



Saint Joseph School
132 High Street
Medford, MA 02155



**Preschool Handbook
2023-2024**

“Let Us Be Your Catholic School”

Introduction and Background

Welcome to Saint Joseph Preschool. The purpose of this handbook is to provide each parent with basic information about the school, policies and procedures, in the hopes that your experience here will be positive and rewarding for both you and your child.

The goal of the preschool is to provide a quality learning experience for three and four-year old children in a warm and nurturing environment. We strive to foster each child's physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual development.

The preschool, which is located on the bottom floor of Saint Joseph School, was established in September 1999 to complement the Kindergarten through Grade 8 program at Saint Joseph School.

History

Saint Joseph School was established in 1929 under the direction of Father Daniel Hogan, the fourth pastor of Saint Joseph Parish. It was staffed by the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Boston who continue to serve along with other religious communities. In 1999 part of the first floor of the convent was designated as the site of a pre-school facility. Saint Joseph Pre-School is now located in the upper school and accommodates our three and four-year old children. A qualified and dedicated faculty and staff educate children in an environment that supports, encourages and nurtures spiritual, intellectual, social and personal growth in the Catholic tradition. Saint Joseph School is fully accredited and continues to provide quality Catholic education to Saint Joseph Parish and many surrounding parishes and communities.

Mission Statement

Saint Joseph School is a nurturing Catholic school community that seeks to answer the call of Christ: To love God and neighbor. We support and teach our students to be respectful, creative, critical thinkers who strive for academic excellence and seek to serve, so that they can be confident and productive members of their community.

Philosophy

The faculty and staff believe in teaching to the heart, mind and soul of each child. We strive, strengthened by our faith in God, to provide each student with the highest quality education and create a passion for learning.

We at Saint Joseph School

- recognize that students bring unique learning styles that require different methods of instruction to develop their talents and achieve their goals.
- encourage family/school/community to provide a secure, nurturing environment thereby creating an atmosphere of life-long learners.
- believe that our identity as a faith community motivates us to instill knowledge while nurturing Christian attitudes and values thus preparing our students to become responsible members of the Church and society.

Policies and Procedures

Absence

Parents should notify the school office in the event of a child's absence; a message on the answering machine is fine. If a child becomes ill at school, a parent or designated adult will be contacted and asked to take the child home as soon as possible.

A child who has shown signs of illness **should not be sent to school**. S/he **should be fever-free for 24 hours** without a current dose of medication **before returning to school**. A child who has been prescribed an antibiotic should not return to school within 24 hours of beginning the prescription. When a child has been diagnosed with a potentially contagious illness, the school should be notified regarding the nature of the illness, as this information allows us to watch for symptoms in others and, if necessary, to forewarn other parents of symptoms.

Accidents

In the unlikely event of an accident in school, the school nurse will be contacted, and a parent will be notified directly or, if not available, the emergency number listed on your child's form will be called. Emergency protocol will be followed should a serious incident arise. Please be sure that your emergency information is updated with the school whenever it changes.

Admissions

In keeping with the Christian concept of education, Saint Joseph School poses no conditions for admission other than the child's ability to function as a student in the structure of this facility and abide by the rules governing social behavior. As a school under the auspices of the Archdiocese of Boston, Saint Joseph School admits students of any race, religion, national, or ethnic origin with all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to all students at the school. Saint Joseph School does not discriminate based on race, religion, nationality, or ethnic origin, in administration of educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and in the hiring of school personnel. The purpose of our existence is to impart the message of Jesus Christ according to the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Students of other religions are welcomed, but they will be required to take part in religious education. Saint Joseph School does not provide an option to our religious education.

Children do not need to be fully potty trained but must meet the age requirements as follows: PreK-1 children must turn three by **December 31** of the current school year; PreK-2 children must turn four by December 31 of the current school year.

Announcements/Communications

A calendar of events for the school year is provided in September, and it is also posted on the school website (www.sjsmedford.com). A weekly newsletter for each classroom will be distributed by email and/or placed in hardcopy form. The school information system will be utilized when appropriate as will email distribution. It is important to notify us with any changes in your telephone numbers, email addresses and emergency contacts.

Birthdays

A birthday is a big event in a young child's life, and we encourage the celebration of your child's birthday with his/her classmates. However, we ask that the celebration **not** include any food items due to food allergy concerns.

If your child has a summer birthday, his/her teacher will give you the opportunity to have it celebrated in class during the month of June.

