



St. Mary's Little Angels Preschool Handbook

2023-2024



"Nurturing a lifelong love for Jesus, each other, and learning"

St. Mary's School

Bryantown, Maryland

PHILOSOPHY

St. Mary's School provides a basic, traditional Roman Catholic education to the parish community of St. Mary's, Bryantown. St. Mary's School serves children in grades Pre-K-3 through eight by developing their intellectual, social, physical, moral, and spiritual life.

St. Mary's School views each child as a unique expression of God's love. Our staff exhibits professionalism in their approach to teaching the whole person. Our students build a solid foundation of skills needed for their adult lives.

St. Mary's School recognizes that parents are the primary educators of their children. St. Mary's School assists families in fulfilling their obligation for the Christian formation and education of their children. Together, we form a nurturing educational environment for the children of the community.

St. Mary's School fosters a sound belief in parish, family, and community involvement. The administration of St. Mary's School believes in a strong collaboration of staff, parents, church and parish within the school.

We adhere to all guidelines set forth by the Archdiocese of Washington. We are a nonprofit operation, funded solely by the tuition charged for each student.

Our model will always be Jesus, the "Master Teacher." Our aim in fulfilling our mission as a Catholic school is to pattern our services to all people as Jesus did for us.

MISSION

Catholic education is an explicit expression of the evangelizing mission entrusted by Jesus to His church. Our mission at St. Mary's Bryantown is:

- To teach the message of Jesus Christ through prayer, word and example,
- To promote self-esteem, moral and spiritual values, enabling the students to reach full awareness of the talents God has given them,
- To build within a parish setting, a strong community based on Christian faith and service, ● To provide a structured and enriched educational program in an atmosphere that empowers students to achieve their potential as children of God who will impact the local and global community.

This process is enhanced by students, parents, staff and administrators, whose lives are modeled on Gospel values as they teach, serve, and build community as Jesus did.

MOTTO: "Nurturing a lifelong love for Jesus, each other, and learning".

Goals of Our Preschool

- To provide creative and educational play experiences for children.
- To help them establish happy, secure relationships with other children, with other parents and with their teachers.
- To broaden each child's spiritual, physical, intellectual, academic, emotional and social experiences to provide groundwork for future education and daily life.

- To encourage positive work habits that include being expressive, constructive, thoughtful and careful with school and other people's property.
- To teach self-discipline, self-control, and responsibility for his/her own actions.
- To provide a learning opportunity to lead the little children to Jesus.

Academics

Our preschool classes provide the opportunity for children to practice skills in a supportive environment. Each child's spiritual, social, emotional and cognitive development is interrelated. Through developmentally appropriate practices, our programs encourage readiness skills by focusing on the whole child. We recognize that learning is a dynamic process requiring a curriculum closely matched to a child's emerging competencies, needs and interests. Play is an important component of the early childhood curriculum, and is essential to a child's development. As a values-based program, rooted in the tradition of Catholic education, our preschool invites children to grow and learn in the nurturing love of our faith community.

School Readiness

All children must be 3 years of age by September 1st for PreK-3.

All children must be 4 years of age by September 1st for PreK-4.

All children must be potty-trained and able to take care of their own needs in the bathroom. In order to be successful in the program, students should display a certain standard of school readiness. This includes but is not limited to:

- drinking from an open cup
- using a fork and spoon independently and successfully
- being able to put on shoes independently (separate from tying laces)
- pulling shirt over their head
- pulling pants up and down
- able to follow one- to two-step directions
- able to effectively communicate needs to teachers

Our Pre-K program has a variety of age-appropriate toys. We do not permit children to bring toys into the Center as they are often a cause of distraction and can become broken. The use of pull-ups/training underwear and pacifiers are not permitted in the St. Mary's Little Angels Program.

Opening and Closing Times

St. Mary's Little Angels Preschool for 3 Year Olds will operate on a set 5-day or 3-day schedule.

Pre-K-3 – 8:45 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (Full Day Program)

St. Mary's Little Angels Preschool for 4 Year Olds will operate on a 5-day schedule. The schedule will be Monday through Friday for 5 days a week.

Pre-K-4 – 8:45 a.m.-3:30 p.m. (Full Day Program)

Before and After Care

Before and After Care is available for all students for an additional cost. The Before and After Care Registration fee is \$125 per family. Please see the Before and After Care Registration form on our website for rate information. The hours of operation for BAC are: 7:00 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Tuition Information

Tuition and Fees for St. Mary's Little Angels Preschool will be as follows:

Fee Information: A \$200 Registration Fee, a \$50 Admission fee for new students, and 1st Month's Tuition (for new families) are due at the time of Registration.

- A **2%** discount for tuition is given if paid in full by September 1st
- Except for the SMB \$60,000 raffle obligation of selling five \$100 Raffle tickets, Pre-kindergarten families are exempt from volunteer commitments, but are encouraged to participate
- Tuition and Fees are non-refundable.
- Families not paying in full, must set up a monthly payment plan through TADS Tuition Management for 10 or 11 monthly installments from July or August to May or June.

