

**ST. STEPHEN**  

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**CATHOLIC SCHOOL**  
**CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

**ST. STEPHEN MONTESSORI  
PRESCHOOL AND YOUNG FIVES  
FAMILY HANDBOOK  
2021-2022**

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# I. Location and Contact Information

## A. Location

18800 Huron River Drive (at the intersection of Huron River Drive and Sibley Road)

New Boston, Michigan 48164

## B. School Contact Information

School Office – (734) 753-4175; Mrs. Deb Kirk – School Secretary

School Office Email – [schooloffice@ststephennb.education](mailto:schooloffice@ststephennb.education)

Preschool Email – [ltyrybon@ststephennb.education](mailto:ltyrybon@ststephennb.education)

## C. Administration

Mr. Joe Monte – Principal

Mrs. Linda Tyrybon – Preschool Director

# II. School Overview

## A. School Mission and Philosophy

St. Stephen School seeks to educate the whole child in mind, body, and spirit as we provide a faith-based community that assists children in developing a Christian conscience and attitude along with an understanding of the Catholic faith, centered in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Since 1951, St. Stephen School has served as a Catholic education institution for children. The St. Stephen Montessori program provides a warm, vibrant, Christ-centered, educational home designed to foster a love of God, develop a love of learning, and help all children reach their fullest potential at their own unique pace. Our philosophy is inspired by the philosophy and methods of Dr. Maria Montessori, who was the first female physician in Italy and the foundress of the first Montessori school in Rome in 1907.

Dr. Montessori believed that the goal of the educational process was to cultivate a child's natural desire to learn. It is our intention to create an educational atmosphere that acknowledges and fosters that human tendency in every child. Within this ordered, challenging, nurturing environment, the child is encouraged to follow their interests and travel along the path of self-construction: intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. The role of our teaching staff, then, is to observe the unfolding of this natural process of development and to encourage, challenge, and advocate for each child so that they may reach their fullest potential. It is our intention to foster not only a high standard of academic excellence, but also to provide an environment where strong relationships are cultivated, both interpersonal and between the child and God – where every individual recognizes they are a child of God of infinite worth.

## **B. The Montessori Method – “Help me to do it *myself*.”**

The Montessori-certified Lead Teacher carefully observes each child’s activity and interest and presents them with new activities and materials for learning. Dr. Montessori observed that children are motivated through the work itself and that children, like adults, learn best by doing rather than by being filled with facts. The multi-year classroom setting allows the teacher time to understand each child’s unique approach to learning and to build a classroom community where children understand the importance of their role in the group. The children feel safe, useful, understood, and respected. This allows them (frees them!) to learn how to observe, think, concentrate, evaluate, and gain a love for the process of learning. The Montessori Method is not simply adjusting traditional models of education, it is a completely different way of learning, teaching, and observing designed to joyfully prepare children for all that God has prepared for them.

## **III. Admissions and Enrollment**

### **A. Eligibility and Non-Discrimination Policy**

Children who are 3 years old, 4 years old, or 5 years old (Young Fives students) by September 1, 2021 are eligible for enrollment. A child who is 5 by September 1 may attend for another year. This is for children who would benefit from a gift of time to develop cognitively, socially, and/or emotionally before moving on to Kindergarten. They are our “seniors” – it is wonderful to see their confidence grow when they are in this role!

Toilet training is required of children before enrolling. St. Stephen Montessori is invested in creating respectful relationships among teachers, administrative staff, families, and children, and does not discriminate in the administration of its educational or admissions policies on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, gender, or disability.

### **B. Enrollment Process**

We encourage the families of prospective students to set up an appointment to observe the school before applying for admission. If there are openings, receipt of the completed application forms and the registration fee enrolls the child in the school. If there is a waiting list, receipt of the completed forms places the child’s name on the list. When there is an opening, you will be notified.

Children are generally accepted into the school in the order in which they apply, however, siblings of current students will be considered first.

We request that each child visit the classroom with a family member before beginning school. This allows them to meet the teacher and become acquainted with the environment.

### **C. Required Minimum Student Schedule**

The Preschool/Young Fives multi-age groups (3-6 years) meet for 3 ¼ hours in the morning (8:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.) or afternoon (12:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday. All children attend five days each week, remaining with the same teachers and classmates.

