

St. Mary of the Assumption Early Education Readiness Program HANDBOOK 2024-2025



St. Mary of the Assumption School
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St. Mary of the Assumption Early Education Readiness Program Philosophy:

Children in the St. Mary of the Assumption Early Education Readiness Program will explore their world through a variety of quality curriculum and center-based learning experiences. We strive to provide a warm, safe, nurturing, Christ-centered learning environment to promote the spiritual, emotional, social, physical, and intellectual growth of children.

Our Mission at St. Mary of the Assumption School is to:

Working together to build an educated, dedicated, loving and caring faith community preparing for the challenge of life in a global society.

Diocese of Cleveland

PHILOSOPHY OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

SOURCES: We believe that a philosophy of Catholic education begins with faith that God, through creation, gifted us with life, became one of us in His son, Jesus; and, in the Person of His Spirit, awaits our response to His unconditional overture of love. Jesus remains with the community He formed, witnessing and sharing the Good News in every age and with all people ever yearning for a return of love, whether by a sincere response to conscience or by membership in His church. It is from this perspective that the educational ministry of the Catholic community flows.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION: We believe that education which is Catholic begins, with life, in the heart of the family. Parents, the primary educators, see and nourish values which are deeply human, deeply spiritual. Affirmed, treasured, and supported by the living witness of Christian faith communities, the child continues a lifelong response to God's love in growing and excelling through responsible involvement in the academic, cultural, and civic concerns of daily life.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS: We believe that the Catholic school is sensitive to the mandate of Jesus, "*Love one another as I have loved you,*" as the goal toward which all Catholic education leads. The school community, in sharing this vision within an atmosphere designed to celebrate and practice love of God and neighbor, is the most effective means available to the Church for the education of youth. This vision motivates students to grow academically, culturally, and socially. Among the values prized in the Catholic school are self-worth, self-discipline in the search for the moral way of life, and appreciation for our American heritage. With deep concern for their brothers and sisters, young people in the Catholic day schools and parish schools of religion form their personal response in truth, justice, and love of God, their maker.

Absences

If your child unexpectedly will not be attending due to illness or an unforeseen occurrence, please email your child's teacher or call the school office. It is **vital** that you keep us informed about your child when he/she will not be attending and if they have presented an illness.

Admission Procedures

St. Mary of the Assumption Early Education Readiness Program (EERP) includes and meets the diverse needs of our families and community.

Prior to admission, a tour of classrooms and an introduction to our staff will be available. Each family will be provided with a link to a website that contains an application packet consisting of information that the parents are required to fill out and return. **All information must be completed in full prior to admission to St. Mary of the Assumption EERP.** St. Mary of the Assumption EERP will not accept a child whose packet or forms have been returned incomplete.

In addition, as required by the state of Ohio, parents are required to provide up-to-date medical or immunization information for their child. Parents will be provided a new medical and/or immunization form prior to their child's paperwork expiration date. Parents of children who are not immunized must complete an approved form. **Current physical examination and immunization records are due prior to the first day of school.**

Birthday Treats

At times there are students at St. Mary of the Assumption EERP with severe allergies to peanuts and/or tree nuts. Because of the seriousness of this allergy, we are asking you to refrain from sending food items to school for birthdays or celebrations. If you choose to send in favors, we ask that it contain **non-food** items. All birthday favors will be sent home with the students and not consumed in class.

Child Medical Statement

The state of Ohio requires each child to have an annual well check/physical examination performed by a physician. Physical examination and immunization records must be updated annually with the EERP Director. **These are due to the EERP Office prior to the first day of school.**

Classroom Management

Our teachers and aides will manage individual classrooms by modeling and reinforcing appropriate behavior, maintaining consistent supervision, setting reasonable expectations for children's behavior based on their developmental levels and individual differences, becoming familiar with an individual child's needs, and providing interesting, challenging, age appropriate things to do. We will offer alternatives to children engaged in undesirable behavior by offering a different toy, suggesting a new activity, engaging the child in an activity with a teacher or another child, or by suggesting independent

play. The teacher explains to the child the inappropriate behavior and shows him/her the appropriate way to handle the situation.

