

St. Elizabeth Preschool

Parent Handbook



917 Montrose Road
Rockville, MD 20852
Principal: Mrs. Mary Penny

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www.stelizabethschoolmd.org

WELCOME

Msgr. Parent, Mrs. Penny, The School Advisory Board, and the Faculty and Staff of St. Elizabeth School would like to welcome you to our school community. We hope that this will be a wonderful beginning for your child and an exciting and rewarding experience for you as a parent.

The handbook is designed to acquaint you with our school. It provides most of the information you will need to know throughout the school year. We urge you to read the handbook and keep it as a reference during the year.

Everyone here at St. Elizabeth School looks forward to working with you and your child in the year to come.

HISTORY

St. Elizabeth School was established in 1966. The school is sponsored by St. Elizabeth Parish. St. Elizabeth School is accredited by AdvancEd. We have over 500 children in our lower and middle grades (K-8).

St. Elizabeth School is winner of the National Elementary School Recognition Program for Excellence, awarded by the US Department of Education.

The school building includes state-of-the-art classrooms, a library, computer technology center, science lab, gymnasium, multi-purpose room and two outside playgrounds situated on five acres.

St. Elizabeth students embrace the Catholic faith through daily prayer and solid religious education.

MISSION

The mission of St. Elizabeth Catholic School is to provide the highest quality spiritual formation in an environment that is rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. Toward this end, the administration, faculty, staff, and parents endeavor to live and learn in a community of faith where each individual is recognized, respected, and encouraged to grow. We strive for academic excellence through the creation of a strong curriculum. St. Elizabeth Catholic School is committed to the creation of a faith community educated to achieve academic success and to reach out to all people in faith and compassion to bring the message of Jesus Christ.

We believe that:

- Children are our community's most valuable asset.
- Effective education develops the whole person — spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically.
- Every individual has inherent worth.
- Children learn at different rates and in different ways.
- Understanding and appreciation of diversity are critical to world peace and harmony.
- Life-long learning is essential for success in a changing society.
- Education is the shared responsibility of the school, the governing authority, student, family, government and community.
- A core of common values and ethical conduct are fundamental to sustaining our society.
- Self-esteem is directly related to success.
- Risk-taking and a willingness to change are necessary for continuous improvement.
- The transmission of faith and cultural values is a primary responsibility of education.
- All children have a right to safety, love and learning.
- Healthy organizations purposefully provide for self-renewal.

PHILOSOPHY

St. Elizabeth School endorses the call of the Catholic Bishops of the United States to express its strong educational ministry through the three objectives: personal spirituality, social justice, and a strong academic program in accordance with Catholic values. This commitment extends to building a Catholic community and to fostering Catholic service to the whole human family.

GOVERNANCE AND LICENSING

St. Elizabeth Preschool is under the authority of the Archbishop of Washington and is related to the Catholic school's office. St. Elizabeth Preschool is licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education.

ADMISSIONS POLICY

Admission to the program is open to all children who have reached the appropriate age. St. Elizabeth School does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, or national origin. We do give admission preference to siblings of St. Elizabeth School students and then to students who are members of St. Elizabeth parish or other parishes in the Archdiocese of Washington. Admission to all others is open on a space-permitting basis.

Registration and Acceptance

Registration is open in October and is done on a rolling admission basis. Please fill out the registration on Tads. Once your application file is complete, a decision letter will be mailed out. TADs online preschool application admission: <http://mytads.com/a/stelizabethschoolrockvillemd>

At the time of registration, a \$225.00 non-refundable application fee is due. Upon acceptance to the Preschool, a deposit is due. The deposit amount is the last month's payment for the school year.

Tuition

Tuition for the Preschool is set by the School Advisory Board. Tuition costs can be found on the school website. Tuition is billed monthly beginning in July.

Late Fee

A \$25.00 late fee is assessed to a family's tuition each month if the balance is not paid in full by the statement due date.

Returned Check Fee

A fee of \$40.00 will be assessed to a family's account balance if a check should be returned from the bank.

Student Withdrawal

If you wish to withdraw your child before being assessed the first month's tuition for the following school year, you must notify the school by March 15th.

CURRICULUM

St. Elizabeth Preschool's curriculum is designed to promote child development through hands-on learning while immersed in a spiritually rich environment. As early childhood educators, our staff believes that play is a natural part of learning that encourages integration of a child's experiences into language and actions.

