



# OUR LADY OF THE LAKE

---

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

**Preschool Handbook**

**2025-2026**

# OUR LADY OF THE LAKE CATHOLIC PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK

## MISSION STATEMENT

"Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, rooted in Sacred Scripture and centered on the Eucharist, Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School embraces the values of Education, Faith and Citizenship.

## PHILOSOPHY

"Christian community is not merely a concept to be taught but a reality to be lived."  
Pope John Paul II

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Preschool is a faith based, developmentally appropriate program for 3 and 4-year-old children to help them grow socially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

## ATTENDANCE

Preschool attendance is important for your child. Please email the school at [esattendance@ollakers.org](mailto:esattendance@ollakers.org) if your child will be absent due to illness or for any other reason. If your child has an appointment scheduled, please call the school office and let us know when to expect your child. Classes start promptly at 8:00 a.m. Timeliness helps to facilitate classroom routine.

## BAD WEATHER AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

School closings will be announced on area radio stations beginning at 6:30 a.m. Please listen to local radio stations, Channel 16-WNDU TV, Channel 22-WSBT TV, or refer to [www.wsjm.com](http://www.wsjm.com). School closings will also be posted on our school's website, [www.ollakers.org](http://www.ollakers.org), and through a school text.

When emergencies arise, while school is in session, and time does not permit for a safe dismissal, students will be sheltered at school. In the event of a public emergency, please do not call the school, but listen to the radio or television stations mentioned above for school information.

## CATECHESIS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The preschool religion program is called *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. *CGS* is a hands-on, Christ centered, biblical and liturgical approach to the religious formation of young children. An environment called an atrium is provided in which "specific biblical and liturgical themes suitable to the children's developmental needs are presented". The children are encouraged to explore and learn through hands-on materials that reinforce the information presented.

## CORRESPONDENCE

A newsletter will be sent home with or emailed to your child. The newsletter will contain information on the week to come, upcoming dates, and/or general school information.

## CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN

A complete crisis management plan exists and is on file with the Berrien County Sheriff's Department. It is reviewed annually at our back to school staff meeting. Teachers possess an easy-to-use version for their classrooms.

## DISCIPLINE

All members of the Our Lady of the Lake School community have the right to a healthy and safe environment, respectful treatment by others, freedom from harassment and abuse, and a positive learning environment.

Our discipline policy centers around helping the child maintain self control and preserve his or her dignity. We accomplish this by setting realistic and developmentally appropriate expectations. We uphold classroom rules consistently, plan ahead in an effort to avoid problems, encourage children to talk to each other and work problems out, redirect and/or suggest other possibilities when a problem arises, and we stay in close contact with parents, communicating the good and the bad.

Our program reserves the right to terminate services to children who present a danger to other children or adults or after ALL other avenues have been explored by teacher and parent. Teachers and administrators will make every effort to modify inappropriate behavior, using the techniques mentioned above. Behavior difficulties will be discussed with parents before termination is put into effect, unless the child has caused serious injury to another child or staff member. In that case, parents will be called and termination will be immediate.

## DRESS CODE POLICY

Please keep in mind that in Preschool we explore and experiment with many new things and play clothes are preferred and recommended for daily wear in school. The exception is on school picture day when students can wear their best clothes. Young girls that wear dresses should also wear shorts to preserve modesty. Since we spend much time on our Early Childhood playground we ask that students wear close toed shoes to prevent injury from the wood chips on the playground.

## ACCESSORIES

Accessories tend to create a distraction for students and have the chance of getting lost in the shuffle so please keep any accessories at home unless it is for your child's hair.

## ENROLLMENT POLICY

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Preschool admits children of any race, nationality, or ethnic origin.

The following forms **MUST** be submitted before a child may attend the program:

Application form

Child Information Record

Health Appraisal

Parental Agreements

Birth Certificate

Immunization Record

Three-year-old students must be three by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the enrolling year and must be **confidently toilet trained**. Pull- ups are **not** an option.

Four-year-old students must be four by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the enrolling year.