Children at this age seek consistency and routine and do best when they can predict what is going to happen next. It can be difficult for a child to figure out their routine when they only attend school two or three days a week, and we sincerely want to set them up for success, now and when they begin Kindergarten. In our

experience, the vast majority of students thrive with a five-day schedule... we completely understand that it might be a little harder for some of the parents!

We agree with Association Montessori International (AMI), American Montessori Society (AMS), and Michigan Montessori Society (MMS) that students need the consistency of attending school every day to benefit optimally from their experience in a Montessori program – it lets the children feel more comfortable and connected with the daily routine and classroom environment.

To be able to socialize with other children and learn how to be a kind friend, learn to accept limits at school, and learn to share emotions in a socially acceptable way are just as important, if not more important, than the cognitive skills the students will also be practicing five consecutive days a week. Your child will be well-prepared for the rigor of a five day, full-day Kindergarten class... and they will be able to navigate social exchanges with confidence!

If your family wants to ease your child into the five-day schedule, please contact us about arranging an individualized plan for your family.

## D. Student Forms

In order to comply with Michigan Child Care Licensing, the following forms **must be received on or before the first day of attendance**:

### 1. Child Information Record:

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/lara\\_BCAL\\_3731\\_Child\\_Information\\_Record\\_062315\\_492679\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/lara_BCAL_3731_Child_Information_Record_062315_492679_7.pdf)

Please note that unless otherwise indicated, all requested information must be provided. **If the information is not known or does not apply, “unknown” or “none” is the required response.** A blank field, a line through a field, or “N/A” are not acceptable responses.

### 2. Health Appraisal:

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/BCAL-3305\\_09\\_10\\_336837\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/dhs/BCAL-3305_09_10_336837_7.pdf)

This form is required by the Michigan Department of Human Services and must be filled out by your child’s doctor annually. Required immunizations are: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis (DTaP), Pneumococcal Conjugate (PCV13), HIB, Polio, Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR), Hepatitis B, and Varicella (Chicken Pox).

To obtain an immunization waiver for your child, please contact the Wayne County Department of Health, Veterans & Community Wellness at (734) 727-7125 to schedule an appointment. Your waiver will accompany the physician-completed Health Appraisal for your child.

### 3. Family Handbook/Written Information Packet Documentation:

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/BCAL-4340\\_12\\_15\\_fillable\\_508677\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/BCAL-4340_12_15_fillable_508677_7.pdf)

## **E. Tuition**

Tuition and fees are shown on an accompanying page. Tuition may be paid in a single payment, or according to the printed schedule through FACTS Tuition Management Services. If payments are in arrears, the child may be denied admission to the classroom until the deficiency is corrected. Children are enrolled for the full school year (or portion remaining), and the family is responsible for the full tuition balance from the date of acceptance.

## **F. Student Success**

The Montessori environment is unique. It cultivates an inner discipline that is the foundation for further learning and social development. Occasionally the learning style of an individual child is not compatible with the climate of the Montessori classroom. If we become concerned about the suitability of the Montessori class for your child, we will contact you to set up a conference; we want every child to experience the satisfaction and joy of a successful education.

Generally, children adapt to the Montessori classroom within 60 days. If your child is not functioning successfully in the classroom, we will make educational recommendations to your family. If we believe that Montessori will not meet your child's needs, we will recommend alternate environments to you and remove them from the class.

## **G. Withdrawal**

- If it should become necessary for you to withdraw your child from school, we require written notice thirty days prior to the withdrawal date.
- Children who are not toilet trained will be withdrawn from the school.
- Children who are excessively tardy (arriving and/or departing) will be withdrawn from the school.

St. Stephen Montessori is dedicated to maintaining a safe, harmonious classroom environment for the optimum development of all our students. Families of children with excessively disruptive behavior that require more support than staff can provide will be asked to seek professional assistance. While it is always the goal of the school to work with families, there are certain situations that will require immediate withdrawal of the student in an effort to keep our community safe.

