



# **2025-2026 Preschool Handbook**



## Immaculate Conception School Preschool Handbook

Dear Parents,

We believe that a busy, noisy, creative classroom is the best atmosphere for your child. Play is an important part of your child's learning experience. Parents and teachers together can help your child develop to the best of his or her potential.

Our children are free to make choices, as long as they stay within the limits of consideration for people and things. A program like ours prepares children to utilize their intellectual and creative abilities in future learning tasks.

We at Immaculate Conception Preschool wish all good things for all our children and their families. It is our prayer that you have a loving, happy and healthy school year.

Blessings,

Mrs. Constance Fortunato  
Principal

### Introduction

Immaculate Conception Preschool accepts children who will be two, three, and four years of age by October 1. Our Transitional Kindergarten (TK) program accepts children who will be five by December 31<sup>st</sup>. Our Pre-K program is designed to help students easily transition from Preschool into Kindergarten. We follow the elementary school calendar and have the same holidays as the older students in the school with the exception of special days at the beginning and end of the school year.

It is our intention that every child is given the opportunity to grow academically, emotionally, physically and, because we are a Catholic school, spiritually. Children will experience growth in themselves and others. An important factor in optimum learning is a child's own feeling of self-worth and competence. This positive self-image is fostered when adults accept a child as she or he is and allows a child to grow in creativity.

Immaculate Conception School consists of two buildings: our Early Education Building and our Elementary School Building. Currently, our Early Education Building is the home for Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten. Our Elementary School Building houses grades K through grade 8.

### Mission Statement

Immaculate Conception school exists as a gift to God's children, to prepare them to live a life with Jesus the Good Shepherd as their teacher and friend. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, and through the intercession of Mary, the school seeks to foster in each student, spiritual growth, academic excellence and moral integrity.

## Philosophy

Every child is a reflection of the image and likeness of God. That reflection comes to fruition in the love of the personal and parish families. At Immaculate Conception School, we seek to fulfill our mission by being an extension of Christ the teacher as we partner with parents and extended families. We are guided by the teachings of the Catholic Church and the Diocese of Metuchen in order to teach our children the virtues of faith, hope and charity. With these tools, each child can go forth to develop his or her potential as a Christian in a secular world.

## Accreditation

Immaculate Conception School is accredited by Cognia. The school is a member of the National Catholic Education Association.

## Admissions

Immaculate Conception School gives preference to:

- Registered parishioners of Immaculate Conception Church who currently have siblings in the School.
- Catholic students registered in parishes other than Immaculate Conception who currently have siblings in the School.
- Registered parishioners of Immaculate Conception Church who currently have no siblings in the school.
- Catholic students registered in parishes other than Immaculate Conception who currently have no siblings in the School.
- Non-Catholic students.
- Registered parishioners must be registered by January 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of registration.

Students will be accepted to Immaculate Conception School if they will benefit from the learning environment. The final decision for acceptance is at the discretion of the Principal.

Children currently enrolled in the 3 year old preschool program are given priority admission to the 4 year old program.

Children currently enrolled in the 4 year old preschool program and Transitional Kindergarten program must apply for admission to Kindergarten. Kindergarten is part of the elementary school structure, not the preschool program.

Immaculate Conception School maintains grade level waiting lists for one academic year only. Re-registration for the upcoming academic year is required for admission.

## Program Goals

The Early Childhood years are a gift of time which will enable the young children to experience the joy of being created and uniquely gifted by a loving Father.

The preschool program provides the following:

- Growth in awareness of the Foundation of the Catholic Faith as experienced in family, parish and community through gospel weeklies, liturgical events and prayer.
- Developing awareness that he/she is a child of God and will grow in His love.
- Development of a positive self-image
- Development of a social interdependence with adults and peers.
- Experiences that will enable the child to communicate effectively with others.
- Development of motor skills that will lead to proficiency and coordination in action and movement.
- Use of concrete materials and hands-on experiences to facilitate learning through discovery.