## FEE SCHEDULE

| <b>3 and 4-Year Old Preschool:</b> | <b>Subsidized Catholic Rate</b> | <b>Standard Tuition Rate</b> |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 3-year-old 3 day (M,W,F)           | \$3,490                         | \$4,600                      |
| 4-year old 3 day (M,W,F)           | \$3,490                         | \$4,600                      |
| 3-year old 5 day (M-F)             | \$4,700                         | \$6,325                      |
| 4-year old, 5 day (M-F)            | \$4,700                         | \$6,325                      |

## MULTI STUDENT DISCOUNT

3<sup>rd</sup> child – 60% of tuition fee      4th child + children – no tuition fee

## FIELD TRIPS

Preschool 4 yrs. will have one field trip throughout the course of the school year. Students will ride the bus to and from their planned activity unless prior arrangements are made and the office has documentation ahead of time. No siblings are allowed on the field trips. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to attend with their preschooler.

## FIRE/TORNADO/SHELTER IN PLACE DRILLS

There will be 6 fire drills, 2 tornado drills and 3 shelter-in-place drills conducted each year. This is in compliance with state and diocesan guidelines. Emergency routes are posted in each classroom.

## HEALTH CARE PLAN

- **Hand washing policies and procedures** All staff and students routinely use soap and water to wash hands utilizing the rules posted in each hand washing area.
- **Handling of Bodily Fluids** Universal precautions are used when handling bodily fluids. Rubber gloves are available in each classroom and biohazard waste containers are located in the office.
- **Cleaning and Sanitizing** The following steps are used in sanitizing: washing the surface with soap and water, rinsing the surface with clean water and sanitizing the surface with the appropriate bleach to water mixture.
- **Illness and Criteria for Keeping your Child Home and for Staff required Absence** If your child has any of the following symptoms or ailments, he or she must remain at home for the health and safety of the rest of the children and teachers, until symptom free for 24 hours
  - Diarrhea or vomiting two or more times in the past 12 hours
  - Oral temperature above 100 degrees
  - Consistent cough or runny nose
  - Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye) or undiagnosed symptoms of conjunctivitis
  - Fever-free without medications for 24 hours.
  - Chicken Pox, Mumps, or Measles
  - Lice – In the event that a child contracts lice, he/she must be NIT free before returning to school. Please expect an administrator to do a final check upon return.

For communicable diseases, a child must be on prescription medication for 24 hours before returning to preschool.

Parents are asked to notify the school via email [esattendance@ollakers.org](mailto:esattendance@ollakers.org) along with their teacher, if a child will not be attending preschool for any reason. If a child is not attending preschool due to illness, parents are asked to be specific in reporting the illness, for record keeping purposes. (If an illness becomes common throughout the school, parents will be alerted. Therefore, specific symptoms or diagnoses are appreciated.)

- **Health Resources** Several local health resources are available in the area including: Red Cross, Berrien County Health Dept., Berrien RESA, and Riverwood.

## **ILLNESS AND CRITERIA FOR KEEPING YOUR CHILD HOME**

If your child has any of the following symptoms or ailments, he or she must remain at home for the health and safety of the rest of the children and teachers, until symptom-free for 24 hours.

## **ILLNESS OR ACCIDENT DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified and will be expected to pick him/her up as soon as possible. Medications cannot be administered unless prescribed by a doctor and the proper paperwork is completed and on file with the school. In the event of an emergency, first aid will be administered and the school will attempt to notify the parent immediately. If deemed necessary the school will call 911. The school must be notified if a child suffers from epilepsy, asthma, allergies, or other conditions that might cause fainting or other serious symptoms so that proper procedures might be followed with the least possible trauma to the child.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

The medication policy will be in accordance with the policy of Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School as outlined by the Diocese of Kalamazoo.

We will only keep on site and dispense medications for chronic and serious medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, hyperactivity and life-threatening allergic reactions. All prescription and non-prescription medications that students bring to school must be in the original container, and be accompanied by an ***“Authorization for Administration of Medications by School Personnel”*** form which has been signed by your child’s physician, or if in the original bottle a doctor’s signature is not required.

If your child only needs medicine occasionally-such as cough drops, pain relievers, and topical ointments-we ask that you bring the medicine to school and give it to your child personally. **Under no circumstances may a child bring medications to school (including cough drops) and self-medicate.** Such medications will be taken away and stored immediately and parents will be notified. In the event that a child exhibits symptoms that could be relieved by over-the-counter medications, parents will be notified.

Whenever possible, for short-term prescription drugs such as antibiotics, we ask that your doctor dose the medication so your child can take it before or after the school day.

## **NUTRITION AND FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM**

A nutritional school snack is offered every morning and every afternoon. The exception is a birthday or special party treat. A drink of white milk, chocolate milk, or water is served as well. Please let the preschool teacher know if your child has any special dietary needs or allergies. If providing a treat, please ask the teachers about any food allergies in the room.