Our curriculum is theme-based. Lessons are planned around holy days, seasons, real-life experiences, and community awareness. The goal of all lessons is to develop a greater understanding of God, create new skills, develop new ideas and promote learning that can be used beyond the classroom. The classroom environment is specifically designed to encourage play, exploration, and problem solving. These experiences will help build language, math, and social skills.

Children learn and receive knowledge at their own pace. Therefore, class plans are flexible and differentiated to allow for individual differences among children. We strive to have every child realize his or her potential and feel successful. We feel it is vital that children build positive images of themselves as well as strong relationships with God, peers, and adults.

GENERAL INFORMATION

School Hours

The Preschool follows the St. Elizabeth School Calendar. When the school has a day off, the preschool will also be off.

The morning classes begin at 8:10 AM and are dismissed at 11:15 AM. The afternoon classes begin at 11:50 PM and are dismissed at 2:50 PM.

Drop-off and Pick-Up

ALL Students must be walked to and from the parking lot to the Preschool entrance (main school doors) by an adult. At 8:10 am drop off and 2:50 pm pick up, parents are asked to park in the back parking lot. For 11:15 am pick up and 11:50 am drop off, parents are asked to park in the main parking lot, as the back parking lot will be occupied for school recess.

Punctual drop off and pick up of students is important to the students as well as being fair to our staff. **Pick-up time is promptly at 11:15 a.m. and 2:50 p.m. At five minutes after dismissal, parents will be charged a late fee of \$10.00 and an additional \$1.00 for every minute thereafter. Our teachers are on a very tight schedule, so your prompt arrival is much appreciated.** Habitual late pick-ups will require parents to have a conference with the principal.

Closings and Delays

St. Elizabeth Preschool follows Montgomery County Public Schools.

"Montgomery County Schools Closed" means St. Elizabeth Preschool is closed.

School may be closed early due to inclement weather or other serious weather-related or dangerous situations. "Montgomery County Schools Closing Two Hours Early" means St. Elizabeth Preschool will close at 1:00 PM for all day students. Morning only students will dismiss at regular time. There will be NO afternoon preschool.

Crisis, Emergency, Fire and Disaster Plans

The St. Elizabeth *School Crisis Plan* meets the Standards of the Archdiocese of Washington as well as the Guidelines set forth by the Montgomery County Police and Fire Departments. Regular fire and emergency drills are held throughout the year. Any person in the school during the drill must participate along with students and teachers.

Security

During school hours, parents, guardians, and visitors must report to the receptionist to sign-in and receive a visitor's badge. School doors remain locked after drop off. Please ring the buzzer for entrance into the school. Parents and guardians must have a pre-scheduled appointment with a teacher before entering the teacher's classroom.

Clothing

Part of the preschool program includes a trip outside every day, weather permitting. We ask that you dress your child appropriately for class and weather. Children will be required to wear the preschool uniform. The uniform can be purchased at Flynn and O'Hara in the Loehmann's Plaza in Rockville, MD, 20852, (phone: 301-838-8958). Flynn and O'Hara has a list of the uniform needs.

Children must wear slip-on or Velcro shoes or sneakers.

We also ask that every child have an extra change of clothing in a bag marked clearly with the child's name. Items that must be in the bag include socks, pants, shirt, and underwear. All items will be returned at the end of the school year. If for some reason your child must change into the extra clothing, please return a new set the following class day.

Please label all clothing for your child. All items that become "lost" are held in our lost and found near the gym. At the end of the year unclaimed items will be donated.

Potty Policy

St. Elizabeth School is staffed as a preschool facility under the Archdiocese of Washington and the state of Maryland. Toward this end, the following "Potty Policy" has been created.

Children entering preschool at St. Elizabeth School must be able to use the restrooms independently. Children should not be in pull-ups but should be wearing traditional underwear.

Soiled clothing will not be changed by a member of the staff at St. Elizabeth School.

If a child soils him/herself, the parent/guardian will be called and asked to come to school to change the child.

Three "accidents" will result in a child's "training break" for a period of no less than two (2) weeks. If, upon the child's return, he/she should have an additional "accident", the child will be asked to leave the program. The child will be invited to return, provided space is available, once the child is fully potty trained.

Communication From the School

Information is updated on the St. Elizabeth School website (www.stelizabethschoolmd.org) every Thursday. A reminder is sent out each time the web page is updated. Parents and guardians are expected to review each Thursday's information as well as information found on the preschool link. The website is the primary means of school - parent/guardian communication.

Emergency Information Forms

Emergency Information Forms must be completed and returned to the school nurse immediately. *Emergency Information Forms* completed in the past are discarded, so it is imperative that a new form is completed each year for every student. Information is kept strictly confidential. Parents and guardians are to update their *Emergency Information Forms* if changes are needed.

