Handbook

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the Saint Mary of the Lakes Pre K Family! We hope this year will be a fruitful one for you and your child. By working together, parents and teachers can help the children to grow mentally, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. This handbook should help you and your child make a smooth transition from the home to the school environment.

The Pre K Team at SML

MISSION

The Mission of St. Mary of the Lakes School is to provide a program, both academically challenging and spiritually enriching, that prepares students for lives of leadership and service guided by Catholic values.

PHILOSOPHY

As Catholic Early Childhood educators, we minister to the whole child. Awakening the child's innate desire to learn, we foster creativity and excitement about learning by establishing a stimulating atmosphere. By understanding that each child is unique in personality and in learning style, we create opportunities for the child to explore, discover, question, and experience success, thus guiding him/her toward independence. Above all, our program nurtures the child's spiritual relationship with God and develops a caring attitude toward others.

CURRICULUM

The Pre K curriculum has, as its foundation, the development of the three/four/five year old child. Pre K does not necessarily focus on academics; rather, it concentrates on the readiness skills a child should have before s/he enters Kindergarten. Some examples are:

Religion: God loves us and is in our everyday life; we are a special part of God's creation; we learn formal and informal prayers; we hear stories from the Bible, and learn about saints

Language: listening to and telling stories; dramatic play; self- expression; following directions

Math: counting; shapes; sorting; classification; calendar, spatial relationships; coin identification, patterns, measurement, introduction to numbers

Reading: visual discrimination and perception; visual and auditory memory; name recognition; sequence; left-to-right progression; introduction to letters

Gross Motor: running; jumping; climbing; hopping; skipping; balancing; throwing and catching

Fine Motor: manipulatives; coloring; drawing; pasting; painting; tracing; cutting; name-writing

Science: seasons; weather; plants; animals; insects; magnets; magnification; cooking

Social Studies: self; family; friends; holidays; manners; transportation; community helpers

SPECIAL AREA CONTENT CLASSES

Art: creative expression; colors; cause and effect; organization; care of materials; problem solving

Music: creative expression; rhythm; auditory discrimination; auditory memory

Technology: children freely explore touch screens loaded with a wide variety of developmentally appropriate interactive media experiences that are well designed and enhance feelings of success. Beginning coding.

Gym: Children develop their gross motor skills; they practice and improve skills such as spatial awareness, locomotor, coordination and rhythmic skills

Library: children who have been exposed to library preschool programs showed a greater number of emergent literacy behaviors and pre-reading skills

World Language(Spanish): children are introduced to colors, counting, and simple greetings.

SCHOOL DAY

Half Day Students: 8:30 AM – 11:45 AM (PK3 only)

Full Day Students: 8:30 AM – 2:40 PM

- **Please note when St. Mary of the Lakes School has a 12:40 PM dismissal, ALL Pre K students (half & full day) will be dismissed at 11:45 AM**

Arrival Window - 8:30 AM- 8:45 AM:

Please park in the lot in front of the PreK playground (Route 70 side of the school) and walk your child to **PreK Door #5.** Teachers' aids will be there to greet your child each morning.

Half Day Morning Friends (PK3) 11:45am & Afternoon Dismissal 2:40 PM

All children will be dismissed by the teacher/assistant to a parent or authorized person. You must notify us in writing (in either a handwritten note or email to your child's teacher prior to 10:30AM for Half Day students and 1:30PM for Full Day students) if someone other than the usual adult will be picking up your child, and they will be asked to show identification. This is for your child's safety, thank you.

Classes will dismiss from the following:

PreK 3 will dismiss from PreK 3 Exterior Door #6 (via playground)

PreK 4A will dismiss from PreK4 Exterior Door #7 (via playground)

PreK 4B will dismiss from main Pre K Door #5 (Rt. 70 side, same as arrival)

Note:

Pre K students are eligible for the Before School and After School programs. If your child is attending Before Care or After Care, please notify your child's teacher in writing that they are attending on that given day. Please see the following links for more information:

https://www.smlschool.org/after-school-program

https://www.smlschool.org/before-school-care-program

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Emergency Closings / Inclement Weather:

Emergency Closings Regular sessions of school are canceled only in case of emergency. Heavy storms or serious weather conditions, which might cause danger to the students, are the main reasons for emergency closings. Notice of closing or delayed opening is generally between 5:00 A.M. and 7:00 A.M. through the Honeywell Instant Alert System. Each parent/family who wishes to be notified through this alert system must provide the required contact information when registering for the Honeywell alert system. (HTTPS://INSTANTALERT.HONEYWELL.COM). School closings are also listed on the school website, www.smlschool.org.