Components of Our Curriculum

The St. Mary of the Assumption Early Education Readiness Program is designed to suit the developmental needs of young children, promoting their spiritual, emotional, social, physical, and intellectual growth.

Religion Readiness is an integral part of the Catholic Preschool Program. It is the preparation time for more formal instruction which will come in the years ahead. During the early childhood years, a child is developing good decision-making skills and forming good habits. He/she is developing a positive self-image in relationship to a loving God. The basis for a deep love of God comes from the examples set by family, school, and the parish community. A child learns to love God through the warm atmosphere of love and acceptance in the preschool environment, where the child learns about God's wonderful world. Classroom prayer and paraliturgies, appropriate to the child's developmental level, prepare him/her to participate in the celebrations of the Church. Prayers at this age should be prayers of praise and thanksgiving. We use the Loyola Press series *God Made Me* and *God Made the World* in our classes.

Language is the development of communication skills that enable a child to share his/her world with others. These skills include listening, speaking, and thinking. Transferring thoughts into words is the primary skill upon which future language development is based. An awareness of the five senses will stimulate a child's curiosity as to the different ways his/her body receives information about life around him/her. Visual discrimination and memory, and auditory discrimination and memory are important readiness skills that can be taught through play-based hands-on learning activities. Phonics in Motion and the Creative Curriculum is used to support student's growth and development.

Social Emotional and Personal Development is the primary goal for the young child entering preschool. A positive self-concept is essential to successful learning. The more a child understands himself/herself, the better equipped he/she is to relate to other children and adults. Basic social interactions between two children, the teacher and a child, and as a member of a group, provide ways in which the child establishes autonomy and learns skills to help him/her relate to his/her world. Students participate in specialized social emotional lessons to promote positive strategies and tools for social development.

Personal development includes knowing name and age, address, phone number, birthdate, caring for one's own self-help needs, separating from parents with relative ease, caring for one's own belongings, and respecting others.

Social development includes cooperative play, sharing, following directions, initiating conversations and play situations with peers, entering into group activities, developing a positive relationship with teachers, and caring about others.

Math & Science Readiness involves acquiring knowledge which comes from the understanding of color, shapes, quantitative concepts, such as size differences, basic counting skills, learned through fun and practical application, and the classifying and ordering of objects. These concepts are taught through manipulative play experiences. The Creative Curriculum is used to enhance learning in mathematics and science.

Social Studies & Multicultural Awareness is promoted through positive social development. This includes awareness on the part of the child of the similarities and differences in family lifestyles, cultures, and customs. The Creative Curriculum is used to enhance learning in learning about the world around us.

Art at the preschool level is a joyful, creative experience full of self-expression. Creative art activities will come from use of manipulatives that develop fine motor skills.

Music is a channel for creative expression in two ways: the manner in which sounds are communicated by the music-maker and the emotional and physical response that sound evokes from the listener. Singing, listening to music, using rhythm instruments, dancing, and other activities are ways of developing a love and appreciation for music. Pre-K and Junior K students participate in music classes weekly.

Motor Skills are a vital part of the young child's development and are crucial to the learning skills he/she will need in the future. Young children learn with his/her body. These motor skills are not to be overlooked in favor of cognitive skills: gross motor (body coordination, arm-eye coordination, balance) and fine motor (hand-eye coordination, dexterity and strength of small muscles, natural hand preference). Students participate in weekly physical education classes in addition to classroom activities.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences for all students are held twice a year—a scheduled conference in the fall, and an optional conference in the spring. Sign up procedures will be presented closer to dates. At any time, conferences are available throughout the year as needed.

Discipline

St. Mary of the Assumption Early Education Readiness Program believes that all children should experience success. EERP staff members are in charge of the discipline for each child or group of children. We strive for a classroom setting that provides children with opportunities to explore their environment within consistent, age-appropriate limits. In this atmosphere, most behavioral issues are prevented. However, if behavioral issues occur, our philosophy is to help children learn human values, problem solving skills, and to take responsibility for their own choices. By using the following progressive guidance techniques, we strive to minimize inappropriate behavior while creating a positive environment for all of our children.