### **Enrollment Termination Process**

- The Director will consult with the Principal at the earliest opportunity to identify an at-risk student.
- The Principal will observe the student in the classroom and/or on the playground, and the staff will document specific incidents of behavior that are worrisome or problematic.
- If needs or problems are significant, the Director and Principal will meet with the family. Using observations about patterns of behavior, a plan will be created to address the needs of the child. The need for specific professional consultation may be identified. If the need for professional support is requested, the family is expected to respond in a timely manner to acquire those services.
- A written statement of goals and strategies for achieving goals will be created with the family, St. Stephen School, and consulting professionals. A date for a progress review will be set.
- If support from the family is not forthcoming and/or the problems are of such severity that the climate of the classroom and safety of the other children is in jeopardy, the family will be given a date by which

the student will be removed from the classroom and alternate care for their child will need to be obtained.

- If a family is asked to leave the school, the student will be considered withdrawn after the last date of attendance. Tuition will be prorated for time attended, and the school shall retain the registration fee.

## IV. Program Schedule and School Hours

### Program Schedule

St. Stephen Montessori is in session from the day after Labor Day until Memorial Day. We follow the St. Stephen K-8 school calendar, and scheduled closings (Professional Development days, Catechetical days, Records days, Holiday Breaks, etc.) will be scheduled and announced as early as possible to allow for planning.

### School Hours

Morning Session – 8:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

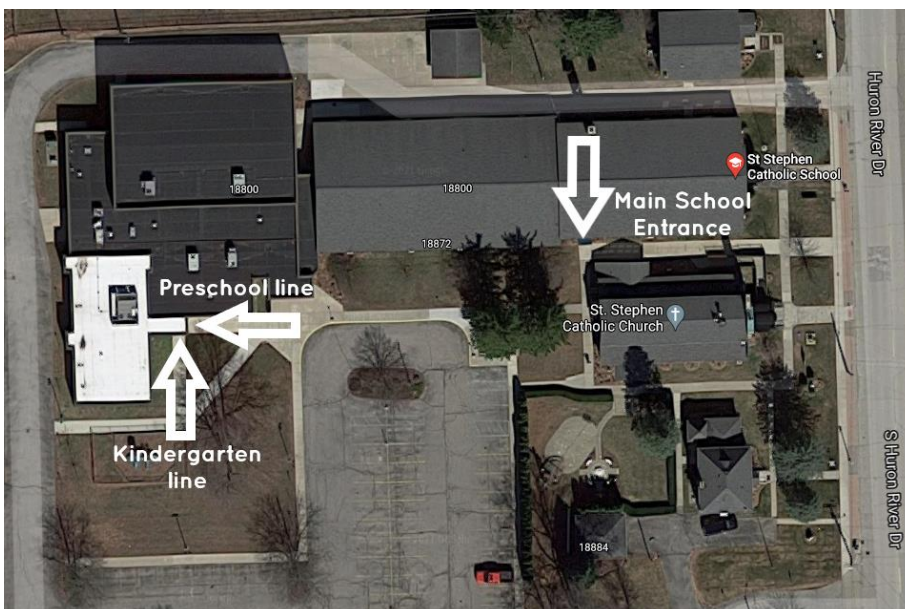
Afternoon Session – 12:15 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

## V. Arrival, Attendance, and Departure

### A. Arrival

#### 8:00 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. daily

- You may park anywhere in the school parking lot.
- Escort your child to the Preschool Waiting Line; this is marked with an arrow on the map. It is the sidewalk that runs east from the Preschool and Kindergarten entrance against the wall of the school building – there is a bench on that sidewalk as well.
- Preschool children will be greeted one at a time and brought inside to begin their day – parents and family members remain outside the school building.





## **B. Attendance**

### **Absences**

Regular attendance will help your child make steady progress in school. If your child will be absent for any reason, including illness, please notify Mrs. Kirk in the office at (734) 753-4175 or [schooloffice@ststephennb.education](mailto:schooloffice@ststephennb.education), or Mrs. Tyrybon at [ltirybon@ststephennb.education](mailto:ltirybon@ststephennb.education) before class begins for the day.

