



Saint Mary's Catholic School Preschool Program Policies and Procedures

Saint Mary's Catholic School

312 Seneca Street Storm Lake, Iowa 50588

712.732.4166

<http://www.stmarys-storm.pvt.k12.ia.us/>

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Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards (QPPS)

<https://www.educateiowa.gov/documents/special-education/2013/06/iowa-quality-preschool-program-standards-qpps>

I. WELCOME TO STORM LAKE SAINT MARY'S PRESCHOOL

Storm Lake Saint Mary's Preschool partners in the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program through Storm Lake Community School District. Storm Lake Saint Mary's Preschool program's goal is to provide a high quality, faith-infused preschool program meeting each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background. The preschool provides a rich learning environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new skill development. It is a setting where children feel safe, respected, and cared for. This is an opportunity for all four-year-old children to take part in planned, active learning experiences to build their readiness skills. The preschool program has adopted and meets the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, administered by the Iowa Department of Education. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices.

II. MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, AND GOALS

Mission:

Saint Mary's Catholic School seeks to be a Christ-centered family devoted to the development of the spirit, the mind and the body.

Philosophy:

Saint Mary's Catholic School is in existence for the child, the primary aim being the full and complete development of each student. As a Catholic School in today's society, we are in the position of providing values integrated with life skills for daily living. The school forms community by its networking of the following:

- a) environment – both global and local
- b) establishment of identity as a disciple of Christ and person of faith
- c) an educationally sound curriculum
- d) a devoted, mature staff looks to provide integration of faith and life in accordance with the principles of the gospels

Goals:

In order that our children may become all that their talents promise for them, Saint Mary's faculty and staff pledge:

- To affirm the message of Christ, with an emphasis on Christian values and morals.
- To supply experiences that will create a desire to learn.
- To teach how to read and write effectively, and to speak the English language clearly.
- To assist in developing logical thinking ability in order to solve problems.
- To instruct in basic mathematics and scientific concepts.
- To assist in helping student gain an appreciation of the fine arts.
- To cultivate an ability to observe and to listen.
- To help students understand the basic facts of health and disease.
- To guide students in learning to make worthwhile use of time.
- To foster an understanding of the interrelationship existing between people and their environment
- To inspire students to worthy goals and vocations and to affirm the values of Christian living.
- To lead students to acquire attitudes of tolerance and understanding.
- To include the uses of technology in all aspects of learning.
- To encourage each and every child to embrace lifelong learning, so that ideals of Catholic Christian education continue into adulthood
- To foster an inclusive spirit by reaching out to all cultures in the Storm Lake and surrounding communities.

III. ENROLLMENT

Equal Educational Opportunity

It is the policy of Storm Lake Saint Mary's Catholic Schools not to discriminate in its education programs or educational activities on the basis of sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, marital status or disability. Students are educated in programs, which foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society. Students who feel they have been discriminated against are encouraged to report it to the school level one investigator, Ryan Berg. He can be reached at (712) 732-4166. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, (515) 281-5294. Procedures and levels are outlined in district policy for resolving complaints and are available upon request from the school office.

Eligibility

3 Year-Old Preschool Program

Children must be three years of age prior to August 15 of the current school year. Pre-registration will begin in the spring of the year. Registration materials are available from the school office and on our school website: <http://www.stmarys-storm.pvt.k12.ia.us/>

4 Year-Old Preschool Program

Children must be four years of age prior to September 15th of the current school year. Pre-registration will begin in the spring of the year. Registration materials are available from the school office and on our school website: <http://www.stmarys-storm.pvt.k12.ia.us/>

Hours

3 Year-Old Preschool Program

Saint Mary's 3 Year-Old Preschool classes meet three days per week (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays) from 8:15am-3:00 pm. In most cases, the preschool follows the Saint Mary's Catholic School calendar. **Exceptions include: preschool students will only attend ½ days the first week of school.** There are also extra days off which usually fall on a Friday. Please check the calendar on the website for this information.

4 Year-Old Preschool Program

Saint Mary's 4 Year-Old Preschool classes meet Monday through Friday from 8:15am-3:00 pm. The preschool follows the Saint Mary's Catholic School calendar. **Exceptions include: preschool students will only attend ½ days the first week of school.** There are also extra days off which usually fall on a Friday. Please check the calendar on the website for this information. Twenty hours per week is funded by statewide voluntary preschool (through partnership with the local public school). These twenty hours per week occur from 8:20am-12:20pm each day, Monday through Friday. No faith-based instruction occurs during these hours. The hours beyond that each week are covered by a charged tuition.

Fees and Payment

3 Year-Old Preschool Program

Tuition for 3 Year-Old Preschool is \$350 per month (over a 9-month period though payment options are available for a 12-month period if preferred). \$200 registration fee is required and secures a place in the program. The \$200 registration fee is applied toward September's tuition bill. Other fees will include school lunch, snack fee, and after school program (optional).

4 Year-Old Preschool Program

Twenty hours per week (8:20am-12:20pm, Monday through Friday) is funded by statewide voluntary preschool. The hours beyond that each week are covered by a charged tuition. Tuition for 4 Year-Old Preschool is \$350 per month (over a 9-month period though payment options are available for a 12-month period if preferred). \$200 registration fee is required and secures a place in the program. The \$200 registration fee is applied toward September's tuition bill. Other fees will include school lunch, snack fee (snack time occurs outside of statewide voluntary preschool hours), and after school program (optional)

General Information

Within six weeks after a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted to the school office that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control of the United States Public Health Service (CDC-USPHS), and the Academy of Family Practice.

The maximum class size in the 4 year-old preschool is 20 children in each session based on square footage of the current location. A teaching staff-child ratio of at least 1:10 will be maintained at all times to encourage adult-child interactions and promote activity among children. The elementary principal will maintain a current list of available substitutes for both the teacher and teacher assistant. Should one of the teaching staff need to temporarily leave the room, the teacher will call the elementary office and the principal will arrange for coverage of the classroom to maintain the staff-child ratio.

Inclusion

The preschool program provides inclusion for all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs as much as possible. Storm Lake Saint Mary's works with Storm Lake Community School District and the Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency when identifying and providing support to students with special needs, especially when students require unique services not available at Saint Mary's. Staff are aware of the identified needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans when they are developed. Training will also be secured for staff, as necessary to aid in supporting students with diverse needs. Individualized Education Plans or St. Mary's Accommodation Plans are made collaboratively with parents, faculty, administration, and other applicable specialists. Copies of these plans are kept in the child's file and also given to parents. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience for teachers, students, other children and their families. The preschool facilities meet the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.

IV. A CHILD'S DAY

Who Works In The Preschool

Program Administrator The elementary principal is designated as the program administrator supervising the preschool program. The principal meets all qualifications described in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards.

Teacher A full-time teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holding an early childhood endorsement is assigned to the preschool classroom.

Teacher Assistant

A full time teacher assistant in the classroom carries out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The teacher assistant will have specialized training in early childhood education.

Support Staff

Prairie Lakes AEA support staff provide resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom upon request to help all children be successful in the preschool setting. Such staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist or others.

