

Saint James Elementary School Preschool Handbook



Introduction

Saint James Preschool is a part of Saint James Elementary School, Red Bank. SJES is a Catholic elementary school that provides a Catholic environment for academic education of youth, under the direction of the Education Office of the Diocese of Trenton, the pastor of Saint James Church, and the school administration. Saint James does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or ethnic origin in the acceptance of students.

Goals

Saint James Preschool, established in 1992, builds a strong foundation for academic success in the elementary years and beyond. Developmentally appropriate activities take place in a warm, nurturing Catholic environment. Our program is designed to provide for the development of the TOTAL child- the physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and spiritual growth. The atmosphere is both interactive and engaging, where young children grow in awareness of God, self, and others. Qualified and dedicated staff work with your child in helping them develop independence while gaining new knowledge and friendships. We strive to make your child's first experience a positive one, while meeting our young children's spiritual and academic needs.

3 Year Old Program ~ "Pre 3"

Saint James Preschool is the start of a wonderful journey for the 3 year old child. This class offers young children their first opportunity to interact with their peers. Our initial goal is to provide a comfortable transition from home to school, with supportive, caring teachers.

As they become increasingly independent, the children will participate in a variety of activities including art, Spanish, music, dramatic play, story time, puzzles, sand play, games, and outdoor playtime. Our classrooms are designed to have a positive and comfortable atmosphere where the children can meet new friends, and feel safe and secure while away from home. Learning to be part of the group involves sharing, listening skills, waiting one's turn, and trusting new adults.

Computers are increasingly a part of preschooler's lives. We believe that introducing technology to young minds, with iPads and SMARTboards, will enrich and enhance cognitive, emotional, linguistic, and literacy skills in our preschool children.

The focus at this age will include learning colors, shapes, letters, and numbers. They will be recognizing letters and numbers, and much of the software available with these technology tools will support that learning. It is a balance between structured learning and free play where they can create and explore.

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4 Year Old Program ~ “Pre K 4”

The 4 year old class is lively and challenging. Traditionally an exuberant age group, fours thrive on hands-on experiences. They rely less on teacher direction and pursue activities that interest them.

Building on the many activities introduced in the 3 year old program the year; the 4 year old program is more structured, offering a balance between academic readiness, teacher-student interaction, and large group play. Letter recognition is reviewed and children are introduced to letter sound and formation. The *Open Court* reading program reinforces the concepts of print with respect to reading and print directionality. Sight words are introduced and children experience reading success paving the way to a positive school experience. Our preschool program also encourages children to develop peer relationships. Children learn and play cooperatively while sharing and interacting with other students in group settings. Opportunities are provided to challenge children who are ready for pre-reading and pre-math activities. Our program’s emphasis is on building confidence and self-esteem as well as enthusiasm for learning.

Technology is an integral part of learning. Our children are introduced to the iPad and the interactive SMARTBoards, tools used to integrate our curriculum. The iPad offers unique opportunities for learning through exploration, creative problem solving, and self-guided instruction. Teachers use apps that help reinforce pre-reading skills, sequencing, sound-letter recognition and patterns. These applications help young students learn important concepts while having fun all through the use of their tiny fingertips. SMARTBoards are used in the classrooms both for teaching and as an interactive learning experience for the students.

Transitional Kindergarten Program ~ “TK”

The *TK* program is designed to ease the transition to full-day kindergarten as well as provide children with a challenging and exciting program. *TK* is an excellent alternative for children not yet ready for a full day kindergarten. Children who are young chronologically or emotionally usually benefit from an additional year before formal schooling. Extra time helps them develop confidence, independence, and enthusiasm for school - all necessary tools for kindergarten success.

Classes meet five days a week. The curriculum includes a balance of traditional early childhood activities as well as reading and math readiness activities appropriate for older fours and young five year olds. Reading instruction focuses on letter recognition, sound and formation. The *Open Court* reading program is used to introduce sight words and reading readiness skills such as reading directionality and comprehension. Children begin to experience success early on and develop a love of reading.

Technology has become an essential part of daily life and we incorporate technology in our schools with iPads and SMARTBoards to enrich the ways in which our teachers teach and our students learn. Using these areas of technology as a tool for learning, we focus on letter recognition, letter sounds, number recognition, counting, writing, pre-reading skills, and simple addition and subtraction. The iPad will also allow the teachers to focus on social/emotional needs, such as taking turns, being a good friend and sharing. The teachers have found that using the iPad encourages students to expand their ability to acquire information, solve problems, and communicate with others. SMARTBoards are used in the classrooms both for teaching and as an interactive learning experience for the students.