### **Train App**

Our school is located near busy railroad crossings, but there is an app available for your smartphone that allows you to check your route before you leave. Instructions are available here to download ACTi Mobile Client: <https://d2y1pz2y630308.cloudfront.net/28697/documents/2021/2/trains.jpg>. Once you add the camera feed from the Huron Township railroad crossings, select **hurontwp**, and then select the crossing you wish to view. You can also view all seven crossings at the same time (Waltz, Willow, Pennsylvania, Sibley, South Huron, and Huron River Drive are on the first screen; swipe to the left to view Eureka).

### **Late Arrival**

If you arrive more than 10 minutes late for your child's class, please ring the doorbell at the main school entrance and bring your child to the School Office to be escorted to the classroom. We are not able to keep a staff member at the preschool entrance after class begins.

## **C. Departure and Student Release Procedure**

### **11:15 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. daily**

- You may park anywhere in the school parking lot.
- Parents and family members will line up in the Preschool Waiting Line; this is marked with an arrow on the map. It is the sidewalk that runs east from the Preschool and Kindergarten entrance against the wall of the school building – there is a bench on that sidewalk as well.
- Preschool children will be brought out to the families – parents and family members remain outside the school building.
- Please be prompt when picking up your child – we are not able to keep a staff member at the door past the departure time. Excessive tardiness will result in dismissal from the program.

The Child Information Record (see Student Forms), required by Michigan Child Care Licensing, asks for emergency information and a list of persons whom you authorize to pick up your child from school. Your child will be released ONLY to people listed on the page, so be sure to notify us of any changes. Staff will require positive identification (Driver's License or other photo ID) from people they do not recognize.

With respect to child custody disputes, until custody has been established by a court order, neither parent may limit the other from picking up the child, and the school will release the child to a known identifiable parent.

## VI. School Closings

When Huron Public Schools are closed due to severe weather conditions, St. Stephen School is also closed. A closure may be specific to St. Stephen School only, such as a power outage.

In all cases, we will announce the closing of St. Stephen School on WJBK/Channel 2, WDIV/Channel 4, and WXYZ/Channel 7 – we will be listed as **St. Stephen School – New Boston**. We will also send out an announcement on Remind.

Scheduled closings (Professional Development days, Catechetical days, Records days, Holiday Breaks, etc.) will be scheduled and announced as early as possible to allow for planning.

## VII. Health and Safety

### A. Illness Information

If your child is not feeling well enough to participate fully in all school activities, **please keep them at home**. Please inform the school if your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness; we report all cases of contagious diseases to the Wayne County Health Department.

If children should become ill at school, we do our best to make them comfortable until you (or another authorized person from the Child Information Record if parents are not available) can pick them up. Please come immediately after you are called in this event.

St. Stephen School is committed to helping children stay healthy and stay in school. The following procedures and Illness Policy are in place to help facilitate this goal:

- Handwashing requirements for staff and students
- High cleaning standards for the classroom equipment and school building
- Grace and Courtesy lessons in the classroom that teach personal hygiene practices
- Annual staff training on health and safety practices

### Illness Policy – When To Keep Your Child At Home

We will not accept a child for care (or an employee or volunteer for work) if he or she has:

- Temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- Sore throat
- Cough (for children with chronic cough due to allergies or asthma, a change in their cough from baseline)
- Difficulty breathing (for children with asthma, a change from their baseline breathing)
- New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever
- Diarrhea, rash, or vomiting

If any child develops symptoms that could be consistent with COVID-19 while at school, it is the policy of the school to:

- Require the child to wear a protective mask.

- Immediately isolate the child and contact the parents for pick-up.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the child and parents where possible.
- Utilize deep cleaning of areas where the child is known to have been and set aside toys or other materials that may have been contaminated.
- Follow up with the parent as to the wellness of the child.

If a child exhibits multiple symptoms of COVID-19, you suspect possible exposure, or a child tests positive for COVID-19, the child must stay at home until he or she has been fever-free for at least 72 hours without the use of medicine, other symptoms have improved, and at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

## Illness Policy – When Your Child May Return To School

### Fever

With the exception of the COVID-19 policy listed above, your child must be fever-free for **72 hours** without the use of medication before returning to school.