Daily Activities

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal

and informal. Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day

Large and Small Group Activities	Self-directed Play	Snack
<i>Learning Center Activities:</i> Art, Science, Writing Table, Games and Put together toys, Book Center, Blocks and Wheel Toys, Pretend Play, Digital Learning	Story Time	Technology
	Outdoor Activities	Individual Activities
Faith-based instructional activities and stories		

Weekly notes/newsletter will be sent home to families in children’s backpacks (and electronically if parents desire).

Curriculum & Assessment

Curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. It is a process by which learners obtain knowledge and understanding, while developing life skills. It is continually revised and evaluated to make learning fun and exciting.

It is the policy of this district that the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, and physical disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a multicultural nonsexist society.

The preschool program uses *The Creative Curriculum*, a research and evidence based comprehensive curriculum designed for four-year-olds. *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* is a curriculum for preschool success. Comprising *The Foundation*, five research-based volumes that provide the knowledge base of the curriculum, and the *Daily Resources*, which offer step-by-step guidance in the form of *Teaching Guides* and additional daily teaching tools, *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* is fully aligned with the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework* and state early learning standards. Using exploration and discovery as a way of learning, *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool* enables children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills.

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is based on 38 objectives for development and learning, which are fully aligned with the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework* as well as early learning standards for every state, presents knowledge-building volumes and daily practice resources in tandem, giving every educator the “what,” “why” and “how” of early childhood education, offers daily opportunities to individualize instruction, helping teachers meet the needs of every type of learner, addresses all the important areas of learning, from social-emotional and math to technology and the arts, and incorporates them throughout every part of every day, offers daily, built-in opportunities for observation, helping teachers and administrators clearly see the strong relationship between curriculum and assessment, offers complete support for working with English- and dual-language learners, including detailed guidance that helps to build teachers’ knowledge about best practices and contains guidance for working with all learners, including advanced learners and children with disabilities.

Guiding principles of Child Assessment:

It is the school district’s belief that assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally

appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. The results will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All results will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and stored in a secure filing cabinet in the teacher's classroom and/or main office.

Children are assessed in the following ways:

- *Teaching Strategies GOLD*® is an authentic, observational assessment system for children from birth through kindergarten. It blends ongoing, authentic, observational assessment across all areas of development and learning with intentional, focused, performance-assessment tasks for selected literacy and numeracy objectives. Evidence is collected of children's knowledge, skills, and behaviors during meaningful everyday experiences. Checkpoints are completed in the fall, winter, and spring.
- Observational data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities.
- The ASQ assessment is completed once a year at minimum as a whole-child screener. This is done generally with all students within 60 days of enrollment but especially with those who are Empowerment Scholarship recipients (as a requirement of the scholarship). Some students are rescreened throughout the year if their initial results show more need for improvement. In students who are in need of rescreening, collaboration occurs between teaching staff, parents/guardians, administration, and outside specialists (such as from the AEA).
- Early Literacy Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) are given when needed for further supplemental data at the beginning, middle, and end of the year to monitor the growth of early literacy skills.
- Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and include the assessments, observational data, and child work samples collected on an on-going basis.
- Families are asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development.

The information from the above is used in the following ways:

- To provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for them;
- To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones;
- To indicate possible areas that require additional assessment.

Assessment information will be shared formally with families during parent teacher conferences in the fall and spring. The preschool teacher will communicate weekly regarding children's activities and developmental milestones. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or information on the *GOLD* assessment, ASQ assessment, or IGDIs, the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she/he will communicate this to the family during a conference, sharing documentation of the concern. Suggestions for next steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents:

- The teacher and principal will engage in problem identification, intervention plans, provide support and make outside resources available to those individuals requesting assistance.
- A request made to Prairie Lakes Area Education Agency for support and additional ideas or more formalized testing.

The preschool teacher would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

If a child is determined to need special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the

materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by teaching staff in the classroom.

Program Assessment

Storm Lake Saint Mary's Preschool implements the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. Administrators, families, staff, and other routinely participating adults will be involved annually in a program evaluation that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives. The annual evaluation process includes gathering evidence on all areas of program functioning, including policies and procedures, program quality, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction. A report of the annual evaluation findings is shared with families, staff, and appropriate advisory and governance boards. The program uses this information to plan professional development and program quality-improvement activities as well as to improve operations and policies.

Supervision Policy

Before children arrive at school, the preschool teacher will complete the following daily safety checklist indoor and outdoor:

- All safety plugs and electric outlets covered, heat/AC, water temperature, and toilets, etc. in working order.
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of children reach and stored properly.
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground.
- Supplies checked - first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
- Daily monitoring of environment - spills, sand, etc. Other serious problems reported to head custodian.
- Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.

No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently, who are in the library area, etc.). The classroom teacher and associate designated to each classroom remain with the class at all times, whether in the preschool building, on the playground, traveling to the main K-12 building, on a field trip, etc. During a field trip it is typical that additional staff or parent volunteers accompany the group to increase the number of adults accompanying the group. If an activity is ever conducted around a body of water, a supervising adult is always within arm's length of each student. Any time a class moves out of the classroom, name-to-face recognition is used for attendance and a staff member leads and follows the group. If a classroom teacher or associate are absent for the day, a substitute or different staff member will be designated to fill the role throughout the day to ensure proper ratio (1:10) is maintained. The appendix includes a table that shows proper student to staff ratio being used.

Child Guidance and Discipline

Teaching staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, and planning ahead to prevent problems. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self disciplined. Where the child understands words, discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. Teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property and learn to be responsible for their actions. Teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

Challenging Behavior

The teaching staff in the preschool is highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. The teachers

anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors teachers promote pro-social behavior by:

- interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
- modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed

Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills by direct and indirect classroom lessons. Faculty and administration will share our policy regarding discipline and child behavior through access to the preschool handbook, parent-teacher conferences, newsletters from administration/faculty, individual conversation, orientation activities such as home visits, etc. Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is a program used in the preschool and elementary buildings, and staff are trained to develop further skill sets and knowledge for implementing it successfully.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Permissible Methods of Discipline:

For acts of aggression and fighting (biting, scratching, hitting) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may: (1) Separate the children involved; (2) Immediately comfort the individual who was injured; (3) Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident.; (4) Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident; (5) Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence. A collaborative approach between faculty, parents, and administration is key.

Prohibited Practices

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures:

1. harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
2. physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing.
3. any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect.
4. withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Suspension and/or Expulsion

Suspensions and expulsions refer to the following:

1. In-program suspension that involves removing a child from a classroom or from activities that include the other children.
2. Out-of-program suspension that remove a child from the program in the short-term or place restrictions on the time a child may attend the program.

