

I would like to welcome you and your child to St. Mary's Preschool program. I am excited to have your child in my classroom. This year is going to be a fun, and exciting year with lots of fun activities planned throughout the year. To help this year go smoothly, there are some standard operating procedures you should know about. Please keep this in a handy location so you can refer to it as needed.

School Procedures

School arrival time:

Students are to arrive no earlier than 7:45 a.m. If your child needs to be dropped off earlier because of parents' work schedule, the before school program is available. Students are to wait at their designated school entrance. For preschoolers this is the front door. There will be an adult that supervises the area each morning. Students are dismissed to their classrooms at 8:00 a.m. Classroom learning begins at 8:15 a.m. If students arrive after this time, they will need to report to the office to sign in.

Dress code:

St. Mary's does not have a uniform; however we do have a few dress code items. Students **must have** shoes that cover their toes and have something around their heel every day for recess play. Please make sure that any print on a shirt is appropriate for school. Also, if a student is wearing a sleeveless/tank top shirt the **shoulder straps must be at least 1 inch wide**.

When your child is absent:

When your child is absent, please try to call the school between 7:45-8:15 a.m. When you call, we appreciate knowing how your child is ill. This will allow us to monitor other students in class for signs of the same illness. If you know in advance that your child is going to be absent, you can send a note ahead of time.

If we have not heard from you by 8:30, the school secretary will call parents to determine the reason for the absence.

Picking up your child:

Bus students are dismissed at 2:50. Town students are dismissed after the buses have left, usually around 2:55. If you are picking up your child, we ask that you wait behind the buses. We prefer all car riders to be picked up on the same side as the school. It seems to keep things going smoothly and safely. If you are parked across the street, please come pick your child up in front of the school. We require all students to tell us goodbye before they go to their vehicle, so we can make sure they are going with

the appropriate person. If you are picking up your child, please make sure you gain the teacher's attention to let us know you are taking your child.

Leaving school early/picking up your child late:

If your child is leaving early: please send a note ahead of time or the day that your child is leaving early so we can advise the office. When the designated person arrives at school to pick up the student they need to sign them out at the office. We can either have the student wait in the classroom until you arrive or they can wait in the office.

If you are late picking your child up: Unfortunately due to staff meetings, etc, your child will not be able to stay in the classroom to wait for you to pick them up. Your child will be waiting in the office if you will be arriving after 3:10.

Changes in Transportation:

For your child's safety, we must have a message from you each time your child's transportation plans change. If it is a consistent change, for example, they ride the bus every day but Friday, only one note at the beginning of the year will be required for that.

If there is a change in transportation plans we need one of the following:

- Written and dated note given your child permission to do something other than their normal plan. This note will be passed on to the office.
- Phone call to the office BEFORE 2:30.
- Email to us AND the secretary so if we are gone she will still get the message delivered to the classroom. Also, we will reply to your message so you will know that we received it.

The more information you give us about a change in schedule, the better we are able to assist your child.

Often students will tell teachers of different transportation plans. If we have not heard from you about this change the office will try to contact you and confirm the information. If we are unable to reach you, the students will do their regular transportation plan. For safety reasons, we cannot go solely by what your child says.

Parent/School Contact

Contacting the office:

School Phone: 563-927-3689

Becky Salow: Secretary's email: bsalow@st-marys.pvt.k12.ia.us

Kelley Harbach: Principal's email: kharbach@st-marys.pvt.k12.ia.us

Contacting the teacher:

We are always happy to talk with parents about any concerns or questions you may have. For routine matters a dated note or email will be sufficient. If you need to speak to us but are unavailable at the time, please leave a message with the office and we will return your call as soon as we are able to do so. You can email at any time of the day also. We check our emails during breaks or after school depending on how busy the day is. We will try to be as timely as possible with responding to you, but sometimes we have other work or family commitments that don't allow us to respond immediately. Please include all three of us on all emails you send, in case Ms. Cumberland would be gone.

School Phone: (7:45-3:30) 563-927-3689

Ms. Cumberland's email: jcumberland@st-marys.pvt.k12.ia.us

Mrs. Vaske's email: jvaske@st-marys.pvt.k12.ia.us

Mrs. Gaffney's email: cgaaffney@st-marys.pvt.k12.ia.us

The teacher contacting you:

There are many ways we maintain contact with you. Most of the time our contacts with you will be through notes, emails and a monthly newsletter. Please make sure you check your child's take home folder nightly for any notes or important information.