### Diarrhea, Rash, Vomiting

- If a child has had diarrhea or a rash, or has been vomiting, they may return to school when:
  - They are able to participate fully in school activities, **and**
  - Diarrhea has subsided; it has been 24 hours since the last loose/watery stool, **or**
  - Vomiting has subsided; it has been 24 hours since the last vomiting episode, **or**
  - Rash has been diagnosed as not contagious and/or physician indicates that the child may attend school

### Strep Throat

- Children with strep throat must be excluded from school and be on an antibiotic for at least 12 hours before returning to school.

## B. Allergies and Health Concerns

Inform the school of any special health problems such as allergies, dietary restrictions, and food sensitivities. You will be asked to specify the condition and treatment in writing on the form provided.

## C. Medications

We administer prescription medicines or non-prescription medicines only when accompanied by written permission from you. Complete this form to note specific instructions:

[https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/BCAL-1243\\_8\\_15\\_fillable\\_2\\_498629\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/lara/BCAL-1243_8_15_fillable_2_498629_7.pdf)

This form gives proper instructions to our staff; our staff cannot administer medicine at their own discretion. Children are not allowed to self-administer medications (including vitamins or other over-the-counter products). Medicine must come to the school in its original container with a label. Please do not send it in your child's bag, but hand it directly to the adult who greets you upon arrival.

We are NOT permitted to administer Tylenol or aspirin to treat a fever, as this only hides the symptoms of illness.

## **D. Minor Injuries**

Minor injuries will be documented on a Minor Injury Report, and then signed by both a staff member and a parent (at pick-up). A copy will be given to the parent, and a copy will be placed in the student's file.

## **E. Medical Emergencies**

In cases of medical emergency, the staff will call 911 and the child will be taken to the medical facility determined by the 911 staff. The parents or guardians will be notified and directed to the medical facility where the child is taken.

## **F. Safety Drills**

A written crisis management plan outlines the school's procedures in the event of various situations that could potentially threaten the building or the students and employees. During the scheduled fire drills, tornado drills, and lockdown drills for the school, children learn to listen carefully, follow directions, stay quiet, stay together, and stay safe. We discuss these concepts with the students prior to all of the drills and reinforce that the teachers at St. Stephen are there to keep everyone safe.

## **G. Gun-Free Zone**

Guns are prohibited in the school or on school premises.

# **VIII. Communication Between Home and School**

## **A. Communication from School**

**Transparent Classroom** – <https://www.transparentclassroom.com>

Transparent Classroom is an online system for record keeping, student progress tracking, and parent communication. It is designed to let you know what lessons your child has had in class and spark conversations about them at home. Families will have access to the following information for their child(ren):

- The scope & sequence of the Montessori curriculum
- Your child's current presentations within the context of the curriculum
- Your child's activity feed (any entries specific to your child)
- Photos of your child
- Written observations
- Conference reports
- Classroom directory

Parents can choose how and when they receive notifications during sign-up and by adjusting the profile settings. Lessons will be recorded and new photos will be uploaded at least once a week.

**Remind** – <https://www.remind.com>

Remind is the primary method of communication from the school office and your child's classroom about events, updates, and reminders. An "announcement" has a 140 character limit, and a "message" to a family (not the whole class or school) has a 1500 character limit; this is why "messages" to parents can be longer than abbreviated "announcements." Families can use Remind to send a message as well.

## **Monthly Newsletter**

This will be a recap of highlights from the prior month, a preview of what will be coming up, information about school events, and a place to share more in-depth information about the Montessori materials and how children work with them and progress through them.

## **Calendar**

The school calendar can be found at <https://www.ststephennb.org/calendar>. The calendar will also be available on Transparent Classroom.

## **Conferences**

Conferences are held in the fall and the spring. They are an important opportunity for you to talk with your child's teacher about your child's classroom experience and progress. Conference sign-up information is available 2-3 weeks prior to conference dates.

## **B. Contacting Your Child's Teacher**

Communication between the school and your family is of utmost importance to us. The best forms of communication with the teacher are email, telephone calls, and Remind messages – under normal circumstances, you will receive a response within 24 hours. Out of respect for the child, it is our policy not to discuss the child in his or her presence. If you need to get a message to the teacher regarding your child during class hours, please call the school office at (734)753-4175, and the secretary will assist you.