According to the Iowa Department of Education, "factors that may increase expulsion and suspension practices during early childhood education may include:

- Lack of positive relationships between educators, families, and children
- Misguided or missing policies
- Insufficient training and/or support for staff for promoting social-emotional development and

- managing challenging behavior
- Inconsistencies in classroom practices and/or expectations

[Additionally,] Results of expulsions and suspensions during early childhood education may include:

- Negative impact to the development of positive relationships
- Disruption to learning
- Unintended and undesirable results (instead of reduced or eliminated targeted behaviors)
- Delay or interference with the process to identify and address underlying issues, which may include disabilities or mental health needs
- Increased family stress and burden, including location of alternative services, often without assistance”

In light of all of this, it is always the goal of our preschool program to keep our students on-site in a safe and productive learning environment while not using suspension or expulsion as a casual means to accomplish this. In an effort to prevent suspension and/or expulsion, teachers and administration will take the following steps prior to ever considering suspension or expulsion:

- Continually use GOLD, ASQ, and other classroom assessment data to identify what a student’s needs currently are and how those needs can best be met. Continual observations are also included as part of the classroom data collection and helpful in identifying and managing concerns early on.
- Classroom teachers and/or administration will document student concerns and needs through parent/teacher conferences, face-to-face meetings and conversations, phone calls, emails, and other electronic communication. The school representative(s) will partner with parents to address and resolve concerns, creating and using PBIS behavior plans and/or other resources to support needs and target concerns, as applicable
- Faculty and administration will receive professional development, training, and resources from local AEA representatives or other professional organizations to target student behavioral issues or classroom management concerns. Administration will help secure resources to assist school staff with the student concerns being seen.
- Administration will work with faculty to see what modifications or changes can be made within the classroom setting to help lessen or eliminate student behavioral concerns. These adjustments may include but are not limited to changes in room arrangement, adjusting the classroom schedule, providing more visual cues, etc.

St. Mary’s School will only consider suspension or expulsion after all the above actions have been taken and a child’s behavior continues to pose a threat to themselves, other students, or staff, and/or the environment is unable to be made conducive to keeping the child safe . A child’s best interests will always be at the forefront of any decisions, and at times, an alternative, more specialized learning environment may be in a student’s best interest. Additionally, we acknowledge that parents are entitled to receive notice and an opportunity to be heard before any lengthy removal (ten or more days) could be considered for their child. Children with special needs are also entitled to additional protections when they are removed from their educational setting for disciplinary reasons, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. We also acknowledge that by law, disciplinary removals must occur in a nondiscriminatory manner.

St. Mary’s also acknowledges that it must report suspensions and expulsions of all children as required by School Reporting in Iowa, and that school policy and procedures must be regularly reviewed to ensure all alternatives and prevention strategies have been applied and that any disciplinary action has been used appropriately and equitably. St. Mary’s will maintain and review data on disciplinary practices so as to set goals and routinely review to assess progress. Additionally, if a child is suspended or expelled from St. Mary’s School, we would work with other local schools and area organizations to assist the family in finding an alternative placement for the

child that better meets that child's needs.

In all cases, suspension and expulsion are never the desired result, and such a decision would only be made through collaboration with faculty, parents/guardians, administration, and other applicable agencies such as the AEA.

Water/Sensory activities

We have a sensory table in the classroom for children to stand and play with their hands in the water or other sensory materials. During sensory play, children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the sensory table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to eat or drink the materials during sensory play activities. When using water, when the activity period is complete, the water table is drained and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children comes to participate. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers as well as the sensory table. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervises all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables.

Technology

Digital media can be a great learning tool when used appropriately and with set limitations that are both developmentally and age appropriate for students. As part of center time and/or small group time, a few Ipads are available for student use, under the direction of teaching staff. With the help of our technology support staff, the classroom teacher pre-selects learning apps students use during designated periods of time (approximately 15 minutes). Teaching staff oversee the use of the Ipads at all times during the school day, and communication of the role of technology in preschool is shared with parents at home visits, during orientation time, in newsletter updates, etc.

Snacks/Foods and Nutrition

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate that their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

A snack is served in the later afternoon and is planned in accordance with USDA guidelines. All menus are kept on file for review by a program consultant. The preschool serves a wide variety of nutritional snacks, and encourages children to expand their tastes by at least trying a portion of the food offered.

All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines. Clean, sanitary drinking water is made available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children's reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program with an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and specialist involved in the child's care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. Program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and provide parents with that information.

High risk foods, often involved in choking incidents, will be avoided as much as possible. For children younger than four years, these include hotdogs, whole or sliced into rounds; whole grapes; nuts; popcorn;

raw peas and hard pretzels; spoonfuls of peanut butter; or chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

The school district does not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will teaching staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Outside Play and Learning

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. Sometimes we spend longer getting bundled up than we spend outside. We use the Child Care Weather Watch guidelines produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play.

In cases when we cannot go outside (due to weather conditions) children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment. For example, tumbling mats may be offered for upper body activities or rolling across the mat.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside it is important to dress him/her according to the weather. When it is cold outside he/she needs a warm coat, mittens or gloves and a hat (labeled with your child's name). For the warmer days dressing your child lightly is just as important. For those in-between days dressing your child in layers is a practical idea.

There are areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. We encourage you to bring a hat or other clothing for your child to wear as another protection from the sun. Sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher will be applied to your child's exposed skin (only with your written parental permission to do so). We will also use an insect repellent containing DEET (only with your written permission) no more than once a day to protect your child from insect bites when the public health authorities recommend its use.

Program staff will complete the National Program for Playground Safety's Suggested General Maintenance Checklist on a weekly basis.

Playground Equipment Stability and Fall Surfacing Inspection

St. Mary's playground uses DHS guidelines and the National Program for Playground Safety guidelines to ensure outdoor play areas are safe and available for student use. Staff members and administration work with our childcare nursing consultant, use playground safety handbooks, and receive training that promotes what to look for when trying to prevent injuries. Any equipment added to the preschool playground is installed according to manufacturer's instructions (including anchoring), and its placement location is determined so as to meet safety guidelines. Weekly playground inspections are done by preschool staff to look for: missing/broken parts of toys, protruding nuts and bolts, rust and chipping paint, sharp edges/splinters, stability of handholds, visible cracks, stability of non-anchored large play equipment, wear and deterioration, safety hazards from public litter, hazards from nature (such as stinging insect nests), fall surfacing issues, etc. Anytime an issue is identified by teaching staff, it is reported to school administration and a maintenance request is completed and filed, with administration working with the maintenance department for follow-through.

Fall surfacing requirements are evaluated by administration and/or maintenance annually (usually quarterly), at least once a year, an outside specialist (such as the child care nursing consultant or DHS inspector) does a safety check of the playground. Adjustments are made to the fall surfacing anytime a new piece of equipment is added that requires a new depth for safety, and natural erosion and packing is addressed by maintenance and administration, with new surfacing being added whenever needed.

Clothing

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. While we encourage the use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects, we can't guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. Clothing should be free of words, graphics, or pictures that are profane, immoral, illegal, or disruptive in nature. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

Toilet Learning

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the following procedures are in place:

1. Diapering will only be done in the designated diaper area, i.e., the bathroom adjacent to the classroom with a fold down changing table. Food handling will not be permitted in this diapering area.
2. Staff will follow all diapering guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Programs Standards: Standard 5, Criteria 7:
 - Cloth diapers and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering. For children who require cloth diapers, the diaper has an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and the outer covering are changed as a unit.
 - Staff check children for signs that diapers or pull-ups are wet or contain feces at least every 2 hours and when children awaken. Diapers are changed when wet or soiled.
 - Staff change children's diapers or soiled underwear in the designated changing areas and not elsewhere in the facility. The changing area is separated by a partial wall or at least three feet from other areas that children use and is used exclusively for one designated group of children.
 - At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child if being changed on an elevated surface.
 - Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding.
 - Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands-free device (e.g., a step can). Containers are kept closed and are inaccessible to children. The container will be clearly labeled to show its intended use.
 - Diapering and Gloving posters will be posted in the changing area showing procedures through the use of visuals and words. These procedures are used by the program administrator to evaluate teaching staff that change diapers.
3. Potty chairs will not be used due to the risk of spreading infectious diarrhea.
4. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes.