### **Enrichment food service**

Students using our afternoon enrichment program are required to provide their own lunch. This must be brought from home.

## **PESTICIDE USE – NOTIFICATION POLICY**

Annually, schools must advise parents of their rights to be informed when any pesticide application is made to the school grounds or building. If you want this information, you must request it in writing to the school. This letter requests the school to inform you when pesticides will be used in the school. Prior notice will be given through a note home with your son/daughter and also through a posting in the classroom.

## **REPORTING OBLIGATIONS**

School staff and Administration are obligated by law to immediately report verbally any reasonable suspicion of physical abuse and/or neglect. The school cannot contact parents in advance of making a report to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). This is followed up by a written report within 72 hours of the original complaint.

## **SCHEDULE OF OPERATION**

**3 & 4-Year-Old Preschool:** Three or Five Days Available

Monday-Wednesday-Friday or Monday - Friday      8:00 am to 10:50 am

Preschool students may be dropped off between 7:45– 8:00 a.m. Students should be escorted into the classroom from 7:45- 8:00 a.m.

Preschool students should be picked up at 10:50 a.m. in the carline in front of the school.

### **All Preschool Students:**

A parent or “authorized” adult must pick up preschool students. Preschool students will not be dismissed to older siblings. Children will only be dismissed to an adult who is listed on the Child Information Record and on the student transportation form. If you will not be picking up your child, please send in a note stating the name of the adult who will be picking them up. Please verify, ahead of time, that the adult you have designated is listed on your child’s forms.

### **Daily Schedules:**

A detailed schedule of daily activities is posted in each classroom.

### **School Calendar:**

A detailed school calendar for holidays and scheduled closings is housed on [www.ollakers.org](http://www.ollakers.org)

## **STAFFING AND TRAINING**

Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School adheres to the rules and regulations of the state of Michigan when staffing the preschool program. Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School has criminal history background screenings and child protection registry checks done on all teachers and staff. Preschool staff receive yearly training in CPR and Bloodborne Pathogens; training in First Aid occurs every three years. Other training includes, but is not limited to, child abuse and neglect, emergency evacuation procedures, health care services plan, diocesan wide in-service trainings, and Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School policy regarding the release of children, administration of medications, supervision, and communication with parents. In addition, each member of the preschool staff is required to complete 16 hours of early childhood training annually and is required by the Diocese of Kalamazoo to participate in at least 5 hours of catechetical training each school year.

## **TERMINATION OF PRESCHOOL CONTRACT OR EARLY WITHDRAWAL**

As stated under **DISCIPLINE**, our program reserves the right to terminate services to children who present a danger to other children or adults or after ALL other avenues have been explored by teacher and parent. Teachers and administrators will make every effort to modify inappropriate behavior, using the techniques mentioned above. Behavior difficulties will be discussed with parents before termination is put into effect, unless the child has caused serious injury to another child or staff member. In that case, parents will be called and termination will be immediate.

If a child is prematurely withdrawn from the preschool program due to a change of address or illness, and IF tuition was paid in full at the beginning of the school year, a refund may be requested for the balance of the school year.

Parents always have the right to request that records, such as cumulative files, be transferred to the child's new school. Please contact the school secretary if you wish to have your child's records transferred.

### **PRESCHOOL SPECIALS**

|                                               |                                |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| PE/Gym: (3 & 4 year olds)                     | 1 day each week for 30 minutes |
| Library: (4 year old only)                    | 1 day each week for 20 minutes |
| Music (4 year old only)                       | 1 day each week for 30 minutes |
| Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: (3-year-old) | 1 day each week for 45 minutes |
| Catechesis of the Good Shepherd: (4-year-old) | 1 day each week for 60 minutes |

### **TUITION PAYMENT**

School tuition rates are set annually by the pastors and published in the spring for the upcoming year. Tuition rates vary for Catholics and non-Catholics.

### **VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS**

All school volunteers, school employees and clergymen who have regular contact with children must attend a Diocesan Awareness Session for the ***Protecting God's Children Program (Virtus)*** adopted by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to help correct the problem of child sexual abuse within the faith community. This training will be necessary for all parents who wish to volunteer at school, including helping with holiday parties and school sponsored field trips. Volunteers are supervised by staff members at all times.

Updated 3-12-2025