If you are planning a private party for your child that includes some, but not all, of your child's classmates, we ask that you be sensitive to the feelings of those children who are not invited and handle the distribution of invitations away from school.

CORI Forms

CORI Forms are requested annually from **each parent volunteer** and all teachers. They give the authorization required for criminal background checks. Blank copies can be found on the school website under Parents/Forms. They must be completed and returned to the main office in person and accompanied by a valid driver's license or passport for verification. Parents must complete a CORI form if they intend to assist in any school activities during the school year.

Curriculum

The curriculum and daily routine at the Saint Joseph Preschool are designed to address the developmental levels of the children in our care. Our three and four-year-old students take part in the physical education program as well as the Spanish, art and music curriculum. Activities include indoor and outdoor play, storytelling and literacy, group learning and discussions, individual and small group hands-on activities, and artistic and expressive projects. The curriculum covers age-appropriate seasonal, thematic, topical, academic and religious content. Our curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Standards and the Common Core.

Dress and Belongings

School uniforms are required at Saint Joseph preschool. It will consist of our school's gym uniform, which is available from Collegiate House which is in Medford Square. Sneakers or rubber-soled shoes are strongly recommended.

An extra set of clothing, including socks and underwear, should be brought in on the first day of school, in the event of a bathroom accident or simple spills. They are kept in labeled plastic shoeboxes inside the children's bathroom. Please remember to replace items after each use, size changes or for seasonal changes.

Please put your child's name on the tags of the extra clothing items that are kept in school. Also, please label your child's outerwear and other removable belongings like hats, mittens, lunch boxes and sweaters.

Extended Hours

Early drop-off is available for an additional fee (\$5 per day) beginning at 7 am.

The Extended Day Program (EDP) is available for Pre-K through grade 8 students, as needed, at \$10 per hour, from dismissal until 6:00pm. Pre-K children are cared for in the cafeteria, and weather-permitting, the playground. Extended Day Program registration forms are available in the main office, if you think you may have a need for the EDP program during the school year. We **must** have a completed registration form on file for your child to stay in the Extended Day Program.

The first Wednesday of each month is reserved for afternoon faculty meetings. Preschool students are dismissed at 11:30am on these days. The Extended Day Program is available to cover the additional hours.

Food/Nutrition

All students need lunch, as well as a morning snack and beverage at school. If your child will be attending the Extended Day Program, please remember to provide another snack and/or beverage. A labeled bottle or cup that your child can drink from after recess time would also be helpful. Please include napkins that your child can use as a place mat and any straws or utensils that are needed for the food you send. Also remember that your child's food **cannot** be refrigerated or heated at school.

Guidance and Discipline

The rules and guidelines of our school are intended to ensure safety, fairness, and a positive learning environment for every child in our care. Similarly, our discipline will be fair and consistent, bearing in mind the individual needs and development of the child involved.

Health Forms and Medication

Emergency forms, completed by the child's parent or guardian, and a Health and Immunization Record, completed by the child's physician, are **required each year**.

The school nurse will dispense all medications (prescription and nonprescription) only when authorized in writing by both a parent and a licensed medical professional. The Medication Consent Form and Release of Liability must be completed in its entirety. All prescription medication must be in a child-proof container labeled by the pharmacy. Any medication, including lotions, must be in their original container and must be handed to a staff member and not left in the child's lunchbox, backpack, or pocket. Whenever possible, parents should schedule their child's medication to not be administered during the school day. This is usually easily accomplished for those attending regular school hours.

If your child requires an inhaler, nebulizer, or Epi-Pen, our school nurse will advise you about the procedure. **Please let us know prior to your child's first day of school of any allergies or medical conditions.**

Parking, Drop-Off and Pick-Up

An adult should accompany each child to school in the morning. The schoolyard door will open at 7:30am and close at 7:50am and be supervised by a staff member as families arrive. The door will then be locked, and those who arrive late should take their child to the front High Street door to enter. Please try to get your child to school on time so that your child will not miss classroom activities. **THERE IS NO PARKING ALLOWED AT THE MAIN DOOR OF THE SCHOOL IN THE MORNING OR AFTERNOON – IT IS DROP AND GO ONLY!!!**

At dismissal, children will be released to a parent/guardian by their teacher at the schoolyard door. Adults should not call to or signal for a child to leave the building until a teacher has asked the child to do so. Individuals who are there to pick up a child must be listed on the child's Emergency Release form and may be asked for identification. Whenever possible, please let us know about any out-of-the-ordinary pick-up circumstances (a new person, an early dismissal, or an unscheduled use of Extended Day Program) in writing and/or by calling the main office ahead of time.