Objects From Home

Because the preschool program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you limit toys brought from home. If your child brings an "attachment" item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack or cubby. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy guns to school. The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.

Weapon Policy

No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real weapon or a look-alike weapon on any school premises, in any school vehicle or any vehicle used by the school or for school purposes, in any school building or other buildings or premises used for school functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. "Look-alike weapon" means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon. A zero tolerance policy on

dangerous weapons (real or toy) is in effect; i.e., gun, squirt guns, water rifles or pistols, slingshots, toy guns, toy grenades and other similar items knives, etc. Violation may result in a student suspension/expulsion.

Classroom Animals and Pets

Classroom pets or visiting animals are permitted by Saint Mary's Catholic School.

If you, as a parent or legal guardian, want to bring your family pet to share with your child's classroom you are welcome to do so upon consultation with your child's teacher. Please be sure to visit with your child's teacher and making arrangements with him/her before bringing the pet. The preschool teacher ensures that the classroom pet or visiting animal does not create an unsafe or unsanitary condition. The animal would appear to be in good health and have documentation from a veterinarian or an animal shelter to show that the animal is fully immunized (if the animal should be so protected) and suitable for contact with children. The teacher would ensure staff and children practice good hygiene and hand washing when coming into contact with the animal and after coming into contact with the animal. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Any children allergic to the pet will not be exposed to the animal. Reptiles are not allowed because of the risk for salmonella. The classroom teacher is responsible for checking requirements have been met.

Birthdays

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. They afford the opportunity for children to be given special recognition. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. The teacher will provide families a list of foods meeting the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines. Those who have summer birthdays are welcome to choose a school day to celebrate with their class. Please plan ahead by making arrangements with your child's teacher. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school.

V. COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations, e-mail, and/or communication apps/digital class pages. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. Teaching staff will write notes for families no less than weekly. Staff will use these notes to inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and well-being. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the teaching staff in a manner that best meets their needs - email, in person, notes, classroom apps, or phone calls.

Open Door Policy

Parents and legal guardians are always welcome to visit the preschool classroom. As a safety feature, all parents and visitors will check in at the school office. Visitors are asked to please use discretion with regard to bringing babies and toddlers to school as young children may disrupt class sessions.

Arrival and Departure of Children

All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or others designated by parents or legal guardians will include the use of age-appropriate, and size-appropriate seat restraints.

When bringing your child to school, we ask that you park your car and turn off the engine before entering the building. Please hold your child's hand as you enter the building to decrease the possibility of an accident. Parents or legal guardians must either accompany children to the classroom at the beginning of the day or leave their child in the care of one of the teaching staff. No child will be permitted to leave the

building without an adult.

Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior written authorization (Parent Consent Form) will be allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them.

In the interest of students' safety, parents/guardians/authorized individuals are requested to report directly to the office when picking up their child rather than going to the child's classroom. Likewise, when a student returns to the building following an absence during the school day, the adult should stop in the office and sign the child in. When picking up your child from the school, please be present at the time school dismisses.

When all children have arrived, the preschool teacher will record attendance for the day. Throughout the day each time children transition from one location to another, i.e. classroom to outdoor, the teacher will be responsible for counting the number of children whenever leaving one area and when arriving at another to confirm the safe whereabouts of every child at all times.

Transportation

Parents/legal guardians are asked to provide their own transportation to and from Saint Mary's Preschool.

Field Trips

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. Storm Lake Saint Mary's Catholic School buses are used for these field trips. Parents will be informed of each field trip through a newsletter, signs posted in the classroom, and other communication means well in advance. A parent or legal guardian must sign an informed consent form for trips for each child before each trip. Adult family members are asked to volunteer to go on these trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios. A notice posting the dates, time of departure, time of return, and the destination location will be posted prominently at least 48 hours before the field trip. Each child will be assigned to an adult for every part of the trip. Before every trip, the teaching staff will instruct children and all adults using the bus about the 10-foot danger zone around the vehicle where the driver cannot see.

During the field trip, all children will wear identifying information that, for children, gives the program name and phone number. A first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization information for the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children will be counted every 15 minutes while on a field trip. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

Attendance

Students who are enrolled for classes at Saint Mary's Catholic School are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others as teachers find themselves taking class time to repeat information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. Excessive absences can also impact eligibility for families who are receiving Empowerment Scholarship funding. Please call the school office with the reason for an absence no later than 8:30am. For safety's sake, if a student is absent without notification, the school secretary/teaching staff will attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school.

The secretary will give verbal notice to parents when their child reaches the **eight-day** and **ten-day** absence in class. When a student's total absences reach 10 days, the parent/guardian may also be contacted by the principal to discuss and plan for the student's future educational placement. The only exceptions to the policy are cases of hospitalization or confinement due to injury or serious illness that requires on-going treatment and an exemption applied for special educational experiences. Extended

absences due to chronic illness or health conditions will be handled on an individual basis involving the parents and the principal.

All pre-scheduled absences require written notification in advance. If the family plans an extended absence, parents need to notify the school office and teachers well in advance to complete missed work.

Sign-in and Sign-out Policy

Attendance is an important part of each school day. Parents are expected to notify the school office regarding a child's absence by 8:30am that day. A record is made of the reason the child is gone in our main office, and that information is communicated to classroom teachers as applicable. If a child does not show up to school and no information has come from home, the school office will call the child's parent/guardian (between 8:30-9am). Classroom teachers make note of who drops off and picks up each student daily, and collaborate with the school office regarding any questions or concerns. A sign-in/sign-out process is used in the school office regarding any visitors during the day and anytime a child leaves school early or arrives late, the time, reason, and accompanying adult are documented. Parents/guardians and visitors must all go through the main office (in person or by phone call upon arrival) before gaining access to the preschool building so records are maintained. Contact information for all parents/guardians and visitors is maintained by our school office.

Ethics and Confidentiality

Staff follow an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. Children are people who deserve respect. One way we demonstrate this respect is to refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation and to refrain from labeling a child negatively or positively. No information about any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.

All staff must complete VIRTUS safe environment training as mandated by the Diocese of Sioux City. Staff are required to read and stay current with monthly VIRTUS bulletins.

Children's Records

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's records during regular office hours. Parents may also file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if they feel their rights regarding their child's records have been violated. For a complete copy of the school district's policy on student records or the procedure for filing a complaint, refer to Saint Mary's parent/teacher handbook. Parents or guardians will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

Advisory Committees

Storm Lake Saint Mary's Catholic School has multiple committees that provide further support to the overall school system (including preschool building). The School Improvement Advisory Committee/Academic Committee meets each year and is made up of parents, students, faculty, and community members. They help review academic goals set by the school Leadership Team and collaborate on assessment data and programming ideas.

PTP (Parents and Teachers of Panthers) is a committee composed of parents and school staff. This group

meets quarterly to provide support to St. Mary's School system for student activities, PBIS rewards, field trip opportunities, etc. They also serve as a sounding board for new ideas and services. All parents are automatically part of this group when they enroll their child at Saint Mary's. Check out the PTP information on our school website under the "Parents" tab to learn more about the group and how to get involved.

