

**St. Mary's Catholic School**  
**Little Tigers' Preschool Handbook**  
**2023-2024**



**Information, Guidelines, Policies**  
**and Procedures**

**Accredited by**

Diocese of Alexandria

AdvancEd/Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

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## Welcome

Welcome to the Little Tigers' Preschool Program at St. Mary's Catholic School. It is our goal to help prepare your children for a formal education by providing them with a loving, caring and safe environment in which to learn.

All children are unique and special. We recognize that children whose basic emotional, social, spiritual and physical needs are nurtured through the preschool years will be ready and eager to learn the academics in elementary school.

**The purpose of this handbook is to detail the program and policies of the Little Tigers' Preschool Program. Please read it carefully, sign the signature page, and return the signature page to your child's teacher.**

Thank you for entrusting your children's very special years to us. We are looking forward to a wonderful school year. Remember that you are your child's first and most important teacher.

## Spiritual Development

Our Catholic Faith is an essential part of our Preschool Program. We use a variety of resources in our daily religion lessons to help each child know God is love, and that He is the maker of all that is great and beautiful in the world. Jesus said "Let the little children come to me." The children begin the year with Chapel prayer time once a week. Beginning in October, the Pre K4 class will start attending All School Mass as well.

## Program Information

The Little Tigers' Preschool Program offers a three-year-old and a four-year-old program. **Both classes offer half and whole day options.**

Both programs offer developmentally appropriate curriculums. Curriculum is designed to develop readiness skills and provides developmentally appropriate activities directed toward that end. The Pre K4 class uses the OWL~Opening the World of Learning reading series from Pearson Scott Foresman and also follows thematic units. Pre K3 uses thematic units.

## Entrance Requirements

Children must be three by September 30th to enter the three-year-old program and four by September 30th to enter the four-year-old program.

**NO EXCEPTIONS:** All children **MUST** be toilet trained when school begins. Pull ups and diapers are not permitted.

**GOOD FAITH:** Children are accepted in good faith. Occasionally, it is necessary to remove a child from the program based on the child's behavior or individual needs.

## **School Hours**

**7:40 am - 2:45 pm**

**The first bell will ring at 7:40 am each morning. All students will be dismissed at 2:45.** School will be locked until 7:15 am. The school will not be responsible for any student dropped off before 7:15 am. Children need to know that someone will bring them to school on time and be waiting when school is over. Therefore, please be prompt in both bringing your child to school and picking up him/her. Our activities begin promptly each day and are disrupted by late arrivals.

## **Health and Safety**

**Chronic conditions and allergies must** be brought to the attention of your child's teacher and the school nurse. Please let the teacher know of any food allergies, especially peanut or nut allergies, so that we may let the other parents know not to send those items to school.

**Illness:** For the well-being of all children and the staff, your child should NOT be sent to school if any of the following conditions exist:

\*Fever and/or vomiting - In the case of fever or vomiting, your child **MUST be kept home for 24 hours AFTER his/her temperature returns to normal without fever-reducing medication and vomiting has ceased.**

**NOTE:** Sick children will be sent home. If your child arrives at school sick, he/she will not be permitted to stay. Also, if your child becomes sick during the day, you will be called and required to pick him/her up immediately. Children may return to school when they have been symptom free for 24 hours.

## **The Disbursement of Medication**

The Catholic Schools Office of the Diocese of Alexandria has directed that school personnel should not administer medication to any student. This policy also includes over-the-counter drugs such as pain relievers and aspirin. If a student's health necessitates taking a prescription drug during school hours, the parent or guardian must submit all required documentation required by law. All forms may be obtained by visiting the school nurse. The St. Mary's school nurse on staff is authorized to dispense medication to students during school hours only if the child has the proper documentation. If the child has been given permission to attend a field trip, and must be administered medication during the time of the trip, the parent must accompany the student on the trip to dispense medication.

## **Absences**

Please inform your child's teacher if your child will be absent. You may call the school office (318-352-8394) or email your child's teacher:

Kelly Savell: Pre K3: [ksavell@smstigers.org](mailto:ksavell@smstigers.org)

Angela Dawson: Pre K4 [adawson@smstigers.org](mailto:adawson@smstigers.org)

**Turn in doctor excuses on the day you return after an illness.**

**Outdoor Play:** Outdoor play is a regular part of our day. We go outside

every day, except on extremely cold/hot days or rainy days.