A private parking area is available for students' pick-up and drop-off. Parents are asked to park in designated spaces and leave the parking area as soon as possible so that later arrivals will have access to parking spaces. The safety of children in the parking lot and in the area adjacent to Mystic Valley Parkway is of utmost concern. Please be sure to keep children close to you during drop-off and pick-up. The presence of a Catholic School in the area should be a source of edification and pride. Please be aware of the property rights of our neighbors, and **DO NOT park on their property, block**

driveways, fire hydrants or allow your children to trespass on private property.

Parent-Teacher Communications

As a parent, you are your child's first and primary teacher. A strong working relationship between parents and staff is particularly important. Parents are encouraged to inform teachers of any circumstances, no matter how small they seem, that may be affecting their child's behavior. Similarly, your child's teacher will let you know of any behaviors or circumstances that are of concern or seem out of the ordinary for your child. Progress reports will be given in January and June.

Ongoing communication is encouraged, but lengthy conversations should be scheduled for times that do not interfere with either classroom activity, drop off or pick up times. Email is also acceptable, although we usually cannot check email during the school day. Please feel free to call or email the Main Office to leave a message for the teacher.

Rest Time (Pre-K1 Only)

Children will participate in a short rest/quiet time at midday. Mats, which include a built-in pillow and covering, should be purchased at school. They will be sent home for washing on a regular basis. We ask that additional blankets, coverings or sleep aides NOT be sent in unless deemed necessary and approved by your child's teacher.

Toileting

PK1 children do not need to be fully potty trained. Pull-ups are permitted. Children will be permitted to use the bathroom as needed and encouraged to use the bathroom at additional designated times. They will always be supervised to and from the bathroom and assisted when needed. Should a child need immediate attention in the event of a bathroom accident, the staff will tend to him/her and, if necessary, a parent will be called.

Toys

Toys that encourage violent or inappropriate behavior are not permitted. We ask that children not bring their own toys or books to school unless requested or approved by their teacher ahead of time.

VIRTUS Program

The VIRTUS Program is mandated by the Archdiocese of Boston for any individual who volunteers or works with children in **any** capacity at Saint Joseph School/Parish. The program addresses sexual abuse issues and the safeguards that are in place for the protection of children.

Weather Closings/School Cancellations

Saint Joseph School will follow the decision made by the City of Medford regarding the cancellation of school. You can also watch/listen for Medford school closings on the TV or the internet. Saint Joseph School will only be listed separately if for some reason we are closed but the City of Medford is not.

Withdrawal

If a parent decides to withdraw a child for any reason, written notification is required, and all financial obligations must be fulfilled.

Contact Information

Saint Joseph School

Address: 132 High Street, Medford, MA 02155
Telephone: 781/396-3636 x0
FAX: 781/396-5478
Website: www.sjsmedford.com

Principal, Robert Chevrier

Email: rchevrier@sjsmedford.com

Secretary, Anne Campbell

Email: acampbell@sjsmedford.com

School Nurse, Michele D'Ampolo, RN

Email: mdampolo@sjsmedford.com

Telephone: 781/396-3636 x4

Saint Joseph Pre-School Faculty & Staff

Maria Von Euw, Pre-K1 Teacher

Email: mvoneuw@sjsmedford.com

Janice Boyer, Pre-K2B Teacher

Email: jboyer@sjsmedford.com

Martha Whitman, Pre-K2A Teacher

Email: mwhitman@sjsmedford.com

Parish

Pastor, Rev. Paul Sullivan

Email: stjosephparishmedfordma@msn.com

Address: 114 High Street, Medford, MA 02155 (Rectory)

Telephone: 781/396-0423

Finance/Operations Manager, Laura Powers

Email: lpowers.stjoseph.stfrancis@gmail.com

Address: 114 High Street, Medford, MA 02155 (Rectory)

Telephone: 781/396-0423 x104

Tuition Office, Pat Cappucci

Email: pcappucci@sjsmedford.com

Address: 114 High Street, Medford, MA 02155 (Rectory)

Telephone: 781/396-0423 x117

PARENTAL AGREEMENT

I/we have read and agree to abide by the policies contained in this handbook.

Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Student's Name _____ Grade _____

Please sign and return this form to the Main Office. Thank you.