Grievance Policy

Open and honest communication between families and the preschool program is an essential component of a high quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to your child's teacher. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for the assistance from the elementary principal, Mrs. Kate Swanson.

If you have a concern regarding some aspect of the program or policy, please contact the elementary principal who is the program administrator for the preschool.

As part of our program assessment, in the spring of each year, we also provide you with a family questionnaire to evaluate our program. This information helps us to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses.

VI. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Saint Mary's Catholic School encourages families to be very involved in their child's education by observing their children during the day when possible and meeting with staff. Family members are welcome to visit at any time during class sessions.

Teachers and administrators use a variety of formal and informal ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of child-rearing practices and communication; and information about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds as they wish to share. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the year regarding their family, beliefs, and preferences. Home visits are conducted at the beginning of the school year. Program staff communicate with families on at least a weekly basis regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of their children. Family teacher conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters, as well as when either party requests. At least one Family Night is held during the year, if not more.

Saint Mary's Catholic Preschool values the time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. As the teacher learns from the families' expertise regarding their child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, goals for your child's growth and development can be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the preschool teacher or administration at any time. Although in-person daily contact cannot be replaced, preschool staff also relies on notes home, emails, phone calls, newsletters, communication apps, digital class pages, and bulletin boards as alternative means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

Saint Mary's Catholic Preschool invites you to become involved in one or all of the following ways, and welcomes other ideas as well.

1. Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities. Keeping the teacher informed of changes and events that might affect your child allows the teacher to be more responsive to your child's needs.
2. Return all forms, questionnaires and so on promptly.
3. Attend Family/Teacher conferences in the Fall and Spring semesters.
4. Take time to read the family bulletin board.
5. Check your child's backpack each day.

6. Participate in field trip activities.
7. Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken.
8. Share any of your families' cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
9. Read all the material sent home with your child.
10. Feel free to visit the classroom / volunteer.
11. Help with special events. Helping takes many different forms such as preparation of materials at home, making telephone calls, preparing or posting flyers, recruiting other volunteers, collecting donations or prizes, run errands, photography, setup before the event, or clean afterwards.
12. Be an active member of the Parents and Teachers of Panthers (PTP) group.
13. Feel free to submit information to the weekly newsletter.

It is the policy of the Storm Lake Saint Mary's Catholic School not to discriminate on the basis of race, national origin, creed, age, marital status, or physical disability in its education programs, activities, or employment policies as required by Title VI or VIII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments, and the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The school will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of the families with children with limited English proficiency, families with children with disabilities, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats on request, and, to the extent possible, in a language families understand.

The school believes that families should be supported in making decisions about services that their children may need. The teaching staff will provide information to families about available community resources and assist as requested in helping the family make connections. A variety of resources are also available on our school website under the "Parents" tab.

Home Visits

Home visits are made prior to the start of school. This is an opportunity for the preschool teacher to get to know you, your child, and your family and for you to begin to create a partnership between home and school in order to best meet your child's needs. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the teacher understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you'd like addressed. Parents are encouraged to share these preferences, concerns, and questions at any time with either the classroom teacher or administrator. Home visits are scheduled during registration in August at the Panther Fair and/or through personal teacher communication. An additional mid-year home visit may be coordinated during the school year as well with communication coming from classroom teachers in such a case.

Parent Teacher Conferences

The preschool program will have formal parent teacher conferences at the same time as the elementary school – fall (end of the first quarter) and spring (midterm of the third quarter). The teacher will send home a sheet before the conference asking you to consider what new skills you see your child developing at home or in the community, to think about what you'd like more information about the classroom, and whether you have new or different goals for your child. During the conference the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Together you can make a plan to continue to encourage your child's growth and development.

Family Nights

Family nights are an opportunity for you and your family to come to school to participate in fun as well as educational activities (such as a science night, family game night, etc.). Based on results from a family survey, the teaching staff will select a topic for the evening. With help from family volunteers, the night will be planned to meet the needs of the children and families in the classroom.

Transitions

Home-school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program, such as special education. The child's family provides the consistency and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child whether the transition is within the same building or in another location. Teaching staff will partner with the family to make the transition as smooth as possible by connecting family members with the next program's staff. Preschool staff will provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, program options, and arrange for a classroom visit whenever possible.

VII. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Storm Lake Saint Mary's Preschool is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

Health and Immunization Certificates

Within six weeks after a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted to the school office that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Centers for Disease Control of the United States Public Health Service (CDC-USPHS), and the Academy of Family Practice.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunization for which parents are using medical or religious exemption.

Health and Safety Records

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school office. Files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or teaching staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records; the child's parent or legal guardian; and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

1. Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
2. Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results;
3. Current emergency contact information for each child, that is kept up to date by a specified method during the year;
4. Names of individuals authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child;
5. Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes);
6. Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support; and
7. Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff implement a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

General Health and Safety Guidelines

- All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.
- Under the supervision of the preschool teacher, all staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.
- All staff are to follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.
- All teaching staff complete “Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens” training annually.
- At least one staff member who has a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, is always present with each group of children. When a child in the group has a special health condition that might require CPR, one staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR is present in the program at all times.

Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. If your child has any of the following symptoms during the night, he or she will not be admitted the following morning for the safety of the other children.

- fever greater than 100 degrees F
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- pink eyes with drainage
- cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge

The center’s established policy for an ill child’s return:

- Fever free for 24 hours
- Chicken pox: one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- Strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage

Upon arrival at school, each child is observed by teaching staff for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child’s ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. Children will be excluded when a child is not able to participate comfortably; if the illness requires more care than staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group; or if keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at preschool, parents, legal guardians, or other person authorized by the parent will be notified immediately to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that we have current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child’s pediatrician. In the meantime, we will provide the child a place to rest until the parent, legal guardian or designated person arrives under the supervision of someone familiar with the child. If the child is suspected of having a contagious disease, then until she or he can be picked up, the child is located where new individuals will not be exposed.

Reporting Communicable Diseases

Staff and teachers provide information to families verbally and in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program

and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, made contact with those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur.

Students who have an infectious or communicable disease are allowed to attend school as long as they are able to do so and their presence does not pose an unreasonable risk of harm to themselves or does not create a substantial risk of illness or transmission to other students or employees. If there is a question about whether a student should continue to attend classes, the students shall not attend class or participate in school activities without their personal physician's approval. Infectious or communicable diseases include, but are not limited to, mumps, measles, and chicken pox.

Medication Policies and Procedures

The school will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. Because administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside preschool hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

The school office staff coordinates and/or administers medication during school hours only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant. Any other person who would administer medication has specific training and a written performance evaluation, updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration: (1) verifying that the right child receives the (2) right medication (3) in the right dose (4) at the right time (5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given. Medication errors will be controlled by checking and recording these five right practices each time medication is given. Should a medication error occur, the Regional Poison Control Center and the child's parents will be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the school.

For prescription medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the school with the medication in the original, child-resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication; the date the prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage, and disposal instructions.

For over-the-counter medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the medication in a child-resistant container. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names; specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer; and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child.

Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the teaching staff in writing (by a signed note or a prescription label) or dictated over the telephone by a physician or other person legally authorized to prescribe medication. This requirement applies both to prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Medications will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child-resistant container that is locked and prevents spillage.

Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.