## **Meetings**

We welcome the opportunity to talk with you! Please email or call to schedule a time to meet if you have questions, ideas, thoughts, or concerns.

## **C. Parent Notification of Licensing Notebook**

All child care centers must maintain a licensing notebook which includes all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, and all related corrective action plans. The notebook must include all reports issued and corrective action plans developed on and after May 27, 2010 until the license is closed.

- This school maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports, and all related corrective action plans.
- The notebook is available to parents for review during regular business hours. It is located in the classroom.
- Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from the past two years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing website at [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare).

We will provide families with a form to sign that acknowledges this notice.

# IX. Family Involvement

## A. Room Parents

Room parents are ambassadors of St. Stephen School! As part of the school leadership team, room parents support the school by organizing and participating in the community-building activities that happen throughout the year. Volunteer opportunities for room parents can include:

- Researching, planning, and communicating to preschool families about field trips or in-house presentations
- Volunteering to help with events and school-related efforts
- Reaching out to new families to help them feel welcome
- Planning social events for families
- Working with planning committees on school-sponsored events
- Researching, planning, and assisting with fundraising
- Organizing presentations for the students done by St. Stephen families (a family member does a presentation about their cultural heritage, about their occupation, etc.)
- And more!

Parents and family members can volunteer for as many or as few activities as they would like. This list will evolve to reflect the talents and areas of interest of our families – if you don't see what you would like to contribute, please let us know!

## B. Requirements For Volunteering in the School

The Archdiocese of Detroit requires the following:

### 1. Complete a Protecting God's Children Workshop

- Adults must complete the **Protecting God's Children** workshop prior to assisting at St. Stephen School.
- To register for an upcoming online workshop, please visit <https://www.virtusonline.org>
- If you have already attended a **Protecting God's Children** workshop in the past, you don't need to attend an additional one

### 2. Complete and Submit Paperwork

- **Protecting God's Children** workshop certificate – turn in to the school office
- Authorization for a Criminal Background Check – <https://aod.app.box.com/s/b3561ew235xphw3xgbmvhxx0mm37c51x> – turn in to the school office

In addition, Michigan Child Care Licensing requires that:

1. **All supervised volunteers shall receive a public sex offender registry (PSOR) clearance** before having any contact with a child in care. {Rule 125 (3)}
2. **A written statement must be signed and dated** by staff and volunteers at the time of hiring or before volunteering **indicating all of the following information**: The individual is aware that abuse and neglect of children is against the law, the individual has been informed of the center's policies on child abuse and neglect, the individual knows that all staff and volunteers are required by law to immediately report suspected abuse and neglect to children's protective services. {Rule 125 (5)}

And, if applicable to the amount of time volunteering:

3. A center shall keep on file at the center evidence to verify that each child care staff member and each volunteer who has contact with children at least 4 hours per week for more than 2 consecutive weeks is free from communicable tuberculosis (TB). **Verification of TB status** is required within 1 year before employment or volunteering. {Rule 128}

A supervised volunteer does not include the occasions when parents accompany their child on a special activity such as a field trip, when the parent is only with their child and has no responsibility for classroom activities.

## C. Observations

We welcome and encourage parents and guardians to visit their child’s classroom. Observing is the best way for families to witness first-hand the Montessori method in action. We ask that you wait at least six weeks after the beginning of the school year before scheduling an observation; this allows time for the children to become comfortable in their environment and with the routine of the day. After the initial six weeks of school, we invite you to call or email Mrs. Tyrybon to schedule an observation in the classroom environment.

# X. Classroom Life

## A. Student Orientation and Beginning-of-School Schedule

Each school year begins with an orientation period that helps children adjust to school gradually. The first day of school (the Tuesday following Labor Day) is an open house for all children, when the parent and child come together just to visit. The classroom is temporarily simplified to help the children master basic procedures and activities.