## Preschool Curriculum

### **Religious Development**

The toddler, 3, 4 and 5 year old child will grow in awareness regarding the foundation of the Catholic Faith as experienced in family, parish and community. Students will explore concepts through gospel weeklies, liturgical events and prayer experiences.

### **Social Emotional Development**

The toddler, 3, 4 and 5 year old child will demonstrate growth in self-control through the development of:

- A positive self-concept
- A positive relationship with others
- Appropriate personal hygiene
- Acceptable behavior
- The ability to interact with peers
- The ability to cooperatively work with peers/adults

### **Language/Cognitive Development**

The toddler, 3, 4 and 5 year old child will develop a beginning understanding of the symbolic relationship between the written and spoken word of the child:

- Identifies the 5 senses
- Listens to stories, poems and fingerplays
- Shares stories, poems and fingerplays
- Dictates stories
- Becomes aware of the alphabet and # concepts
- Increases vocabulary
- Recalls information taught
- Talks informally with others
- Shows interest in the printed word
- Experiences a language rich environment (verbal and visual)
- Interacts with the computer and its software

The toddler, 3, 4, & 5 year old child will learn basic concepts in science, math, social studies and health as the child:

- Identifies, orders, compares and classifies colors, shapes and sizes
- Recognizes and counts numbers
- Explores the environment through hands on materials and direct experience
- Participates in problem solving activities
- Realizes his/her place in the family
- Follows health and safety routines
- Interacts with the computer and its software

### **Physical Development**

The toddler, 3, 4, and 5 year old child will develop gross motor skills through opportunities in which the child has to:

- Walk, dance, skip, run, jump, hop
- Perform rhythmic activities
- Throw and catch a large ball
- Build with blocks
- Engage in games and active play
- Maneuver large toys
- Participate in dramatic play

The toddler, 3, 4, and 5 year old child will develop fine motor skills through opportunities in which the child may:

- Tear and cut
- Paste and glue
- Paint
- Experiment with drawing instruments
- Work with clay, play dough and sand
- Work with puzzles
- String and lace
- Build with interlocking blocks
- Personal dressing
- Participate on the computer keyboard
- Cooking
- Handwriting

The toddler, 3, 4, and 5 year old child will develop handwriting skills through a developmental approach offered through a program called “Handwriting without Tears” by Jan Olsen.

### **Aesthetic Development**

The toddler, 3, 4, and 5 year old child will continue to develop an aesthetic appreciation through:

- Creative experimentation with various art media
- Singing and listening to music
- Using and making rhythm instruments
- Participation in movement, dance and dramatic play
- Observing nature
- Rhythm band

The Transitional Kindergarten child will be immersed in a literacy rich environment to encourage the exploration of English Language Arts and Reading Readiness:

- Build reading and language readiness skills
- Print Awareness
- Letter Knowledge
- Phonemic Awareness
- Develop strategies for decoding words
- Encourage children to experiment w/writing
- Exposure to rhymes, songs, name games
- Integrating reading & writing

The Transitional Kindergarten child will experience countless opportunities for positive exploration and discovery of mathematics and science.

- Recognizes # 1-20 and beyond
- One-to-one correspondence
- Matching sets and numerals
- Counting 1-100
- Writing numerals
- Discovering
- Observing
- Predicting
- Measurement
- Estimation
- Graphs
- Patterns
- Classifying
- Exploring
- Questioning
- Experimenting
- Communicating

### Tuition Policy

In determining the tuition policy, we have strived to make payments affordable while offering the best program. Notify the school office 1 month prior to withdrawing from the program. Please direct all questions regarding tuition to the school bookkeeper.

### Fire Drills/Emergency Drills

Under the Crisis Response Plan, one fire drill and one emergency drill are required monthly. We will do our best to stress the importance of drills without frightening the children.

## Dismissal

Your child will only be released to you or the person you have designated at the end of the day. If someone different will be picking up your child, please let the teacher know by written note at the beginning of the class. Please submit all legal documents, such as custody or restraining orders, to the teacher for confidential filing. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of any changes in persons having contact with your child.

## Health

Your child's health is a matter of importance to us. We require that your child have standard immunizations. It is only with a doctor's note and explanation that a child may be excused from these regulations. The state laws are specific about the shots required.