A medication log will be maintained by the school staff to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount, the time of administration, and

the person who administered each dose of medication. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take medication will be noted on this log.

Cleaning and Sanitization

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. Surfaces that may come in contact with potentially infectious body fluids are disposable or made of material that can be sanitized. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately. When spills of body fluids occur, staff clean them up immediately with detergent followed by water rinsing.

Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and disinfected after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be disinfected using a non-toxic solution of one tablespoon household bleach to one quart of tap water made fresh daily. To disinfect, the surfaces will be sprayed until glossy. The bleach solution will be left on for at least 2 minutes before it is wiped off with a clean paper towel, or it may be allowed to air dry. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

Staff will be trained in cleaning techniques, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials, and information required by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents.

Routine cleaning will be supervised by the preschool teacher and will follow the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table in Section III, page 47 of the QPPS manual. A checklist will be completed as indicated in the table.

Facility cleaning requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure of the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Non-toxic substances will be used whenever possible.

Staff dispose of contaminated materials and diapers in a plastic bag with a secure tie that is placed in a closed container.

Hand Washing Practices

Frequent hand washing is key to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Teachers teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand-washing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
- Staff assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- upon arrival for the day;
- after diapering or using the toilet (use of wet wipes is acceptable for infants);
- after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit);
- before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry);
- after playing in water that that is shared by two or more people;
- after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals; and

Adults also wash their hands

- before and after feeding a child;
- before and after administering medication;
- after assisting a child with toileting; and
- after handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include

- using liquid soap and running water;
- rubbing hands vigorously for at least 10 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water).

Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute, for hand washing in any situation listed above.

- Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
- Staff do not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal material.

In situations where sinks used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

First Aid Kit

A first aid kit is located in the preschool classroom next to the door. It is inaccessible to children, but readily available for adult use. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Healthy Child Care Iowa. Following each use of the First Aid kit, the contents will be inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The First Aid kit will be inspected monthly. The first aid kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

Fire Safety

A fire extinguisher is installed in the preschool classroom with a tag indicating its annual service date. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. Fire drills are conducted monthly and recorded on a log.

Medical Emergencies and Notification of Accidents or Incidents

The Storm Lake Saint Mary's Preschool School District has in place an Emergency Operations Plan that describes information and procedures for situations that may occur. Content includes but is not limited to:

- Emergency phone numbers
- Fire procedures
- Utility Failures (electric power failure, water line break, gas line break)
- Severe weather
- Bomb threats
- Physical Threats/Armed Intruder
- Evacuations
- Crisis Intervention Plan, Crisis Intervention Steps, and Media Procedures
- Accidental Injury or Illness procedures for life threatening and non-life threatening situations
- School crisis team members and a checklist to use
- List of CPR/First Aid experienced persons in each building

This Emergency Operations Plan is available to each teacher/classroom and it is reviewed by each staff

member at the beginning of each school year, during professional development, and when changes are made to it.

In the event that your child receives a minor, non-life threatening injury during their time at preschool, our teacher will assess the situation and apply first aid as needed. Minor cuts and scrapes will be treated with soap and water and bumps will be treated by applying ice to the injured area. Any incident or injuries will be documented on an incident report and a copy will be given to the parent within 24 hours of the incident.

All staff will have immediate access to a device that allows them to summon help in an emergency. The telephone numbers of the Fire Department, Police Department, Hospital, and Poison Control will be posted by each phone with an outside line. Emergency contact information for each child and staff member will be kept readily available. The list of emergency telephone numbers, and copies of emergency contact information and authorization for emergency transport will be taken along anytime children leave the facility in the care of facility staff.

Please update emergency phone numbers with the school office immediately upon change.

Inclement Weather

In the event that the Storm Lake Catholic School must be closed due to bad weather, school patrons will be notified by the school's text notification system, radio (Storm Lake Radio KAYL 101.7 FM and KKIA 92.9 FM), television (KTIV Channel 4), and St. Mary's School social media.

Protection From Hazards and Environmental Health

Program staff protects children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns, or scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping.

The preschool classroom building has been tested for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass, and other hazards that could impact children's health with documentation on file. Custodial staff maintain the building's heating, cooling, and ventilation systems in compliance with national standards for facility use by children.

The program maintains facilities so they are free from harmful animals, insect pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children. The program uses the techniques known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) so that the least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation.

For day-to-day safety, before children arrive at school, the preschool teacher will complete the following daily safety checklist indoor and outdoor (Administration also does occasional safety reviews related to school environment, and at times, a representative from an outside agency comes to do a safety check as well):

- All safety plugs and electric outlets covered, heat/AC, water temperature, and toilets, etc. in working order.
- All cleaning supplies/poisons out of children reach and stored properly.
- Any items at risk for strangulation are eliminated or moved out of reach (window blind cords, electrical cords, unsafe toys, etc).
- Classroom and materials checked for cleanliness/broken parts, etc. including playground.
- Supplies checked - first aid kit, latex gloves, soap, paper towels, etc.
- Daily monitoring of environment - spills, sand, etc. Other serious problems reported to head custodian.
- Upon arrival, each child is observed by the teacher for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate in the daily activities.

No child will be left unsupervised while attending preschool. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as teachers check every two to three minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently, who are in the library area, etc.). The appendix includes a table that shows proper student to staff ratio being used.

Strangulation Prevention

Before children arrive at school, the preschool teacher will complete a following daily safety checklist indoor and outdoor that ensures no strings or cords are accessible to students that are long enough to encircle a child's neck. Window blinds and draperies will not have looped cords that hang at reach for children. Tension or tie-down devices will be installed as appropriate to hold cords tight. Dramatic play items with handles or straps will be removed or shortened, and ties, scarves, necklaces, boas, and similar items for dramatic play will be available but used with proper supervision. Administration also does frequent safety reviews related to the school environment, and once a year, a representative from an outside agency (DHS inspector and/or child care nursing consultant) comes to do a safety check as well.

As an added precaution, parents are asked to remove hood and neck strings from all children's clothing, and any lanyards used by older children and staff should be a break-away type.

Tobacco-Free and Nicotine-Free

In compliance with the Iowa Smokefree Air Act of 2008, Storm Lake Saint Mary's Preschool School building and grounds are smoke free. A "No Smoking" sign meeting the law's requirements is posted at the entrance to the preschool classroom building to inform people that they are entering a non-smoking place. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds, in school vehicles, or within sight of any children. All school staff are also prohibited from wearing clothing that smells of smoke when working.

Besides smoking, St. Mary's School facility, grounds, and vehicles, are also off limits for tobacco use, including tobacco-like products and the use of nicotine products that are not FDA (Food and Drug Administration) approved for tobacco cessation. Examples include but are not limited to cigarettes, electronic smoking devices, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff, pipes, snus, etc. This requirement extends to students, employees, and visitors. This policy applies at all times, including school sponsored and non-school sponsored events. Persons failing to abide by this policy are required to extinguish their smoking material, dispose of the tobacco/nicotine product, or leave the school district premises immediately. It is the responsibility of administration to enforce this policy.

Child Protection Policies

The health and well being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility. An applicant or volunteer for temporary or permanent employment with the preschool program involves direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children must execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families. In addition no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

The program has written school board policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, or both by families, staff, volunteers, or others to the appropriate local agencies. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. All teaching staff complete "Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse" at least every three years and within six months of employment.