Morning Group 1 (half of the students) will attend the Morning Session on Wednesday, September 8 and Morning Group 2 (the other half) will attend the Morning Session on Thursday, September 9. Similarly, Afternoon Group 1 will attend the Afternoon Session on Wednesday, September 8, and Afternoon Group 2 will attend the Afternoon Session on Thursday, September 9. All students attend their session on Friday, September 10, and all students will start their five-day schedule on Monday, September 13. Families can sign up for an Open House time and will be notified of their child’s group for the first week of school.

<b>Monday, September 6, 2021</b>	<b>Tuesday, September 7, 2021</b>	<b>Wednesday, September 8, 2021</b>	<b>Thursday, September 9, 2021</b>	<b>Friday, September 10, 2021</b>
Labor Day – School closed	Open House – families can sign up for a time to visit	Morning Group 1 attends from 8:00 - 11:15 a.m.	Morning Group 2 attends from 8:00 - 11:15 a.m.	All morning students attend – 8:00 - 11:15 a.m.
	Open House – families can sign up for a time to visit	Afternoon Group 1 attends from 12:15 - 3:30 p.m.	Afternoon Group 2 attends from 12:15 - 3:30 p.m.	All afternoon students attend - 12:15 - 3:30 p.m.

## B. Typical Daily Schedule

### Morning Session

**8:00 am:** Children arrive, put away their belongings, and may select activities in the classroom

**8:00 am-11:15 am:** The children are engaged in a wide variety of activities (Practical Life, Art, Sensorial, Geography, Math, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Science, Language) working individually or in small groups. They may choose when to have their snack at the snack table. The teacher meets with individual or small groups of children throughout the morning. The entire group comes together at the end of the morning to hear a story, participate in music and movement, and go outdoors.

**11:15 am:** Children are dismissed to their families.

### Afternoon Session

**12:15 pm:** Children arrive, put away their belongings, and may select activities in the classroom

**12:15 pm-3:30 pm:** The children are engaged in a wide variety of activities (Practical Life, Art, Sensorial, Geography, Math, Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Science, Language) working individually or in small groups. They may choose when to have their snack at the snack table. The teacher meets with individual or small groups of children throughout the afternoon. The entire group comes together at the end of the afternoon to hear a story, participate in music and movement, and go outdoors.

**3:30 pm:** Children are dismissed to their families.

## C. Snack

Students will need to bring a **labeled reusable water bottle** (spill-proof, child-size) and a **small portion of a healthy snack (that does not require refrigeration) in a labeled container** each day for their snack. We ask that you **do not** send in single-use water bottles; reusable water bottles are less likely to spill in bags and backpacks and have no bottlecaps to lose.

Families will be informed at the beginning of the school year whether snacks that include nut products may be brought to school. Safety is always the priority – families will be kept apprised of any changes that need to be made throughout the year to keep the students safe.

## D. Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays for the students are very special days! The child may bring a treat for the class and is honored during a short ceremony. Classmates sit in a circle on the floor around a model of the sun (and a battery-operated candle), and the birthday child walks around the sun carrying a model of the Earth. Each trip around the candle represents one year in the child's life. As the child walks, the teacher reads information that you have provided and/or shows photos you have provided of the child. The narrative continues until the child reaches their current age – it is a wonderful concrete way for your child to experience their growth!



It is your input that makes it personal; you can help your child select photographs from each year of their life and help them prepare a written history of milestones and fun times that happened each year (they learned to feed themselves, they went down a slide for the first time, etc.).

If your child's birthday falls on a holiday or day the school is closed, we will celebrate it before or afterwards, according to your wishes. We celebrate summer birthdays during the school year, either in September, May, or on the child's half-birthday.

Additional information will be forthcoming about birthday treats for the 2021-2022 school year (with regard to food allergies and COVID-19 restrictions and recommendations). We typically recommend cookies, muffins, brownies, and treats with no frosting or a VERY thin layer of frosting... something small but special!

We are happy to distribute birthday party invitations if all of the students in the session are invited.

## E. Clothing

### Clothing That Stays at School

Children will need to bring a **labeled complete change of clothes** (top, bottoms, underwear, and socks) to keep at school. They will also need to bring a **labeled pair of designated indoor shoes** to keep and wear in the classroom; these need to be clean, comfortable, rubber-soled shoes that your child can take on and off by themselves. Slippers are not recommended (children wear through the fabric soles, and sometimes they are too warm). Crocs are an option for inside shoes, but they do not offer the best ankle or arch support, and some children have difficulty with the lack of stability when walking indoors – please use your best judgement.