Delayed Opening:

In the event of "Delayed Opening:" Sometimes, the weather causes us to have a 2 hour delayed opening. In that case, Pre K arrival will be 10:30 AM-10:45 AM, instead of 8:30 AM-8:45 AM. Since the half day children would be in class for less than two hours, the half day program would be canceled for the day.

Emergency Crisis Procedures:

Safety and security is our priority at SMLS. Students and staff participate in monthly drills and staff engage in ongoing training and preparation for an emergency situation. In accordance with the State of New Jersey, a copy of our crisis plan has been filed with and approved by the Medford Police Department.

COMMUNICATION

Be assured that we are available to discuss your child's progress. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know. Our school phone number is (609) 654-2546.

For non-'conference' type questions, you can email your child's teacher anytime. A response will be given as quickly as possible but no later than 24 hours. You will receive your child's teacher information before the first day of school.

Student Folders & PreK Weekly Newsletters

Your child's school-provided folder is the main means by which the teachers send home school information. Notes from home, lunch orders, etc. should be sent to school in your child's folder. Anything needed to be sent to the main office can also come in through your child's folder and we will forward it to the office.
A Pre K weekly newsletter will be sent home via email to inform and remind you of important happenings in school. Keep this communication in a handy spot for reference. If for some reason you are not receiving these communications, please contact your child's teacher.

SMLS Website

Also, be sure to check the school website: www.smlschool.org. General school information can be found on the website. Pre K information will be posted on the Pre K page of the website. Go to the "Academics" tab. On the drop-down menu there is a button for Pre K.

SMLS Weekly Update (School Wide: PreK - 8th Grade):

The PTA sends out weekly update emails. Please be sure that the school has your current email address. You can submit your email address through the school website. Click: Parents>Weekly Update sign up>Weekly Update. All school announcements are also sent via the Remind app (link will be sent to sign up).

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences will be scheduled in November this year with the rest of the school.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

The following steps will be used by the teacher/assistant when disciplining a student:

1. Talk with the child, giving the child the opportunity to correct his/her behavior.
2. Redirect the child's activity.
3. If the unacceptable behavior continues, the child will be removed from the group and placed in another area within the classroom for a short time.
4. Parents will be notified if it appears that a pattern of uncooperative behavior is developing.

HEALTH

Every child must be properly immunized for the safety of all children. Our school nurse will request this information in writing, as well as emergency telephone numbers and home telephone numbers. An updated immunization record and current physical examination are due in the health office by **AUGUST 1.**

Immunizations

The following immunizations are required for enrollment:

DPT	4 doses	HIB	1 dose
Polio-OPV	3 doses	Varicella	1 dose
MMR	1 dose	PCV7	1 dose
Influenza	1 dose annually between 9/1-12/31		

Emergency Cards

Medical Emergency cards are sent home from the Health Office in September. These cards must be completed and returned promptly in order for the school to notify parents or other responsible adults in case of an emergency. On the reverse side of this card we ask that you provide the school with information regarding chronic illnesses (asthma, diabetes, epilepsy), which might require attention during the school hours. If information changes during the school year, please notify the School Nurse immediately.

EPI-PEN

If your child requires an EPI-PEN, please make sure that you have registered your child's EPI-PEN with the School Nurse in a clearly marked bag prior to their first day of school. We ask that you also provide a second EPI-PEN to be stored (also in a clearly marked bag) with your child's PreK Teacher.

Please be sure to let the teachers know of any medical situations, allergies or sensitivities your child may have.

One of the things we will learn to do this year is to share; however, one thing that we don't want to share is germs! If your child is ill, keep him or her home. Please call the Health Office and email your child's homeroom teacher to report an absence. If your child becomes ill at school, be assured that you will be contacted.

Rules for a student returning to school after a communicable disease:

If your child contracts a communicable disease, DO NOT send him/her to school until your physician gives you written permission to do so.

Chicken pox - 7 days- May return to school 7 days from the day of outbreak, when lesions are dry.

Conjunctivitis/Pink eye - When eyes are free from redness and discharge. Requires treatment by a physician.

Impetigo - 2-5 days- Child should be excluded until he/she is under treatment by a physician.