The school district does not tolerate employees physically, or sexually abusing or harassing students. Students who are physically or sexually abused or harassed by an employee should notify their parents, legal guardians, teacher, principal, or another employee. The Iowa Department of Education has established a two-step procedure for investigating allegations of physical or sexual abuse of students by employees. That procedure requires the school district to designate an independent investigator to look into the allegations. The school district has designated Ryan Berg at 712-732-4166 as the Level I

investigator. Storm Lake Police at 712-732- 8010 is the Level II alternate.

Missing Child

If a child is ever noticed as missing, though they were otherwise marked as present during morning attendance, the following measures will be taken to try to locate the child, prior to reporting the child as missing:

- Office staff and administration will be notified immediately by the classroom teacher/staff member who identified the disappearance.
- Administration and office staff (or at least one other staff member) will speak to the classroom teacher/staff member for details as to the last known whereabouts of the child, and will conduct a search on school premises/immediate vicinity for the child. The safety and well being of all other children being supervised will be maintained.
- Parents of the child will be contacted and informed about the situation to ensure the child has not been picked up or otherwise in the care of a family member (that was perhaps not properly reported).
- If the child is found during these inquiries, administration will do a further follow-up investigation to determine what risk factors (if any) were at play or how the situation could have been prevented. Policy and expectations may be adjusted if appropriate. Parents and teachers will also be involved in this review, as applicable. An incident report will be completed, documenting the event.
- In the unlikely event that the child is not found during these initial inquiries, the police will be called, and school staff will provide as much information to them as possible regarding the child and situation. The police will then take over the investigation.

Substance Abuse

Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of the Storm Lake Saint Mary's School. At no time will children be released to a person under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Volunteers

Parents, friends, grandparents, and other adults are encouraged to take an active part in the educational process of the children. Please contact the teacher, the elementary principal, or our office secretary if you would like to be a school volunteer. In addition no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children. If a volunteer works more than 40 hours per month with children, he/she will also need to provide a current health assessment, not more than one year old. For safety's sake, if a volunteer will be working with children, he/she will be expected to execute and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or families through Virtus Safe Environment training.

Bullying & Harassment Policy

St. Mary's Catholic PK-12 School strives to maintain a learning and working environment that is free from bullying and harassment of any kind. No employee, volunteer or student of the school shall engage in or be subjected to harassment or bullying on the basis of age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference or belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status. This includes conduct of a verbal or physical nature that is designed to embarrass, distress, agitate, disturb, or trouble persons.

Bullying or Harassment may include but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal, physical, or written harassment or abuse.
- Repeated remarks of a demeaning nature.
- Implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, etc.
- Demeaning jokes, stories, and activities at student/employee.
- Any of the above via electronic means.

- Places the student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or property.
- Has a substantially detrimental effect on the student's physical or mental health.
- Interferes with the student's academic performance.
- Interferes with the student's ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with employee's or student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile working or learning environment.

It shall be a violation of this policy and state law for any employee, volunteer or student to bully or harass any employee, volunteer or student on school property, at any school function, or at any school-sponsored activity regardless of its location. School employees, volunteers and students shall not engage in reprisal, retaliation or false accusation against a victim, witness, or an individual who has reliable information about such an act of bullying or harassment.

Violations of this policy or procedure by students will be cause for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion or dismissal from school. Bullying, harassment and abuse may also be a violation of criminal or other laws. The school has the authority to report students violating this rule to law enforcement officials.

Procedure for Reporting/Action Regarding Allegations of Bullying/Harassment

Staff and/or students who feel they have been harassed or who feel they have witnessed incidents of harassment are encouraged to contact the principal or any other staff member. Employees and students are advised that all reports will be kept as confidential as possible and that retaliation will not be tolerated.

1. Any student, parent of a student, or employee of St. Mary's School who feels they have been harassed or who feel they have witnessed incidents of harassment are encouraged to contact the principal or any other staff member. Any staff member to whom an incident of harassment has been reported is to contact the principal as soon as possible to inform the principal of the incident and identify the person making the claim.
2. The principal will have the person making the claim fill out the form reporting the harassment and instruct the person to recall and record as many details as possible including identifying any witnesses to the incident.
3. The principal will then interview any witnesses having him/her fill out a report form as completely as possible.
4. The principal will next interview the person claimed to have committed the harassment. If any of the criteria for misconduct under the respect policy is found as stated in the St. Mary's handbooks, there is cause for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion or dismissal.
5. Claims made against a principal/school administrator shall be reported to the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Sioux City immediately, (712-233-7589) to report the incident.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment may include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment means unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct is made as a condition of a person's employment or advancement of a student's participation in school programs or activities
- submission to or rejection of such conduct by an employee or student is used as the basis for decisions affecting the employee or student
- such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee's or student's performance or creating an intimidating or hostile working or learning environment

Sexual harassment may include but is not limited to the following:

- Verbal or written harassment or abuse
- Pressure for sexual activity
- Repeated remarks to a person with sexual or demeaning implications
- Unwelcome touching

- Suggesting or demanding sexual involvement accompanied by implied or explicit threats concerning one's grades, job, etc.

Consequences for students committing acts of bullying or harassment:

- **First offense:** Principal and/or counselor will notify the harasser of the complaint and will educate the harasser about appropriate behavior. Administration will determine the consequences and notify the harasser. Parents of both the target and the offender will be notified of the incident and the consequences assigned. The consequences will be based upon the severity of the harassment and may include one of the following:
 - A written or verbal apology to the victim and any others affected by the incident
 - Regular check-in with the counseling staff to learn skills that may help prevent future issues
 - Writing a reflection paper related to their behavior and how it impacted others involved
 - Internal community service
 - Detention
 - Referral to outside professional counseling
 - Another consequence deemed appropriate by administration
- **Second offense:** Principal and/or counselor will notify the harasser of the complaint and will educate the harasser about appropriate behavior. Parents will be contacted and a meeting with parents and child will take place. Administration will determine consequences and notify the harasser. A minimum 2-day suspension (either in-school or out-of-school) as determined by administration. Parents of both the target and the offender will be notified of the incident and the consequences assigned. Outside professional counseling may be required. The cost of such therapy will be the responsibility of the harasser and/or parents of the harasser. Any recommendations resulting from the counseling will be communicated to the principal and followed through by the parents/student. Any consequences outlined above in the First Offense may also be required.
- **Third offense:** Principal and/or counselor will notify the harasser of the complaint and will educate the harasser about appropriate behavior. Parents will be contacted and a meeting with parents and child will take place. A minimum 5-day suspension (either in-school or out-of-school) as determined by administration. Parents of both the target and the offender will be notified of the incident and the consequences assigned. Outside professional counseling may be required. The cost of such therapy will be the responsibility of the harasser and/or parents of the harasser. Any recommendations resulting from the counseling will be communicated to the principal and followed through by the parents/student. The student may be required to sign a behavior contract in order to remain enrolled in school. Any consequences outlined above in the First Offense may also be required.
- **Fourth offense:** Principal and/or counselor will notify the harasser of the complaint and will educate the harasser about appropriate behavior. Parents will be contacted and a meeting with parents and child will take place. According to Diocesan Policy, the student will be expelled. Parents of both the target and the offender will be notified of the incident and the consequences assigned. Outside counseling would be required and the St. Mary's Disciplinary Committee would need to meet and consider whether or not to allow future re-enrollment.