### Clothing That Is Worn to School

To allow your child to participate without hesitation in various school activities, please choose clothing that is washable, manageable by the child, and appropriate for active play. Non-slip shoes are required for outdoor play, and open-toed-shoes and flip-flops are discouraged for safety reasons.

### Winter Weather Gear

When cold weather arrives, please provide labeled outerwear that is suitable for outdoor play. We go outside as often as we can (taking temperature, wind chill, and everyone being dressed warmly into account). There is no official temperature range from Michigan Child Care Licensing; they ask directors to use their discretion. We aim for around 20° and higher for safety, and evaluate the weather conditions daily.

In the winter, your child will need:

- A coat
- Something for their head (hood, hat, etc.)
- Something for their hands (gloves or mittens)
- Snow pants
- Boots
- Labels on their items
- A reusable grocery bag to keep it all in

You can determine what would be easier for your family:

We can keep your child's bag of winter gear at school (because you have extra winter items at home) and we will only send things home if they need to be dried or laundered, **or...**

We can have their winter gear come and go each day with them (if it is needed at home).

## **F. What to Leave at Home/ What Can Be Brought to School**

We request that children leave toys and other personal items at home, and the staff will ask children to leave such items in their bags if they are brought to school. Our experience has been that the items can be distracting, and loss or damage may occur.

Students may occasionally bring something of interest to the class (natural specimens, something from another culture, something the child has made, an interesting book, special discoveries, objects from a vacation, etc.). Please check with the staff about the appropriateness of a questionable object before bringing it to school. The staff reserves the right to restrict personal items at their sole discretion.

## **G. Holidays, Celebrations, and Traditions**

Celebrations and traditions are integral to the life of our school community. As a Catholic school, we approach seasons and holidays from a Catholic perspective (All Saints' Day and Halloween, the season of Advent, the season of Christmas, Epiphany, St. Valentine's Day, the season of Lent, St. Patrick's Day, the season of Easter, Pentecost, etc.) and often enjoy a short celebration of food, special activities, songs, and literature. More specific information about celebrations will be provided as they draw nearer. Again, additional information will be forthcoming about food and treats provided by families for the 2021-2022 school year (with regard to food allergies and COVID-19 restrictions and recommendations).

Families are invited and encouraged to help us introduce the children to a variety of holiday traditions by sharing stories, traditions, and activities from cultures throughout the world.

## **H. Student Conduct and Discipline Policy**

St. Stephen Montessori grounds its entire program in the significant relationship between adult and child. A positive, supportive, and loving bond promotes the child's self-esteem and sense of security. The role model provided by the adult teaches children positive problem-solving techniques and courtesy. Children are continuously taught how to solve problems, deal with frustration, and express feelings in a manner that is growth-producing and positive. Some examples of positive methods of discipline include:

- Redirecting or distracting a child from the unacceptable activity to a constructive one
- Planning ahead to prevent problems
- Encouraging, teaching, and modeling appropriate behavior
- Setting consistent clear rules
- Talking to the child about the feelings they are having
- Offering alternative solutions to the problem

- Involving children in solving the problem
- Ensuring a relationship between the behavior and the discipline method
- Tailoring the method of discipline to the individual child
- Removing the child from the source of conflict

Students who are disruptive or hurtful to others will be spoken to by the teacher in a respectful manner. They may be requested to sit away from the group until they are ready to rejoin it. The students themselves may determine they are ready, or the teacher may invite them to rejoin the group. If the behavior continues, the teacher will review the situation with the family.

Parents of children with excessively disruptive or hurtful behavior will be asked to seek professional assistance. Parents may be required to remove their child from the class if their behavior significantly disrupts the harmony of the class (see Withdrawal Policies and Procedures).

## **I. Field Trips**

Trips will be chosen carefully, with fun, educational value, cost, and reasonable logistics as criteria. There will be opportunities for room parent volunteers to research, plan, and communicate details of field trips to preschool families. Each family is responsible for transporting and supervising their child(ren).