Ringworm - Until treatment renders student non-contagious.

Strep Throat - Return 24 hours after treatment has begun and the student is fever free without the use of fever- reducing medication.

Lice - Lice treatment needed before returning to school. Must be checked by the school nurse and be nit free before returning to school. A note must be sent to the health office with the product used and date treated.

A doctor's note stating the child is no longer contagious is required to return to school after: chicken pox, measles, strep infection, mumps, giardia, hepatitis, influenza, salmonella, shigella, impetigo, scabies, tuberculosis, haemophilus,conjunctivitis. The principal may make the determination that a disease not included on this list would require a doctor's note, depending on the specific situation.

Rashes lasting more than 3 days or that worsen will result in the child being sent home until evaluated by a physician. The child must return with a note.

A fever/oral temperature of 100.4 or higher will require the child to stay home. He/she should return after 24 hours without symptoms or fever, without the use of fever reducing medications.

- **Please see the full SMLS Plan on our website for COVID policies and contact the Health Office for any related questions or concerns. Thank you.**

POTTY TRAINED DEFINITION AND RESTROOM POLICY

All children must be completely potty trained in order to be eligible for enrollment at SMLS. Our restroom policy and definition of what it means to be potty trained includes but is not limited to:

- No pull-ups allowed (including both wearing pull-ups to school and no pull-ups in the backpack as an alternative to underwear for a change of clothes).
- Students must be able to use the restroom independently, including wiping themselves (baby wipes will be provided to them by the teacher, if needed).
- Students must be able to remain dry during Rest Time (if a Full-Day student).
- Students must be able to change their own clothes independently (should an accident in the restroom or classroom occur).
- If an accident should occur that requires more than a change of their clothes, the parent or caregiver will be called and asked to pick up their child from school.
- If a student has more than five (5) accidents at school, they may be asked to re-enroll at SMLS at a later date when they are fully potty trained.

ATTIRE

Although Pre K students are not required to wear school uniforms, we ask that you dress your child appropriately for a Catholic school. Clothing for preschoolers should be comfortable and allow your child to play actively both indoors and out. The clothing must allow your child to go to the bathroom independently, without assistance from the teachers.
All Pre K students must have an extra complete set of clothing that will stay in their backpack. This includes underwear, socks, shorts/pants, top (season appropriate).
In keeping with the policy for the older students, children are not permitted to wear nail polish or wear temporary tattoos. Hair should not be dyed or tinted. Boys' hair should be above the ears, eyes and collar. Jewelry is limited to small post earrings (girls only) and a religious medal or cross. **Sneakers** are the only shoes permitted to be worn by preschool students. The students run, play, jump, and climb and sneakers are the only safe footwear for this kind of activity. Flip-flops, slip-on or open-toed sandals can be a hazard and should not be worn. Since we play outside whenever possible, please remember to dress your child appropriately for the weather. If you have any questions, please contact us.

SUPPLIES

Your child needs to bring a backpack to school each day. The backpack should be of sufficient size to hold his/her school-provided folder for notices, a lunch box (for snack and lunch), and a complete change of clothing—accidents and spills DO happen! To promote independence, the children will be unpacking their own backpacks. Please make sure that your child can manage his/her backpack and lunch box. All personal items should all be marked with your child's name. PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING.

Individual Supply Kits:

Each student is required to purchase an individual supply kit for $10.00 through your online account. (PK4 only)

The kits include the following items:
Crayons, markers, colored pencils, glue stick, school scissors, and playdough all stored in a pencil box.

Rest Mats:

Full day students will be having a rest time after lunch. Your child may bring a mat from home or you may purchase a new mat through SML for $25.00. Again, this will be charged to your online account. We highly recommend using one of the school available rest mats. as they are made of thick antimicrobial material that can be wiped down by the teachers and assistants on a regular basis. The children will take their mats home at the end of the school year, and the mats may be used again. Full day students may bring in their backpacks, a SMALL blanket and a SMALLl stuffed toy to be used during rest time. Please do not have your child bring in any other toys from home.