Children are susceptible to childhood diseases. We ask your cooperation in certain health habits and matters to limit illnesses at our Preschool.

Teach your child proper hand washing. Wash the entire hand with soap and warm water. Hands should be washed after using the bathroom and before meals. Please teach your child to flush after each use of the toilet, to properly use toilet tissue and to dispose of tissue properly. Please teach them to use paper towels to dry their hands and not to throw paper towels in the toilet.

Please keep your child at home if he or she:

- Has a fever or has had a fever in the past 24 hours. You can send your child back to school when the temperature has been normal for 24 hours.
- Has a cold less than 4 days old.
- Has a heavy nasal discharge (runny nose).
- Has a constant cough.
- Is fussy, cranky or generally out of sorts.
- Has symptoms of a communicable disease (diarrhea, rash and/or fever).

If your child is taking medication (prescription or over the counter), please inform the teacher. Also, inform the teacher of any allergies.

If your child becomes ill at school, we will try to contact the parent/guardian first. We will then try to reach others you have listed on our emergency sheet. It is important that these phone numbers remain current. It is distressing to all involved when no one can be reached to care for a sick child.

Parents are required to complete the "Student Absence Form" to report their child's absence. The form can be filled out by going to the ICS website and clicking the icon on the homepage.

## Administration of Medication

Immaculate Conception School strongly discourages the administration of either prescription or non-prescription medication in school or on school-sponsored activities. However, if it is essential that a student receive medication while under supervision, the following will apply:

- A. A parent/guardian should come to the school and personally administer the medication.
- B. If this arrangement is not possible, the school nurse or principal (or his/her designee) will administer the medication under the following conditions:
  - 1) The medication must be given to the school nurse or principal by the parent/guardian;
  - 2) The medication must be in the original pharmacy-labeled container; and
  - 3) The parent/guardian and the student's physician must complete and sign an "Authorization to Administer Medication in school" form. This form is available from the school.

## Policy on the Administration of Epinephrine

As permitted by New Jersey law, the school shall follow the orders of a physician or advanced practice nurse for emergency administration of epinephrine via epi-pen for anaphylaxis.

Parents/Guardians Authorization and Agreements Regarding Liability written authorization for administration of the epi-pen must be received from the parent or guardian of the student. The parents/guardians of the student shall be notified that upon administration of the epi-pen in accordance with the procedure below as provided by law, the school and its employees or agents shall have no liability for any injury arising from the administration of the epi-pen to the student. The parents/guardians of the student shall indemnify and hold harmless the school and its employees or agents for any such injury, as proved by law.

### **Administration of the Epi-pen by the school:**

The School nurse shall have primary responsibility for administration of the epi-pen. In the absence of the School nurse, another School employee - designated and trained in administration of the epi-pen by the School nurse pursuant to New Jersey law - may administer the epi-pen.

### Emergency Administration of Epinephrine Implementation of P.L.1997,c368

Some pupils attending schools in the diocese may suffer from a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. Pupils with a history of anaphylaxis (as documented by a physician), may require the emergency administration of epinephrine for anaphylaxis and do not have the capability for self-administration of the medication.

P.L. 1997,c.368 (N.J.S.A. 18A:40-12-5 and 12-6) was adopted because a school nurse may not be immediately available to assess the severity of an allergic reaction, and to administer epinephrine for pupils who cannot administer the medication themselves. The law permits the

school nurse to designate in consultation with the principal another employee to administer epinephrine via an auto-injector to a pupil for anaphylaxis.

### Food Allergies

We strive to make our classroom environment healthy and safe. Your child's teacher will inform all parents in the class of severe food allergies. We request you take into consideration your child's snack selection when it could possibly affect the well being of another child. Parents of children with severe allergies should make an appointment with the school nurse to establish a specific protocol.

### Parent Teacher Alert List

Below is a list of situations and events that could have an effect on your child. Oftentimes situations occur, and we do not realize that a child could be affected by it even if they are not "directly" involved in the situation. This can cause a positive or negative behavior change.

