or peanut products in their child's school lunches.)

### **Lunches**

St. Patrick Preschool serves a nutritious morning and afternoon snack. Parents are responsible for providing lunch for their children. Since we all know most children are "picky eaters", please let us know if you have any concerns about what your child is or is not eating from the lunch you have prepared. Due to space, time, and staffing constraints, the preschool is unable to refrigerate or re-heat lunches. (See Allergy Policy for information about peanut products in lunches.)

### **Birthdays**

If you would like to share his/her birthday celebration with classmates, please make arrangements with your child's teacher. Please help us be consistent with our snack policy by keeping the treats store bought, nutritious and low in sugar. We ask that birthday party invitations NOT be passed out at school. *Due to COVID-19 parents are not allowed in the Preschool classrooms.*

## **Holidays**

Holidays and cultural observances will be integrated into the curriculum and presented to the children as all other learning experiences. These are wonderful opportunities for learning more about us and others. Whenever possible, we will emphasize God's role in our Holiday Observances. We will talk about the Spiritual meaning behind the celebration. We encourage everyone from our school community to share their traditions and experiences.

## **Parent Involvement**

We look forward to getting to know all of our parents. We hold a variety of staff/family functions every year, to which we invite everyone. We feel that a close relationship between the teachers and parents benefit everyone in planning and reaching educational goals.

## **Volunteering**

The best opportunities to volunteer are during preschool special events, celebrations and field trips. If still present, volunteers will be asked to leave the classrooms during the children's quiet rest time (12:00-2:30). Volunteers are asked to share their attention with all children. Volunteers may, with advance notice, do a project with all the preschool children. Volunteers will be responsible for any advance preparation and providing all necessary supplies.

## **Parent Communication**

You will receive weekly emails and a Parent newsletter once a month throughout the school year. This will be distributed via email. The weekly emails and Newsletter will provide you with the important happenings in our school community. In addition to Preschool information, it will contain information about upcoming events at the School and Parish. You may also find messages from your child's teacher.

We appreciate every family's right of privacy, but we hope that you will trust us enough to let us know if your child is under an unusual amount of stress due to family illness, living arrangements, or any one of a thousand things that can turn the life of a Preschooler upside down. No one knows your child like you. Please tell us if there is something that will help us make his/her day at school a happier one. Your child is special to us. We care about all his physical and emotional needs.

## **Parent Teacher Conferences**

It is very difficult to discuss a child's behavior or progress during school hours or with your child present; therefore, we would appreciate your setting up an appointment anytime you would like to discuss your child's progress. The Director is always available to listen to a parent's concerns and suggestions. Open communication between families and our staff will help us create an atmosphere of cooperation and understanding for our children. Teachers at St Patrick Preschool work to create a program that reflects our philosophy, mission, and our beliefs about how children learn best. If at any time you do not feel comfortable with the curriculum or the learning environment, please come to us and discuss your concerns.

**Field Trips** [*refer to Preschool Field Trip & Chaperone policies handout*]

We will attend a few field trips throughout the school year. If you want your preschooler to be included in our field trips you must return each permission slip and payment by the given due date. Preschool state licensing laws governing child safety restraints require that our staff and volunteer drivers have time to arrange car safety seats properly. You must arrive at the preschool by the requested time. **Non-Preschool siblings are not allowed to attend preschool field trips.**

**Extracurricular activities**

Preschool allows use of space to independent contractors who provide Preschool-age appropriate classes during the school year and summer programs. These may include, but are not limited to, Soccer Shots and Webby Dance. The classes take place in the classrooms or the playground. Class fees/costs and participation is paid directly to and managed by each independent provider.

**Preschool Parking**

Parking is very limited. The police department strictly enforces parking laws. The parking lot located adjacent to the Veterinary office is a "paid" ACE parking site. From 7:30am to 8:15am (for Extended Day students) and from 8:00am to 8:15am (for School Day students) parents may enter through the open school yard gate on 30<sup>th</sup> Street, park, sign their child into Preschool and ***quickly*** say good-bye and leave the parking lot to allow room for other Preschool parents.

If they will need more time in the morning or if they arrive after 8:15am then they will need to find limited parking in the neighborhood and walk their child to the main School's front office entrance located on Capps Street (after 8:15am). ***Please allow plenty of time for this procedure or arrive by 8:15 a.m. to avoid the delay.***