Our policy **does NOT** permit the use of the following forms of discipline:

- Cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
- Delegating discipline to any other child.
- Physical restraints shall not be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- Profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about him/herself or his/her family, or other verbal abuse.
- Withholding food, light, warmth, clothing, or medical care.
- Discipline will not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.

If a child is separated from the group it is to give him/her time to relax and calm down, and to enable him/her not to be influenced by peers. This is meant to be a positive time to think about appropriate, or “good” choices. The break shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of the preschool teachers and classroom assistants in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.

Dress Code

Please send children to school wearing comfortable clothes. The clothes should be outfits in which your child can paint, go outside, and play. Also, we ask that the clothes should stay away from characters that portray violent messages. Socks should be worn daily regardless of shoe type.

Drop Off Policy

Students may arrive at school no earlier than 7:30AM for morning arrival. Please enter from Mentor Avenue **ONLY** (please do not enter through Acacia Drive), and a teacher will be standing at Door "D" to greet your child. You do not need to park. Simply pull up to the door, assist your child out of the car, and allow the teacher to escort your child into the building. Please do not move your car from the drop off line until the car in front of you has moved. Teachers will be greeting at the drop off door until 8:00AM. If you will be arriving late, please escort your child into the building through the school's main office entrance.

Emergency Plans

In case of an accident or medical emergency, the school nurse or teacher will notify the parents. The authorized persons, other than the parents, will be contacted in the event that the parents cannot be reached. The emergency squad will be called when necessary, and transportation to the hospital will always be done by the local emergency squad. The child's medical and emergency medical treatment release form will accompany the child, as well as a member of the staff. The staff member will stay with the child until released to a parent or guardian. **Please update contact information in RenWeb and let the school office know when changes occur regarding phone numbers, address, etc.**

Entrance Age

Children must be **three years of age by September 30th** of the year in which they are entering the St. Mary of the Assumption EERP Preschool class. Children must be **four years of age by September 30th** of the year in which they are entering the St. Mary of the Assumption EERP Pre-K class. Children must be **five years of age by December 31st** of the year in which they are entering the St. Mary of the Assumption EERP Junior Kindergarten class. All children must be potty-trained before the first day of school.

Field Trips

On occasion, children may attend field trips. Guest speakers will also visit EERP classes. Permission forms will need to be completed as necessary for both off-site and on-site experiences.

Group Size & Teacher/Child Ratio

Age of Child	Teacher/Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
3 years	1:12	16
4-5 years	1:14	22

Guidelines for Immediate Disenrollment

Certain behaviors may cause a significant risk of harm to the health and safety of other children and staff. For example, a physical assault which results in serious bodily injury, an attempted physical assault which, if completed, would result in serious bodily injury, setting or attempting to set fires, bringing weapons to school, substantial damage to real or personal property, etc.

Guidelines for Persistent Inappropriate Behavior

Persistent inappropriate behavior is any inappropriate behavior which continues after the progressive guidance steps have been used; any behavior which threatens the health or safety of other children or staff; or a continuous inability to conform to the rules and guidelines of the St. Mary of the Assumption Early Education Readiness Program. We will use the following procedures:

- We will observe and record the child's inappropriate behavior.
- We will document what we have done to try to change the behavior.
- If inappropriate behavior continues, parents will be asked to participate in an immediate parent/teacher conference. Children old enough to understand this process will be invited to attend. A specific action plan to address the behavior will be developed at this conference. The action plan will outline all steps the staff will take to try to change the behavior, all steps the parents will take, and all steps toward disenrollment if the behavior persists.
- The program director/principal may suggest outside resources to parents and will work with any outside resource for further guidance in responding to the child's behavior.
- If the inappropriate behavior continues, parents will be asked to keep the child home for a day or two.
- If the inappropriate behavior persists after the child is kept home, the St. Mary of the Assumption Early Education Readiness Program will request the parents to disenroll.