Pre-K 5-Day Rate \$6,735

Extensive fundraising, tuition assistance, and the subsidy from St. Mary's parish all help to offset the difference between the actual cost to educate each student and the more affordable adjusted tuition for registering families.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Allergies

Please notify the Pre-K Teacher of any allergies your child has, including allergies to foods, insects, and medications. These will be posted in the Pre-K building so the staff are aware of them.

Illness

Children who have any sort of communicable disease will not be permitted to attend school. St. Mary's should be called if your child contracts communicable diseases such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, pink eye, COVID-19, etc. Please keep your child home if there is any doubt concerning illness. If a child is absent from school for three days or more a physician's note is required before returning to class.

Immunizations

Children must stay current on all required immunizations. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that St. Mary's Little Angels Preschool receives a note from the physician of updated shots. Any child not current will have 15 working days to become current or bring in proof of a scheduled appointment at which time the child will become current in his or her immunizations.

Lead Screening

All children age six and under must have a lead screening before entering Pre-K. Since this screening is mandatory in the State of Maryland, most doctors do this screening in a routine visit or when a child is having an immunization. Every child must have this form, signed by a physician, whether you are in listed zip codes or not.

Medications

The Archdiocese of Washington, in compliance with the State of Maryland, mandates that schools must have proper documentation from a physician to administer ANY prescription or OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATION. In the event that ANY medication must be administered during the school day, the parents must complete a “Student Medication Authorization” form from the School Office.

If a child must take medication during the school day, parents must submit a completed “Maryland State Dept. of Education Office of Child Care Medication Administration Authorization Form” signed by a physician and the parent.

POSITIVE GUIDANCE/DISCIPLINE STATEMENT

St. Mary’s Little Angels Preschool believes that guidance leads to positive learning experiences that set behavior limits and guides children to maturity. Guidance fosters achievement and steers the child to self-discipline so that he/she does what is expected. Guidance sets clear and precise limitations. Discipline is a means to teaching children what is acceptable behavior and helps them develop the inner controls needed to function as positive, productive individuals. Our discipline policy gives positive guidance, allows for redirection, and sets behavior limits. The following is St. Mary’s Little Angels Preschool positive guidance:

- 1) **Redirection:** If a child is experiencing difficulty within an activity, either with another child or with the level of involvement in the activity, the teacher or assistant will calmly direct the child to another area or activity in which the child may be more successful.
- 2) **Time Away:** This provides time for the child to be away from an activity for a brief time to “cool off” him/herself. Time away lasts only as long as the child remains agitated and needs to remain away. Once the child is collected he or she will rejoin the group and demonstrate that they can appropriately engage in the activity. If the situation warrants it, the child may be taken to the school office to discuss his/her behavior with the principal.
- 3) **Exclusion for Off-site Activities:** If a child’s behavior offers a serious threat to the safety of the child’s self or to others, the child may be excluded from activities which occur outside of St. Mary’s Little Angels Preschool. Children may be required to cross or be near a busy street, parking lots or mingle in crowds at public places while on field trips. Children must be in control of their behavior and listen to the instructions of the adults with them to be safe.
- 4) **Dismissal:** A child whose behavior is unruly and which cannot be redirected will be dismissed from Pre-K for the day. A referral to an appropriate child or family agency will be made to assist the family if a child demonstrates the following behaviors: physical aggression towards others resulting in injuries to the child, staff, or others; consistent use of foul or abusive language; throwing of chairs and other items; not responding to direction from supervising adults; leaving the group without permission from supervising adults; leaving the group without being supervised and refusing to return to the group or classroom; or leaving the building unsupervised.
- 5) **Termination:** A child who must frequently be dismissed from the program will be terminated from the program if no sustained change in the unruly behavior occurs and the program is unable to ensure the safety of the child and others.

We reserve the right to terminate a child’s enrollment at the school at any time if we deem it necessary, without going through the above steps. This judgment will be discussed and determined by the Pre-K Teacher and Principal.

Discipline Policy

Children are always treated with love and respect. When a minor discipline problem exists, the child will be given verbal direction and redirection as the main means of guidance. If the problem persists, the child will be separated from the group while being supervised at all times. Most problems are corrected by sitting in the “think about it chair” for a few minutes.

Parents are encouraged to question staff if they are unclear about the handling of an incident.

Positive Behavior Practices

In the classroom, students will be given opportunities to develop decision-making skills to create a sense of responsibility and positive self-esteem. They will be given opportunities to make choices for themselves throughout the day, to help them be more proactive in making positive choices. Opportunities to make positive choices will be given. Some of these choices would include which area to play in during Learning Centers, what materials they would like to use in craft activities, snacks to eat from home or from school, and where they would like to sit. Guidance will be given based on the doctrine of the Roman Catholic church, so that they will find success in their decisions.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher conferences are held once per year. Parents may ask for a conference at any time during the year. For annual conferences, parents will be notified by the School notification system with information on the date and times available.