School Records

St. Elizabeth Preschool assumes that the child is in the custody of both parents unless otherwise notified.

St. Elizabeth Preschool abides by the Buckley Amendment with respect to the right of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, St. Elizabeth will provide the non-custodial parent with access to academic records and other school related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the order.

Child Protection/Safety (Archdiocese Of Washington)

All children have the right to be safe and protected from harm in any and all environments - home, school, religious institutions, neighborhoods, and communities. St. Elizabeth School, a Catholic school of the Archdiocese of Washington embraces this right to safety and is dedicated to promoting and ensuring the protection of all children. St. Elizabeth School will do all in its power to create a safe environment for children and young people to prevent their physical abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect and to bring the healing ministry of the community to bear wherever possible. It is the expectation of St. Elizabeth School that all persons and entities under its auspices comply with the provisions stated in the Child Protection Policy, *Protecting God's Children*, which can be found on the Archdiocesan website: www.adw.org. This child protection policy builds on a 1986 policy issued by the Archdiocese of Washington that was updated in 1993, in 1999, and in 2003. It is responsive to the concerns of St. Elizabeth School for children and to the provisions contained in the revised *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People and the Essential Norms for Diocesan/Eparchial Policies Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Abuse of Minors by Priests or Deacons* initially approved by the full body of the U.S. Catholic bishops at its November 2002 General Meeting, with revisions approved at its June 2005, General Meeting.

The pastor/parochial administrator or principal will ensure that all volunteers in the school have submitted the appropriate Volunteer Application Form and submitted a completed Criminal History Record Check, including fingerprints.

The Archdiocesan Office of Human Resources or the appropriate Agency's Human Resources Office will review all background check results, notify the pastor/parochial administrator or principal of any unsuitable applicants, and maintain a list of all persons in the school who have not been allowed to provide volunteer services due to a background investigation.

Volunteers must also attend the Archdiocesan's *Child Protection Training*, VIRTUS. Information on VIRTUS training can be located on the website of the Archdiocese of Washington at www.adw.org.

Prayer Life

Prayer is an integral part of our Catholic faith experience and is therefore a primary component of activity in our schools. Daily school-wide prayer begins the school day. All classes begin with a prayer.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Health Program Records

Each student has a *Confidential Health File* located in the nurse's office. This file contains the child's Immunization Record and Health Inventory. These forms are required for each child by the Archdiocese of Washington and the State of Maryland Department of Health.

Confidential orders written by the child's physician for the dispensing of medications are also kept in the nurse's office. This form must be signed by a physician and be kept on file in order for him or her to be able to receive medication at school.

Health Room Sick Child Policy

If your child is sick, it is **most appropriate** to keep him/her home from school. A child who is sick will not be able to perform well in school and is likely to spread the illness to other children and staff. Please make arrangements for childcare ahead of time so you will not be caught without a place for your child to stay if she or he is ill.

Our school policy states that you should not send your child to school if she/he has any of the following symptoms:

1. Fever in the past 24 hours
2. Vomiting in the past 24 hours
3. Diarrhea in the past 24 hours
4. Chills
5. Sore throat
6. Strep Throat (must have been taking an antibiotic for at least 24 hours before returning to school)
7. Bad cold, with a very runny nose or bad cough, especially if it has kept the child awake at night.
8. Head lice - unless the child has been treated according to the nurse's or doctor's instruction. Children must be nit-free and cleared by the school nurse to resume classes.

If your child becomes ill at school and the school nurse feels the child is too sick to benefit from school or is contagious to other children, the parent or guardian will be called to come and take the child home from school. Please be sure that arrangements can be made to transport your child home from school and that child care is available in cases of illness.

If your daytime or emergency phone numbers change during the year, please notify your child's teacher and the school nurse immediately.

Medication

No medication, including prescription and over-the-counter medications, such as Tylenol, Advil, Motrin, Tums, etc., will be administered by the School Nurse without the completion of the Authorization to *Administer Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medication* form by the parent/guardian and physician. The form must be signed by a physician. No fax or telephone requests are acceptable.

All medication must be delivered to the school health room personnel by the parent or guardian, or, under special circumstances, an adult designated by the parent or guardian. St. Elizabeth School personnel will not administer medication brought to school by a child.

All prescription medications must be provided in the original container with the original pharmacist label attached. All over-the-counter medication must be provided in the original, sealed container. No other medications will be administered. A physician's samples must be appropriately labeled by the physician.

