

Operating Plan

2023-2024



**Sacred Heart
Preschool**



Sacred Heart Preschool

Sacred Heart Operating Plan 2023-2024 School Year

Sacred Heart Preschool has developed the following operating plan in collaboration with Sacred Heart Church leadership, the Diocese of Raleigh Office of Education and the Diocesan Preschool Directors from St. Michael's, St. Andrew's, St. Francis', and St. Raphael's. The following plan provides specific guidelines that will be implemented upon opening in the Fall. These guidelines follow the requirements and recommendations in the [NCDHHS Child Care Strong NC Public Health Toolkit](#) last updated on September 6, 2022. This operating plan was created through collaboration by many groups. By sharing valuable input for the most effective implementation of the CDC and NCDHHS safety guidelines as applicable to our preschool community we worked to develop a plan that minimizes risks while maximizing learning and socialization, which are the hallmarks of a quality early childhood education.

The mission and developmental philosophy of Sacred Heart Preschool will remain the same: to provide a safe and loving environment where the development of the whole child and the joy of learning is nurtured through socialization and play as we grow in our love of Jesus and discover how God is a part of our everyday lives.

As early childhood educators, we teach children about personal space, accepted behaviors in a group setting, reading facial expressions and body language, learning self-control in social situations, and vocabulary acquisition and letter formations by looking at a teacher's lip formation. These standards remain embedded as best practice and fall within the federal and state health recommendations.



Please note that this operating plan is subject to change based on the directives from the Diocese of Raleigh and Bishop Luis Zarama, as well as guidance and recommendations from Health Services (NCDHHS). Therefore, this document will be updated as necessary.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

- The calendar will remain as scheduled; however, special programs and events may need to be modified for the safety of students, staff, families, and community.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

- The Parent Handbook will be updated to include a COVID-19 safety protocols section and policy for potential refund/credit in the event school does not open, is delayed, or there is an interruption to the calendar.
- ***Parents will be required to submit a Parent Handbook Signature Page acknowledging they read, understand, and agree to the plans being implemented by Sacred Heart Preschool and that they assume all risk of sending their child to the preschool.***
- As always, Sacred Heart Preschool values accurate, clear, and timely communication. We will utilize our typical communication methods, such as email updates, director's newsletters, and teacher newsletters.

PARENT ORIENTATION

- Parent Orientation will be conducted when the students come for our open house. Information will be sent at a later date with a sign-up link.
- Each teacher will provide information specific to their classroom at the open house.

MEET THE TEACHER/STUDENT ORIENTATION

- These programs will be redesigned to allow your child to meet their teachers and transition back to school in a supportive way while adhering to the recommendation of the CDC/NCDHHS to minimize large groups at one time.
- More information along with a schedule will be emailed home.



VISITORS & PRESCHOOL OFFICE PROCEDURES

- We value our parents and volunteers and all they bring to our community; however, we will follow the current recommendation of the CDC/NCDHHS to limit the number of parents and/or volunteers from being in the building at any given time. The exception is to itinerant support for children with learning needs.
- It is expected that meetings with parents will be conducted in person, virtually, by phone, or through email as appropriate.
- Every effort will be made to create opportunities for parents to “see” the meaningful learning occurring for their child through recorded videos and class photo sharing.
- Our building will always remain locked to keep our campus, students, staff, and community as safe as possible.
- Family members needing to check-in or check-out their child outside of normal drop off and pick up times, will need to text the director, Stephanie Hinds, at 910-639-4868. Items that are not time-sensitive can be sent to stephanie.hinds@sacredheartpinehurst.org or a message may be left for the preschool office at 910-295-3514.

FACE COVERINGS/PPE

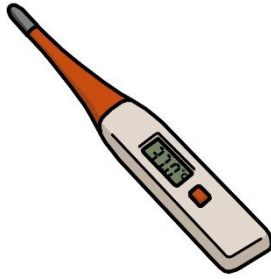
- Cloth face coverings (masks) are not required by any person at this time.
- NCDHSS states face coverings are strongly recommended for children two (2) years of age and up. If you choose to have your child wear a mask, please practice its use

so your child can independently, reliably wear, remove, and handle masks throughout the school day.

- Guidelines on face coverings may change pending guidance from health officials.

ARRIVAL/HEALTH SCREENINGS

- Sacred Heart Preschool recognizes that one of the most critical components is getting the students safely in and out of the building at the start and end of the day. We ask for added patience as the process will look and feel different to ensure the health and safety of our community.
- Health screening of children, staff, and any visitor should be conducted before arrival to identify symptoms, diagnosis, or exposure to COVID-19.



- Arrival in the morning will begin no earlier than 8:50 a.m.
- On arrival, a staff member will approach each car and assist the child in getting out of the car. Please keep children restrained in proper car seats when the car is in motion and until a staff member is there for assistance.
- Temperature readings are not required at this time.
- The staff member will escort the child to their classroom, taking no more than 3 children at a time.
- If desired, parents may park in a designated parking

space and walk the child to the door of his/her classroom.

DISMISSAL

- At dismissal, parents will park in a designated parking space and then walk up to the sidewalk in front of the school. Their child's class will be grouped together. The 2-year-old class will dismiss from the side door of their classroom leading to the parking lot, the 3-year-old class will be on the left side of the covered doors, and the 4-year-old class will be on the right side of the covered doors. The teacher or assistant will walk the child(ren) directly to the parent. Please wait for your child to come to you to limit the number of parents confined to a small space.
- Preschool office phone will not be monitored during arrival or dismissal periods. Parents must call the parish reception phone at 910-295-6550 and a staff member will get the message to the appropriate person.