Consequences for school employees committing acts of harassment:

- **First offense:** Minimum 2-day suspension without pay and mandatory outside professional counseling, the cost of which will be absorbed by the school employee. Any recommendations will be communicated to the principal and followed through by the employee.
- **Second offense:** Termination of contract

SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARASSMENT OF STUDENTS BY EMPLOYEES

The school does not tolerate employees physically or sexually abusing or harassing students. Students who are physically or sexually abused or harassed by an employee should notify their parents, teacher, principal or another employee. The Iowa Department of Education has established a two-step procedure for investigating allegations of physical or sexual abuse of students by employees. That procedure requires the school to designate an independent investigator to look into the allegations. The school has designated **Ryan Berg at 712-732-4166 as its Level I investigator.**

Physical abuse is a non-accidental physical injury that leaves a mark at least 24 hours after the incident. While employees cannot use physical force to discipline a student, there are times when the use of physical force is appropriate. The times when physical force is appropriate include, but are not limited to, times when it is necessary to stop a disturbance, to obtain a weapon or other dangerous object, for purposes of self-defense or to protect the safety of others, to remove a disruptive student, to protect others from harm, for the protection of property, or to protect a student from self-infliction of harm.

Sexual abuse includes, but is not limited to, sexual acts involving a student and intentional sexual behavior as well as sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to such conduct is made either implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of the student's education or benefits; submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for academic decisions affecting that student; or the conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a student's academic performance by creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive educational environment.

INVESTIGATORS FOR ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE OF STUDENTS BY SCHOOL EMPLOYEES - IOWA CODE 280.17

LEVEL ONE INVESTIGATOR RYAN BERG	732-4166
LEVEL ONE ALTERNATE	732-4166
LEVEL TWO ALTERNATE STORM LAKE POLICE	732-8010

VIII. Staff

General Information

The Storm Lake Saint Mary's Preschool School district has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluation. Policies detail job descriptions for each position, including reporting relationships; salary scales with increments based on professional qualification, length of employment, and performance evaluation; benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievance procedures. The policies are provided to each employee upon hiring.

Hiring procedures include completion of the following checks: criminal-record check, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials, verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references, and a current health assessment.

Health Assessment

The preschool program maintains current health information from documented health assessments for all paid preschool staff and for all volunteers who work more than 40 hours per month and have contact with children. A current health assessment is received by the program before an employee starts work or before a volunteer has contact with children. The health assessment is updated every two years. Documented health assessments include:

- Capacities and limitations that may affect job performance
- Documentation by a licensed health professional of TB skin testing using the Mantoux method and showing the employee to be free from active TB disease. For those who have a positive TB skin test and who develop a persistent cough or unexpected fever, immediate assessment by a licensed physician is required. For those who have increased risk of TB according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), documentation is required annually by a licensed health professional showing that the employee is free from active TB disease.

Confidential personnel files, including applications with record of experience, transcripts of education, health-assessment records, documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation, are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the school office.

First Aid/CPR Certification

At minimum, each classroom will have at least one teacher/staff member who has a certificate of

satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid and CPR training including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for children.

Orientation

Employees must know their role and duties. New preschool teaching staff will be required to participate in an initial orientation program that introduces them to fundamental aspects of the program operation including:

- Program philosophy, mission, and goals;
- Expectations for ethical conduct;
- Individual needs of children they will be teaching or caring for;
- Accepted guidance and classroom management techniques;
- Daily activities and routines of the program;
- Program curriculum;
- Child abuse and reporting procedures;
- Program policies and procedures;
- Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Criteria;
- Regulatory requirements.

Follow-up training expands on the initial orientations. See Staff Orientation Checklist.

The employee's immediate supervisor or school administrator should provide the new employee with a review of the employee's responsibilities and duties, payroll procedures, employee benefit programs and accompanying forms to the employee. Regular employees ineligible for the school district's group health plan will be given information regarding where they can obtain health care or health care insurance.

Staffing patterns and schedule

The preschool program is in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our program follows requirements for staffing for Iowa's Quality Preschool Program Standards of maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 at all times. The program administrator will maintain lists of current substitutes for both the preschool teacher and the preschool teaching assistant in case of absence. If one of the teaching staff needs to temporarily leave the classroom, the person will call the elementary office to arrange for coverage in order to maintain the adult/child ratio.

Staff are provided space and time away from children during the day. Should staff work directly with children for more than four hours, staff are provided breaks of at least 15 minutes in each four-hour period. In addition, staff may request temporary relief when they are unable to perform their duties.

Staff development activities

Storm Lake Saint Mary's staff participates with Storm Lake Community Public School for preschool staff development when possible. Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional development opportunities. All teaching staff continuously strengthens their leadership skills and relationships with others and works to improve the conditions of children and families within their programs, the local community, and beyond. Teaching staff are encouraged to participate in informal and formal ways in local, state, or regional public-awareness activities. They may join an early childhood group or organization, attend meetings, or share information with others both at and outside the program.

Teaching staff will be informed of professional development activities provided by Child Care Resource and Referral, the local Empowerment areas, and the area education agency. Staff is expected to attend all staff trainings and meetings throughout the year. Trainings will focus on early childhood topics relevant to the program and community.

Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan

Saint Mary's Catholic School follows the Diocese of Sioux City Teacher Evaluation Handbook when evaluating staff. All staff is evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor or, in the case of the program administrator, by the superintendent. Staff also evaluate and improve their own performance based on ongoing reflections and feedback from supervisors, peers, and families. From this, they develop an annual individualized professional development plan with their supervisor and use it to inform their continuous professional development.

This Preschool Handbook is provided to parents each year, is available anytime upon request, and is also available at all times on our school's website <https://www.stmarys-storm.pvt.k12.ia.us/>

Translation services are available for parents who need the handbook translated for them. We provide a translator either from within the building or through outside community resources. The handbook is currently being translated into Spanish and will be made available to our families immediately upon completion.

This Preschool Handbook was updated and approved by St. Mary's School Board on November 15, 2021. Subsequent update/approval done by School Board on April 11, 2022 and February 20, 2023.

Appendix

QUALITY INFANT/TODDLER PROGRAM STANDARD

RE: PROGRAM STANDARD 10 -LEADERSHIP

TABLE 3 *Teacher'-Child Ratios Within Group Size*

AGE GROUP	GROUP SIZE									
	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
Infants (birth to 15 months) ²	1:3	1:4								
Toddler/Twos (12 to 36 months) ²										
12-28 months	1:3	1:4	1:4 ³	1:4						
21-36 months		1:4	1:5	1:6						
Preschool"										
2.5-year olds to 3-year-olds (30-48 months)				1:6	1:7	1:8	1:9			
4-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10		
5-year-olds						1:8	1:9	1:10		
Kindergarten								1:10	1:11	1:12

Notes:

- In a mixed-age preschool class of 2.5-year-olds to 5-year-olds, no more than four children between the ages of 2.5 years and 3 years may be enrolled. The ratios within group size for the predominant age group apply. If infants or toddlers are in a mixed-age group, the ratio for the youngest child applies.
- Ratios are to be lower when one or more children in the group need additional adult assistance to fully participate