1. Monthly newsletter: We will send a monthly newsletter home about what we are learning about, important dates to remember, and any important information. We will also have a special prayer, or bible verse you can go over with your child during that month.
2. School newsletter: This newsletter is sent home at the end of the month. There will be important updates and calendar included.
3. Emails: We occasionally send out mass emails to remind you of important dates and change of plans. We may also use email to communicate with you regarding questions or concerns about your child.
4. Phone calls: If we have concerns regarding your child, we will call you to discuss these issues.
5. Parent/Teacher conferences: There are conferences at the end of the first and third quarter. However, if your child is having difficulty in class we may ask to schedule another time to meet to discuss it

together. Preschool will only be doing conferences at the end of the third quarter.

Daily Activities

Recess:

We will go outside EVERY DAY, weather permitting. If the temperatures are below zero we will not go outside that day. Please dress your child appropriately for the changing weather. When the winter months arrive please make sure you are sending all winter wear and have it labeled with your child's name or initials. We also prefer if students have closed toe shoes to wear or sandals with backs on them. We will be doing fun large motor activities outside as well (balls, hoops, relay races, ect). We will spend 30-45 minutes outside. If for some reason your child cannot go outside, a note is required.

Toys: Please do not send toys to school. We have lots of toys that we will be playing with during our center time. Students are only allowed to bring toys to school if a note comes home from the teacher. Some days we will ask your child to bring in something that starts with a letter we are learning.

Snacks: Your child will be responsible for bringing a simple snack approximately once a month for all the students and teachers in our classroom. A snack calendar will be sent home at the end of each month indicating when your child will need to provide a snack. The snack should take no more than 15 minutes to eat and be simple. We ask that you stay away from messy snacks such as cake, due to the fact that these items take more time away from our day. **Please try to keep snack healthy! Some examples are: string cheese, cheese and crackers, fruits and vegetables, graham crackers, granola bars, applesauce, yogurt, pudding.** Water will be provided for drinks. If a child has food allergies, we may make different arrangements for snack. We try to schedule snack around each child's birthday, so a special treat may be brought if desired.

Lunch: Lunch is available at the hot lunch program. Daily, weekly, or monthly lunch and milk tickets may be purchased from the office. Students can also bring the money to the classroom and we will send it to the office. Please make sure if you put the money in an envelope with your child's name on it so we can make sure that your child gets their lunch account credited. If you are planning on eating lunch with us please make sure you contact us in advance so we can make sure

there is enough food prepared. Preschoolers are not granted peanut butter as an alternate. If you are planning on eating lunch with your child please make sure you contact us in advance so we can make sure there is enough food prepared. Lunch is served at 11:00.

Classroom Learning

Creative Curriculum: This program uses exploration and discovery as a way of learning. This curriculum is designed to enable children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. Whether children are sorting objects, playing blocks, creating art projects, singing and dancing, playing in dramatic play, every activity serves as a purpose in the developmental growth. Children learn so much through play!

Jolly Phonics: This is a fun, interactive phonics program that we use. Each week we will learn a new letter and a jingle that goes with each one. If you are interested in learning more about this, or want to do it at home with your child, go on YouTube and type in Jolly Jingles and you should be able to find it.

Handwriting without Tears: We use this program for our handwriting instruction. This is a good way for students to learn how to write letters and age appropriate. Each week when we learn a new letter, your child will be bringing home a letter page for them to practice. At school we will be doing rainbow writing, using manipulatives, chalkboards and marker boards to assist with the learning of letter writing.

Things to Know

Volunteers/Visiting the classroom: We encourage you to visit the classroom throughout the year. Children enjoy sharing their learning with family members. We ask that you send a note ahead of time informing us of your plans to visit to make sure we will be in the classroom at the time of your visit. You will need to sign in at the office when you arrive. If you choose to visit, we will most likely ask you to participate in a learning activity of some kind (reading a book, helping assist a student in a project, or interacting with students at centers). Our classroom loves and thrives on classroom volunteers. If you are able to volunteer let us know when you are available.

Preschool is on Tuesday and Thursday from 8:05-2:55. Please email us on non-preschool days if you have questions, and we will get back to you as soon as we can.

If you ever have any questions throughout the year, please don't hesitate to talk to one of us. You as parents play an important role in your child's education and we want to make sure we can help in any way! We are excited and looking forward to a great year!

Ms. Cumberland, Mrs. Vaske and Mrs. Gaffney

School website: <http://www.st-marys.pvt.k12.ia.us>