The following items are used frequently in the classroom. Any donations of the items listed below are greatly appreciated:

- Pump Hand Sanitizer
- Pump Hand Soap
- Disinfecting Clorox "type" wipes
- Sandwich Size Zipper Bags
- Clear Kitchen Size 13 gallon trash bags
- Small individual bottles of water
- Individual bags of peanut/tree nut free snacks
- Bandaids
- Straws

SNACK

Please send in a healthy snack and a drink. (Please do not send soda, or drinks in glass containers.) We want to teach nutrition and proper eating habits, and we feel that our snacks should reflect this. Here's a simple rule to remember: It's a brief snack, not a meal! A small handful of food is enough. Please refrain from sending candy or sweets! Due to allergies, please do not send any food containing ANY NUTS. **For the safety of all students, our PreK Classrooms are NUT-FREE.**

LUNCH

***Please see the school website regarding the lunch program this year. Please make sure that your child has a NUT-FREE snack, lunch and a drink each day.**

***Please note on half-day dismissal we will have snack, but no lunch.**

BIRTHDAYS

We recognize and celebrate the children's birthdays in class. Your child's teacher will communicate with you when the class will celebrate your child's birthday. If your child has a summer birthday, s/he will be included, too. You may send in a special birthday snack to share with the class for your child's birthday. Please remember all Pre K classrooms are **NUT-FREE** and all birthday treats must be as well. You can send in party napkins but please, NO balloons, hats, favors, or "goodie bags". Individual bags of cookies, crackers, popcorn, or chips are all wonderful options for this age group.

Please note: Any home birthday party invitations to be delivered in school must include all children, or all girls, or all boys. Thank you for your cooperation!

VIRTUS

The safety of each child is very important to everyone at St.Mary of the Lakes School. The Diocese of Trenton has mandated that all adults who are closely working with children and teens must attend a VIRTUS training session. The VIRTUS program, a national educational program on sexual abuse, has been adopted in the diocese to provide the essential training for diocesan and parish personnel entrusted with the care of children. Anyone who will be a volunteer in the classroom, whether for class work, or for helping at parties, must have attended VIRTUS training. Please notify the teachers of the date you have attended VIRTUS, and send in a copy of your certificate.

VIRTUS classes are NOT conducted all year. Please be sure to attend one as soon as possible. To find a VIRTUS Training go to https://www.virtusonline.org/ and Login (and/or register) on the VIRTUS website. Once logged in, you will be on the Toolbox page. Click on 'Training' in the left hand column, and select the course 'Protecting God's Children for Adults'. You will be able to search for a session that is convenient for you. You may attend any VIRTUS Training session that is within the Diocese of Trenton. While we do offer several sessions at St. Mary's throughout the school year, you also have the option to attend a Virtus Training session at a nearby school or parish.

PARTIES

Teachers, with the support of Room Parents, are responsible for scheduling classroom parties. During the year, we will celebrate Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter with a party. You will be given an opportunity to help at, and to bring in something for one of our parties. However, you must have taken the VIRTUS class to help at a party, and the school must have a copy of your VIRTUS Training Certificate on file in the Main Office prior to the day of the party. Please provide a copy of the certificate to your child's teacher as well.

ROOM PARENTS

If you are interested in being a Room Parent for your child's PreK class, please let your child's teacher know.

CLASS TRIPS

We like to extend our learning experiences with class trips and special events. Your child's teacher will communicate in advance plans for a class trip. When we go on a trip, each family transports their own child and pays a per person fee. Please remember to promptly return the signed Field Trip permission slip.

MISSION AND SERVICE PROJECTS

Several times during the year, the school participates in service projects, where we ask the children to bring in various items or participate in a service project (such as coloring placemats for a soup kitchen, etc.). Your help is greatly appreciated!

FUNDRAISING

Pre K students benefit from the fundraising efforts of the entire school. Pre K families are encouraged to assist with the PTA's fundraisers when they can. Under the "Parent" tab of the website, go to PTA - PTA Fundraisers to see the many fundraising activities. Contact the school office for more information or if you feel you can help with this or any other fundraising effort.

Please fill out and return the bottom portion of this form to your child's teacher. Thank you!

St. Mary of the Lakes School PreK Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I, parent of (student(s) name(s) _____
acknowledge that I have received, read, and agree with the contents listed in the 2021-2022 St. Mary of the Lakes School PreK Handbook, and further understand the policies, procedures, rules, regulations and practices as stated in this document.

Print Student Name: _____

Print Parent Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Disclaimer: St. Mary of the Lakes School reserves the right to make changes to St. Mary of the Lakes School PreK Handbook at any given time. In the event

that revisions have been made, you will be notified in writing.