SNACKS AND BIRTHDAY PARTIES

Snacks

Parents are asked to provide a snack for their child each day. One snack for morning or afternoon only students and two snacks for full day students. We encourage you to send a snack that is nutritious and requires no preparation by the staff.

Birthday Parties

If parents or guardians would like to arrange for their child to celebrate a birthday with his/her classmates, the following is necessary:

- Obtain permission from the teacher at least one week in advance.
- Arrange a mutually convenient time.
- Bring cupcakes and/or juice to the school on the morning of the party. NO other food, party favors, or party bags are permitted. This policy ensures that each child will be given the opportunity to celebrate his/her birthday in the same manner as every other child.
- **Invitations to private parties are not allowed to be distributed unless every child in the homeroom is invited.**

PARENT PARTICIPATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parent Participation

There are two general meetings, Sponsorship Night, for new parents in May and Preschool Orientation for all parents in September. Preschool parent-teacher conferences take place in November.

Parents are asked to help with occasional special projects when more adults are needed. Parents with special skills, talents, or hobbies, are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the teacher.

Volunteer Requirements

Any parent who volunteers **MUST** fulfill the Archdiocese requirements including fingerprints, Virtus training, and Archdiocese questionnaire. Information on this requirement can be found at www.adw.org.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Just as parents and guardians look to the school to provide the facilities and the trained personnel which are essential to their child's proper development, so the school looks to parents and guardians to assume active responsibilities which cannot be delegated to others.

No school can be wholly effective in teaching virtues and religion, honesty, respect for authority, consideration for the rights and property of others, and standards of personal morality and integrity unless these principles have been established, upheld, and valued in the home.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Classroom Problems

On occasion, there may be a classroom problem you would like to discuss. The following is the procedure we would like you to follow:

- 1) Discuss your particular problem with the teacher
- 2) If you feel there is still a problem, you may discuss your problem with the principal and a teacher-parent-principal meeting can be arranged.

Behavioral Concerns

- 1) If the teacher determines that a child's behavior is inappropriate, the teacher will first attempt to resolve the situation with the child by actions including but not limited to, talking to the child about what is appropriate and acceptable behavior in the class, and/or giving timeouts.
- 2) If the behavior continues, the teacher will discuss the situation with one or both parents.
- 3) If the behavior does not improve and one or both parents do not agree with the teacher, the teacher will speak with the principal and a conference will be arranged with one or both parents, the teacher, and the principal.
- 4) If the situation does not improve by the established deadline, the principal may expel the student.
- 5) If, in the principal's discretion, the safety and/or health of others in the school will be impaired by the child's continued attendance, the principal may require the child's immediate withdrawal.

HOME SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Home and School Association

The St. Elizabeth School Home and School Association provides an effective channel of communication between parents and guardians and teachers for the benefit of the students and the whole parish and school community.

The main purposes of the Home and School Association are:

- to create a mutual support and understanding between the home and school, and thus help to bring about a total learning environment for the students
- to provide a means for keeping parents and guardians informed of school activities, programs, etc.
- to assist in meeting its Association's financial obligations
- to provide parent and guardian educational programs

SCHOOL EVENTS

Picnic (Opening of School)

The **Opening of School Picnic**, sponsored by the Home and School Association is held each September on the St. Elizabeth School grounds. This is an event held to bring the school community together at the very beginning of the year while offering an informal venue for meeting the teachers and members of the staff.

Fundraising

Throughout the year, there are various fundraising events. Preschool families are encouraged to participate but are not required.

Preschool Contact Information:

Preschool 3 Teacher: Mrs. Nicole Chapin (nchapin@stelizabethschoolmd.org)

Preschool 3 Assistant: Mrs. Suzanne Fieni (sfieni@stelizabethschoolmd.org)

Preschool 4 Teacher: Mrs. Kristie Giles (kgiles@stelizabethschoolmd.org)

Preschool 4 Assistant: Ms. Shelley Ott (sott@stelizabethschoolmd.org)

School Nurse: (nurse@stelizabethschoolmd.org)

Principal: Mrs. Mary Penny (mpenny@stelizabethschoolmd.org) (ext 302)

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Kristen Cocozzella (kcocozzella@stelizabethschoolmd.org) (ext 303)

Assistant to the Principal: Mrs. Susan Woo (swoo@stelizabethschoolmd.org) (ext. 302)

Direct of Admissions: Mrs. Heather Kerr (sleffew@stelizabethschoolmd.org) (ext. 308)

Director of Finance: Mrs. Grace Konieczny (gkonieczny@stelizabethchurch.org) (ext. 306)