It is most helpful to the teacher to know if any of the situations or events listed below occur, so the teacher can help your child handle feelings or be more sensitive to their behavior change. Behaviors are much easier to handle if you know what is causing the behavior. Situations or events that might cause a change in behavior:

- moving
- new baby
- parent change in employment (good or bad)
- parent change in work schedule
- illness of anyone in the family
- vacations
- death of a pet
- getting a new pet
- death in the family or a friend (if you are affected your child will also be affected)
- parents not speaking/arguing
- staying up too late
- family reunion
- visitors from out of town
- change in the family routine
- separation or divorce
- events in the past that are out of the ordinary
- allergies
- going to the doctor
- parent(s) going out of town
- change in friends in the neighborhood
- difficulty with a sibling
- a sudden fear of sleeping alone
- visits with a non-custodial parent
- other

## Reminders

**Backpack:** Please provide daily. Choose a size that will hold a change of clothes, a 9 x 12 communication folder and your child's school projects. Backpacks with wheels are discouraged.

**Rain Gear:** We recommend each child have a hooded rain jacket for inclement weather days. Umbrellas are not permitted.

**Communication Folder:** A personalized pocket folder provided by the teacher on the first day of school. Check the folder daily. Any information sent to school should be placed in the folder for the teacher.

**Labels:** Please label everything that your child brings to school.

**Snacks:** Please send a small, nutritious snack and healthy drink for your child each day, that can be consumed in approximately 10 minutes. Snacks may not be shared.

**Toys:** If your child needs to bring a toy or stuffed animal to school for comfort, he/she may be encouraged to keep it in a backpack or cubby during class time.

**Outdoor Play:** Please remember to dress your child appropriately for outdoor play since we will try to go outside every day for fun and fresh air.

**Toileting Accidents:** If your child has a toileting accident, you may be called to the preschool to care for your child's needs.

**Preschool News:** Each teacher creates a monthly/weekly newsletter. All newsletters are posted on the school's website.

## Arrival and Dismissal

*Parents should bring their child to the door on arrival and pick up at the door at dismissal.*

The 3s and Full Day 4s programs will access the building through the door closest to the Church, under the portico. Half Day 4s and Transitional Kindergarten will enter at the Early Education main entrance door (closest to the rectory). The Early Education doors will open at 8:10 AM for arrival and 12:15 PM/2:30 PM respectively for dismissal. We encourage you to be prompt so your child has the opportunity to transition into the classroom with his/her schoolmates. In September, separating from your child may be difficult. We have learned through experience that a quick but loving goodbye at the door will benefit your child. Our staff members are trained to help your child through his/her separation anxiety.

## Tardiness

Excessive/frequent tardiness may result in a family being asked to sign in at the Main Office in the elementary building for a late slip before the student will be admitted to class.

## Arrival/Dismissal Times

### **2 Year Olds**

Tuesdays & Thursdays  
8:30 AM - 10:30 AM

### **3 Year Olds**

Monday, Wednesday, Friday  
8:15 AM - 12:15 PM

### **4 Year Olds**

Monday-Friday  
8:15 AM - 12:15 PM / 2:30 PM

### **Transitional Kindergarten**

Monday-Friday  
8:15 AM - 12:15 PM / 2:30 PM

## After Care

After Care begins when your child's program ends. The cost is \$11.00 per child per hour. After Care is available daily until 5:30 PM. An After Care Registration Form is required to be kept on file.

## Early Dismissal Days

Preschool & Transitional Kindergarten programs will be dismissed at 12:00 PM on scheduled half days **including 1st Thursdays**.

## Delayed Openings, Emergency Closings

In the event of inclement weather, we typically follow Clinton Township. ICS delayed opening is 2 hours (10:15 AM - 12:15 PM for half day preschool programs and 10:15 AM - 2:30 PM for full day programs; 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM for Little Lambs). The delay or closing announcement will be made via the Emergency Broadcast system (automated phone system) and posted on the school website.