Illness and Medication and Communicable Disease

A child with any of the following signs or symptoms should not be sent to school **or** if noticed during school hours, shall be isolated immediately and discharged to the parent:

- Diarrhea—more than one loose stool in a twenty-four hour period
- Severe coughing—causing a child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Conjunctivitis
- Temperature—one of 100°F taken by the auxiliary method when in combination with other symptoms
- Untreated infected skin patch(es)
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- Stiff neck
- Child must be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

While isolated, the child shall be observed for the following symptoms as well as those listed above: unusual spots or rashes; sore throat or difficulty swallowing; elevated temperature; vomiting; or evidence of lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation.

Injury Policy

Should your child receive an injury during the hours of the program, the parents will be contacted. In the event of a serious injury, the staff is trained to call 9-1-1 immediately and obtain instruction from the medical staff.

Isolating and Discharging an Ill Child

A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be: (a) Cared for in a room or portion of a room not being used in the preschool program; (b) within sight and hearing of an adult at all times. No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised; (c) Made comfortable and provided with a mat. All linens and blankets used by the ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child. After use, the mats shall be disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent, or, if soiled with blood feces, vomit, or other body fluids, the mats shall be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent; (d) Observed carefully for worsening condition; and (e) discharged to parent, guardian, or person designated by the parent or guardian as soon as practical.

Medication Policy

Our medication policy ensures your child will receive the proper dose of any and all medication. The medication will be administered by the school nurse or staff. Each time medication is administered, a written record or log including dosage, date, and time will be made. That record or log will be kept on file for one year. Medication will be stored in a locked storage location, except medication requiring refrigeration, which will be kept in a refrigerator that is not accessible to children. Medication brought to the school must be in the original bottle with the child's name, dosage amount, and physician's dosage instructions and expiration date on the label. Appropriate forms will need to be completed for medication to be administered. Each medication must have its own form from the doctor.

Open Door Policy

The St. Mary of the Assumption EERP has an open door policy. We welcome parents to visit our classrooms. A criminal background check and VIRTUS training will need to be completed prior to an extended visit in the classroom, as required by the Diocese of Cleveland. All visitors to the school must register at the front office and receive a visitor's badge. The staff is to notify the office or administration if they notice a visitor is not wearing a visitor's badge.

Outdoor Play Space & Equipment

Children will have the opportunity to play outside at various times. All play areas will be maintained, safe, and free from all hazards. Children remain within sight and hearing of a staff member at all times.

Parent Communication

Classroom teachers and classroom assistants communicate with parents by sending home notes or emails when needed. The EERP Director will also send home a weekly newsletter, which not only includes information on upcoming events, but also keeps parents updated on what topics or skills your child is focusing on each week.

Parent Participation/Volunteers

Throughout the year, our school PTU offers many volunteer programs and activities for our parents to participate in to support our school. Below are some other ways for you to participate in our school program:

- Attend parent/teacher conferences.
- Praise and display the papers your child brings home. Remember, a lot of effort has gone into this work.
- If you have a special talent, such as music, art, creative dramatics, etc., please let the teacher know so that you may share this with the children.
- Read the classroom weekly newsletter.
- Attend school Open Houses and school-hosted functions. These are designed to allow you to explore your child's classroom and tour the school's facilities.

Photographs

Photographs and videos of children participating in the programs may be taken from time to time. Photography, videos, and social media materials including your child are without compensation. A Media Release is completed in your registration packet.

Policies and Procedures

St. Mary of the Assumption School admits students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of our educational and admissions policies. Furthermore, it is the policy of St. Mary of the Assumption School and the St. Mary of the Assumption Early Education Readiness Program not to discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs or employment as required by Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972. The EERP will not abuse or neglect children and will protect children from abuse and neglect while in the program. Rules apply to everyone on the EERP premises.

Progress Reports

Progress reports are sent home three times a year (November, February, May). Necessary updates are sent home throughout the school year and communication is always encouraged with the teachers.