**Please dress your child appropriately for the weather.**

### **Arrival Procedures**

All students will be dropped off at the main entrance of the school, and will sit in their designated area in the gym. At 7:40, the bell will ring to begin morning prayer, Pledge, and announcements. Following these, students will be accompanied to their classrooms by their teachers to begin the school day.

### **Tardies**

Tardies have a negative impact on the child, the class, and the teacher. Preschoolers thrive on consistent routines. Please help your child have a positive start to his/her day by arriving on time.

### **Dismissal Procedures**

Preschool dismissal is at 2:45 pm. Your child must be picked up by 3:05 pm or they will be sent to Aftercare. Aftercare is a free service provided by St. Mary's to all PreK students.

### **Dress Code**

Uniforms are not required for the PreK3 or PreK4 classes. All students are required to wear velcro or slip on shoes. **Lace up shoes are not allowed. Velcro tennis shoes or slip-on shoes ONLY!** Students are expected to be well-groomed and neatly dressed.

**Items not allowed:** Overalls, onesie type clothing, **pajamas** (except for pajama day), lace up shoes, light up shoes, boots, belts.

- **Backpacks:** All preschool students are required to have a **full-sized backpack** with no wheels. Small sized backpacks are too small to fit towels, lunches, and folders.
- **Dresses:** Girls must wear shorts under their dresses.
- **Extra Clothes:** Children do have accidents; everything from potty accidents to getting wet from water in the tunnels on the playground, to spilling juice or milk on themselves at lunch or snack. For this reason, all children are required to have an extra set of clothes to be kept at school. If your child does not have an extra set of clothes and some type of accident occurs, you will be called to bring a set of clothes to your child. Everything you send to school should be labeled with your child's first and last name.

### **Birthdays**

Pre K3 & Pre K4 will celebrate birthdays at snack time. If you would like to send a special snack for your child's birthday, please make arrangements with your child's teacher at least one week before his/her birthday. Birthday party invitations may be sent home in the daily folder if there is an invitation for each child, otherwise they must be mailed.

## **Lunch**

All preschool children will eat in the lunchroom. If your child is unable to eat in the lunchroom due to an allergy, you must submit an excuse or diagnosis to the lunchroom in order to bring your own lunch. If your child brings lunch it must have an ice pack for cool items and a thermos for hot items. We are not able to heat lunches or keep lunches refrigerated. Also send any utensils that your child may need. Forks, spoons and bowls are not supplied. Do not send candy or carbonated drinks in your child's lunch.

## **Snacks**

Due to allergies, Pre K3 and Pre K4 parents will need to provide snacks daily for their own children. Parents are encouraged to send a week's worth of snacks at a time.

## **Rest Time**

All preschool children are required to have a rest time every day. Children need to lie quietly, but do not have to sleep. Pre K3 and Pre K4 will need to purchase a mat of their choosing. Please make sure the mat can be folded/rolled up for storage. Please keep in mind that space is limited to store mats. Mats will be sent home on Fridays to be cleaned.

## **Bathroom**

Preschool children are responsible for their own toilet needs. Children will be encouraged to do the best they can and reminded to wash their hands.

## **Room Parent**

There is one lead room parent for each preschool class. The room parent will work with the teachers and coordinate with the other parents to get all items needed for parties, special activities, and events.

## **Communication**

Your child's folder is the primary means of communication between the home and school. The folder is sent home each day. Notes from the school office, lunch bills, newsletters, and behavior reports will be included. Please sign and return the behavior form daily. Remove all items from the "Keep" side of the folder daily. Pre K3 & Pre K4 will send home a weekly email with school information. The front office will send out emails, parent alerts, and automated phone calls when needed.

## **Technology**

Preschool children do not receive a school issued account nor a device, but will have access to technology in the classrooms. Devices are monitored and restricted to educational apps and or websites. The school adheres to all FERPA and COPPA guidelines in protecting the privacy of all of the students.

**St. Mary's Catholic School**  
**Preschool Handbook Agreement**

I have read and agree to comply with all of the policies and procedures set forth in the Preschool Handbook. Sign and return to the homeroom teacher by the end of the second week of school.

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Print Student's Name

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Print Parent's Name

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Parent's Signature

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Date