Accident/Incident Reports

All accidents and incidents are documented and parents will be asked to sign an acknowledgement. Parents will be called at the time of an injury if it appears serious in nature or requires medical attention. If a parent cannot be reached, the child may be transported to the hospital via ambulance. Ambulances do not transport children with non-life-threatening injuries without the parent present.

Incident reports record behavior-related events and are intended to inform the parent of the situation and follow-up discipline/guidance procedures. These reports must be signed by the parent and returned to the school.

Pets

Pre-K will occasionally have pets in the classroom. We may occasionally have an opportunity to have a pet visit the classroom for the day. If your child has a fear or allergy that is related to pets/animals, please let the teacher know so that she can prepare accordingly.

Transportation

There will be no bus service available for the 22-23 and 23-24 school year. All students should be dropped off in their designated (upper or lower) parking lot between 8:30-8:45 a.m. and proceed to their classrooms. Students in PreK, 1st, 2nd, & 3rd grades are dropped off in the upper parking lot. Students in grades K, 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8 are dropped off in the lower parking lot. No students should be dropped off until the teacher on duty is present. All doors are locked at 8:45 a.m. If it is after 8:45 a.m., parents must sign students in at the main office and they are considered tardy after 8:45 a.m. Parents are not permitted to bring students to the PreK building after 8:45 a.m. Parents must bring their child to the main office and a staff member will walk the child to their classroom.

Uniform

The uniform is the official St. Mary's School Physical Education clothing, which is purchased from Flynn and O'Hara (www.flynnohara.com). This uniform consists of a sweatshirt, shorts or sweatpants, and a t-shirt. Black or blue tennis shoes and white crew socks are to be worn every day. Student uniform items should be labeled with a child's last name. Students are allowed to be out of uniform on their birthday.

Snacks

Birthdays can be celebrated with a small, special snack at snack time that may be brought in by the parent. Ideas include cookies, donuts, small cupcakes. All treats must be the same. Notify the teacher in advance if you wish to provide a snack for your child's birthday. We must be careful of children with food allergies. No party invitations can be handed out unless the entire class is invited. Sensitive feelings need to be protected.

Field Trips

Educational Field trips may be planned throughout the year. There will be permission slips and information about the trip sent out in advance for the parents to sign and return. Parents must be in compliance with the Archdiocese of Washington's Child Protection Program to volunteer or chaperone at St. Mary's School. It is recommended that all children have a chaperone on field trips for safety purposes.

Sample Pre-K Daily Schedule

8:30-8:45 A.M.	Arrival/Morning Work
8:45-9:00 A.M.	Morning Prayers
9:00-9:15 A.M.	Morning Meeting (Calendar, Weather, Songs, etc.)
9:15-9:30 A.M.	Snack
9:30-10:00 A.M.	Letter/Phonemic Awareness Activity/Small Centers/Work Times
10:00-10:30 A.M.	Clean Up/Recess
10:30-10:45 A.M.	Circle Time (Story, Whole Group Lesson, etc.)
10:50-11:50 A.M.	Table Time/Small Groups/Centers
11:50-12:20 P.M.	Lunch
12:25-12:45 P.M.	Bathroom Break
12:45-1:50 P.M.	Nap
1:45-2:00 P.M.	Movement/Gross Motor/Outdoor Play
2:00-3:10 P.M.	Afternoon Activity/Religion/Centers
3:10-3:20 P.M.	Pack Up/Dismissal

Screen Time Policy

Our Little Angels Preschool offers a variety of teaching tools so children are not exposed to screen time on a daily basis. We do not have televisions or video games in our classroom. The teacher computer in the classroom is used for teacher-parent communication and is not used by the children. The computer is connected to a projector that is occasionally used to help the teacher convey movement activities or for other educational purposes. There will be a limit of no more than thirty minutes per week of "Passive Technology". Passive Technology is defined as non-interactive television, videos, and streaming media.



St. Mary's School

13735 Notre Dame Place
Bryantown, Maryland 20617

Catherine C. Silverstone 301-932-6883 301-843-3387 Principal "Nurturing a lifelong love for Jesus, each other, and learning" Fax: 301-274-0626

2023-2024 Pre-K Acknowledgment Form

I am registering my child/children for: ☐ Pre-K-3 5-Day Full-Day Program (8:45 a.m.-3:30 p.m.)
☐ Pre-K-3 3-Day (TWTH) Full-Day Program (8:45 a.m.-3:30 p.m.)
☐ Pre-K-4 Full-Day Program (8:45 a.m.-3:30 p.m.)

Child/Children's Name:

I have read and understand the contents of St. Mary's Little Angels Pre-K Information Packet.

Parent's/Guardian Signature

Please sign and return this form to school