Pick Up Policy for Morning Classes

Please enter from Mentor Avenue **ONLY** (do not enter through Mentor Avenue) by 11:00 a.m. and follow the line to Door D. A teacher will be there to dismiss your child. Pull up to the preschool door to pick up your child. **Please do not move your car from the drop off line until the car in front of you has moved.** After the first cars exit, the next group of cars may pull up. Exit the parking lot through Acacia Avenue. Be sure that all names given permission to pick up your child are listed on your registration form and that your pick up tag is clearly displayed in your front window. All unfamiliar people will be asked for identification, and their names must be on the registration form.

Pick Up Policy for Full Day Classes

Please enter from Mentor Avenue **ONLY (please do not enter through Acacia Drive)** and join the all-school pick up line no earlier than 2:15 p.m. Pick up will take place in the back parking lot in front of Door "H" (Farrell Hall). You will need to park in the middle of the parking lot as directed by the traffic duty teacher. When you see the doors at Door "H" open, please exit your car and proceed toward the door to pick up your child. A teacher will be directing when and where you will be able to cross in between the line of cars that has formed to pick up for the elementary school. After returning to your car in the parking lot, follow all directions given by the designated director of the exiting traffic. Be sure that all names given permission to pick up your child are listed on your registration form and that your pick up tag is clearly displayed in your front window.

Rest Materials

Students enrolled in full-day programming at SMA EERP are required to have a 45 minimum rest period during the day. They will bring rest items to school at the beginning of each week and will bring them home on their last day of school to be laundered. Items should be of a manageable size and fit in a tote bag.

Roster

All families will have the opportunity to be a part of the St. Mary of the Assumption EERP Roster. This will be distributed to all families in our school. You may opt out of the Roster if you choose to do so.

Safety Policy

All policies and rules in the St. Mary of the Assumption EERP Parent/Student Handbook are in effect with the program. In addition to these policies, the following rules will be followed to provide the safest environment for your child:

- No child will be left alone or unsupervised.
- Children will be escorted into the school by a parent/guardian or teacher.
- A telephone is located in the classroom.
- Fire drills are conducted monthly and lockdown drills are practiced.
- Procedures are posted in each room along with primary and secondary routes.
- Staff members will immediately notify the principal and the Department of Children Services at 1-800-4-A-CHILD with suspicions of child abuse or neglect.
- Teacher has copies of medical and emergency transportation forms at all times.
- Staff members are certified in emergency procedures and First Aid.

Snacks

A snack will be provided every class session. Students that participate in the full-day classes are provided both morning and afternoon snacks. Snacks are peanut and tree nut free.

State Requirements

St. Mary of the Assumption Early Education Readiness Program is licensed by The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) to operate a preschool program. The preschool program will operate in accordance with Rules for Preschool Programs 3301-37 Ohio Department of Education. The State of Ohio Department of Education License to Operate and Compliance Report are posted in the classroom. Report concerns to 614.466.0224 or 877.644.6338. **The state of Ohio requires an annual visit to your child's pediatrician.**

Snow Days

St. Mary of the Assumption School and EERP are closed when the Mentor School District is closed. Information regarding delayed openings and school cancellations will be relayed via instant alert phone calls and emails and on local news channels. The phone number listed on your original registration form has been listed as the contact number for snow days and emergency notifications. **Any additional contact numbers will need to be updated by you on the school's instant alert system, through the Remind app, and via email/phone call.**

Special Needs Children

The early education teacher of young children has the unique opportunity to observe the individual learning styles of each child as he/she enters the school experience. It may become apparent to the teacher that some children have needs which require special intervention. The teacher will act as a referral source for further evaluation.

Vacation

All programs follow scheduled vacations on the St. Mary of the Assumption Elementary School calendar. In the event that your child will be missing class sessions due to a "family vacation," written notification must be given to the teacher. A calendar will be distributed prior to the school year for planning purposes.

Withdrawal Procedures

A parent wishing to withdraw their child from the St. Mary of the Assumption Early Education Readiness Program must provide written notification to the EERP Director.