## Volunteers

All volunteers must attend the “Protecting God’s Children” program as directed by the Office of the Bishop of the Diocese of Metuchen. This directive applies to anyone who plans to volunteer during the school year. The Parish Coordinator facilitates the program for Immaculate Conception Church. Dates are announced in the parish bulletin. Call the school or rectory for information. Volunteers must also complete a “Diocese of Metuchen Volunteer Application” and the “Diocese of Metuchon Code of Pastoral Conduct.” **Volunteers should report to the Main Office to sign in before proceeding to the Early Education Building.**

## Room Parents

Two parent volunteers are needed per class (3s, 4s, and TK) to assist the teacher with classroom parties and fundraising. The classroom teacher determines the party schedule and an appropriate number of additional volunteers needed to assist with parties.

## Room Angels

An unlimited number of class parent volunteers are needed to assist the classroom teacher and/or room parents from home for cutting projects, party donations, etc. or in the classroom for parties, field trips, etc.

## Specials & Field Trips

Each preschool class will have the opportunity to participate in field trips throughout the year. Your child’s teacher will send home detailed information prior to such events. Each child must have an adult accompany them during the trip.

The Transitional Kindergarten class is assigned to a 45-minute weekly gym class. Each 4-year-old preschool class is assigned a 30-minute weekly gym class in the Multi-Purpose Room, led by our physical education teacher. Comfortable clothing and sneakers are required. Your teacher will inform you of your child’s gym day.

The Transitional Kindergarten and 4-year-old preschool classes are assigned a 30-minute weekly media class which will incorporate age-appropriate social emotional learning. Your child will listen to stories and will be encouraged to borrow a book for a week from the preschool shelves. Please return the borrowed book on the following media day.

In addition, children enrolled in the full day programs will attend a weekly art class, led by the Art teacher. She will present process-oriented lessons to students. Full day students will also enjoy a music class led by our music teacher. Students will be introduced to a variety of instruments and songs.

## Birthdays

We celebrate each child's birthday with song and prayer. We request, prior to your child's birthday, that 3s, 4s, and TK families arrange with your child's teacher to send a healthy birthday treat.

If you plan on hosting a birthday party outside of school, please hand deliver your child's invitations or send them via mail unless you are distributing invitations to the entire class.

## Holidays

We enjoy celebrating holidays throughout the year. Below are details about the holidays most asked about.

**Halloween:** As a Catholic Preschool, we ask that witch, devil or any costume with weapons not be considered. Angels, saints, community helpers, etc. would be appropriate. Please leave all extra accessories at home.

The 3s, 4s, and TK children and teachers will parade through the school and outside along the sidewalk at the beginning of the school day. Do not miss this opportunity for pictures!

**Christmas:** We will celebrate Jesus' birthday before Christmas vacation. The Epiphany is celebrated upon our return from Christmas vacation.

**Valentine's Day:** Please have your child prepare a valentine for every child in the class. We celebrate on or near Valentine's day with games, crafts and songs.

**Donuts with Dad:** Dads are invited to school on a Saturday morning for a mini-breakfast and fun filled activities.

**St. Patrick's Day:** Every year a sneaky leprechaun visits our building, but we never see or catch him. We celebrate St. Patrick with festive green foods.

**Easter:** We do not celebrate Easter during Holy Week. However, Easter and Spring are celebrated upon our return from Easter vacation.

**Mother's Day Celebration:** Moms are invited to school for a mini-presentation and yummy treats!

**End-of-Year Celebrations:** We recognize and celebrate each child's progress with great pride and enthusiasm. Your child's teacher will send detailed information inviting you to be a part of the festivities, a true Kodak moment.

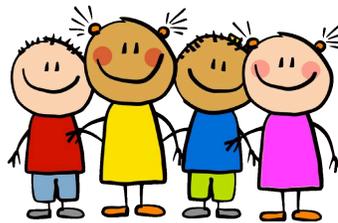
Permission Slip

I give permission for my child \_\_\_\_\_ to participate in walking trips on Immaculate Conception School property.

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_





### Preschool Parent Commitment

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the contents of the Immaculate Conception Preschool Handbook.

I agree to adhere to the policies of Immaculate Conception Preschool.

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_