MONITORING SYMPTOMS

- Parents and staff need to be educated about the signs and symptoms of COVID-19. They will be responsible for learning this information and following the [NCDHHS guidelines](#). If they or their child exhibit any of the symptoms, they are required to stay home.
- Parents are asked to screen their child each morning before arriving at preschool and be on alert for any symptoms. Your child should stay home if your child is showing signs of illness. Parents must not give a pain reliever at home to mask a fever, which could pose serious harm to others in our preschool family and could result in dismissal from our program. We must look out for each other's best interests and the common good.

No one may enter the preschool if they:

- Have tested positive for COVID-19
- Are showing any of the following COVID-19 symptoms:
 - fever of 100.4 or higher
 - chills
 - shortness of breath
 - difficulty breathing
 - new cough
 - new loss of taste or smell

The preschool will follow guidance from local, public health authorities as outlined in the

for appropriate steps following a suspected or positive diagnosis on campus, which may involve a certain class or all programs switching to a temporary distance learning model.

EXPOSURE/DIAGNOSIS

- Our local public health department will make the final decision about:
 - Isolation requirements for individuals who test positive for COVID-19
 - How long quarantine should last in the community they serve, based on conditions and needs
- If a child exhibits any symptoms of COVID-19, they will be given a mask (if age appropriate) and supervised while isolated in the Preschool Office. Parents will be called immediately and required to pick their child up, along with any siblings enrolled at the preschool. NCDHHS guidelines state that a child should not return to the preschool for a minimum of 5 days since symptoms appeared. Protocols listed in the NCDHHS Child Care Strong NC Public Health Toolkit will be followed for cleaning, notifying the health department, closure, etc.



- Any individual who spent a time around someone who tests positive for COVID-19 does not need to remain home for 5 days unless he/she becomes symptomatic.
- Parents will be notified of a confirmed positive case in our preschool community.
- As always, but especially this year, we must be able to reach you during the school day, so please make sure you keep your contact information up to date with the preschool office. Failure to be able to reach a parent or emergency contacts could result in dismissal from the program.

CLEANING/HYGIENE MEASURES

- Sacred Heart Preschool has increased the facilities budget for cleaning and sanitation to allow for the purchasing of additional EPA approved cleaning products and cleaning staff.
- A nightly cleaning of the preschool, classrooms, and bathrooms will occur to ensure everything is thoroughly disinfected.
- Teaching staff will disinfect their classrooms and bathrooms throughout the school day.
- Hard surfaces like tables and chairs, door handles, light switches, and high traffic areas will be disinfected frequently throughout the day.



- Sanitizing stations will be available at all entrances out of the reach of children. Hand sanitizer will be provided upon arrival for anyone entering the building.
- Children and staff will wash hands as soon as they arrive in their classroom, after the playground, before snack, after using the restroom, and throughout the day as needed. Teachers will reinforce the need to wash hands for a minimum of 20 seconds.
- As always, teachers will instruct children on how to properly sneeze/cough into the elbow or tissue, followed by hand washing.

MODIFICATIONS TO CLASSROOM SPACE

- Teachers will remove unnecessary furniture or materials to increase learning space and opportunities for the children to spread out.
- Activities such as playdough, sandboxes, and sensory tables, will be used with enhanced cleaning measures in place. Also, stuffed animals, pillows, dress-up clothing, or anything that cannot be washed/sanitized daily, will not be shared between classes, and will be cleaned frequently.
- Designated bins will be placed near the sink in each classroom to store toys/items that have been mouthed. These items will not be re-introduced during that same day and will be disinfected after school.

PRESCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- We will minimize the mixing of different classes of children. Within the classroom, teachers will limit the number of children in a play center and minimize the sharing of toys, when possible.
- Teachers will utilize outdoor space to provide further opportunities for learning.
- New procedures will be established for walking the hallways during transitions to prevent classes from passing each other.
- Shared materials such as glue sticks, scissors, paint brushes, markers, and toys will be permitted and only shared with children in the same class.
- Children will bring a labeled water bottle from home or teachers will provide a disposable paper cup.
- Children will bring a **peanut/nut-free**, healthy bagged snack each day.



MUSIC AND PLAYGROUND SCHEDULES

- The music teacher will conduct class inside the individual classrooms. Instruments will be thoroughly disinfected between uses.
- Generally, only one class will be on each playground at a time. Occasionally, times will overlap. Children will enter and exit the playground through the classrooms. The two-year-old class will enter and exit the playground through an empty classroom.



DISTANCE LEARNING

- Should schools open, but need to close due to higher infection rates, or a positive COVID-19 case within our community, we will be prepared to offer temporary distance learning. Your child's teacher will provide you with further detail if this becomes necessary.

TUITION PAYMENTS

- The prepaid registration fee is nonrefundable.
- If a child is withdrawn without 30 days written notice, parents are responsible for paying an additional tuition payment.
- If your child must stay home for a quarantine period, tuition will still need to be paid in full.
- If we are forced to close for an extended time as we did in the spring of 2020, we will assess the implications for tuition once the full extent of the closing is known.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND RESILIENCE

- We want to offer support to our students, families, and staff during these challenging times, especially those who may be dealing with hardships as a direct result of the pandemic. We will communicate with our clergy and Catholic Charities who can provide counselors for social and emotional support as needed.
- If more robust support is needed, staff, students, and families are encouraged to seek support by dialing 211 or contacting the Hope4NC Helpline at 1-855-587-3463.

We strongly believe it is in a child's best interest to form in-person relationships with their teachers, interact in meaningful ways with their peers, grow in their faith, and experience the joy of learning in a developmentally appropriate setting. We love your children, we love your family, and our sense of community will be stronger than ever.