PRESCHOOL HOURS:

3 Year Old Program

3 day session - Monday/Wednesday/Friday 8:45 – 1:45 PM

5 day session - Monday through Friday 8:45 – 1:45 PM

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4 Year Old Program

3 day session - Monday/Wednesday/Friday 8:45 – 1:45 PM

5 day session - Monday through Friday 8:45 – 1:45 PM

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Transitional Kindergarten

Monday through Friday 8:45 – 1:45 PM

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The ABC's of Saint James Preschool

Admission:

A child must be 3 years of age by October 1 to be admitted to the 3 Year Old Program. A child must be 4 years of age by October 1 to be admitted to the 4 Year Old Program. Children must be independent in their toileting skills (i.e. potty trained) to be admitted to our preschool, and they must display the skills and maturity needed to thrive in our programs.

In certain cases, a child may be admitted on a *probationary basis*: If your child will turn 3 by December 31, is toilet trained, and you feel that your child is emotionally ready to attend preschool, then an exception may be made. The child is accepted into the program on a tentative basis, (an 8 week probationary time frame), pending a determination of the child's ability to adjust to the school environment. The decision of the principal is final.

Saint James Preschool requires a New Jersey medical/immunization form to ensure the health and safety of all our students. We cannot admit any child without his/her medical form.

Arrival:

Please have your child at school on time. It is important for children to be in their classroom when activities begin, and late arrivals disrupt the learning environment for all the students in the class. There is no parking on Peters Place during the school year. Preschool students are met at their cars by the preschool aides and brought to the foyer or their classroom where they are greeted by their teachers. Please remain in your car until the line moves forward and your car is at the front entrance of the school. Cars should be in "PARK" when children are exiting car. Drop off time is 8:30 - 8:40 AM. Please do not arrive prior to 8:30AM. Classes proceed to the preschool classrooms at 8:40 AM. Class begins promptly at 8:45 AM.

Please do not make U-turns on Peters Place but proceed down Peters Place to Maple Avenue.

Attendance/Illness

Although being able to attend school on a regular basis is essential to each child's progress please do not send a sick child to school. If your child has a contagious illness, e.g. chicken pox, strep, head lice, please notify our school nurse at once. If you know your child will be out of school, please send in a note to the teacher or leave a message on the business office phone line (732) 741-3363 press #2 for attendance. This voice mail is a 24 hour service, so calls can be made at any time you realize your child will be absent. Voicemail messages will be reviewed and reconciled with the daily attendance by 9:15 AM.

Parents are to complete the Parent Portal COVID-19 Check Report EACH DAY by 7AM if your child is attending morning EDP and by 8AM otherwise.

- If a student comes to school and school personnel **cannot** confirm that the Parent Portal COVID-19 Check was conducted, that child's temperature will be taken upon entry to the building and parents will be called. **FOR EVERYONE'S SAFETY AND WELL BEING WE ASK THAT ALL INDIVIDUALS CONDUCT THE DAILY HOME SCREENING CHECK LIST AT HOME.**

Please refer to Saint James Preschool Reopening Plan for COVID-19 for more information.

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Birthdays

Birthdays may be celebrated at school. Please let us know a few days ahead so we can plan a special surprise for your child. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Epidemic, students will not be distributing special treats from home. Items should be store bought and individually wrapped as well as nut free. School policy does not permit us to distribute party invitations at school.

Communications:

Parents are kept abreast of policies, procedures, and other information on a regular basis via: eBlasts (Be sure to subscribe via or website), the school's website, the teacher's eBoard and *Google Classroom*, *Saint James Preschool Newsletter* (monthly issues). Parents are urged to check the school's website www.mysaintjames.com as this site is continuously updated and contains a wide variety of information on activities, events, opportunities, PTA news, and helpful links. Information be sure to also follow us on Facebook.

Clothing:

We encourage children to handle dressing themselves; therefore, we suggest no overalls, belts, etc. Clothing should be comfortable and washable. Comfortable play clothes will enable them to participate actively without worrying about good clothes. Sneakers are required (dress shoes often slip on smooth floors and on climbers outside). Please dress your child for the weather – we go outside every day. Put your child's name on all articles of clothing worn to school, including boots. In order to encourage independence and self-esteem, we suggest you practice dressing with your child, including buttons and zippers. Children attending preschool must be **toilet trained and out of diapers or pull-ups**.

Since occasional bathroom accidents may occur in preschool, please ensure that we have a season appropriate set of extra clothing for your child. If your child's clothing gets wet, the teacher will contact you via email or phone. The teacher and/or aide will guide your child into changing his/her clothing. The teacher nor the aide will wipe your child's bottom. They will instruct the child with the appropriate ways to wipe themselves. If your child has soiled clothing, the child will be accompanied to the Nurse. The Nurse will assist the child in dressing and cleaning. The Nurse will contact you.

Conferences:

Parent conferences are held in October, November, and January - depending on the age of the child. You will receive a conference slip the week before stating the date and time. We look forward to seeing you and having the opportunity to discuss your child's progress. In order to be able to discuss your child comfortably, **children are not to attend the conference**. If you would like an appointment at any other time during the school year, please drop us a note or call the school office to schedule a time. We are always here to listen to your questions or concerns.

Dismissal:

The children will be brought to their designated pick up locations beginning at 1:30PM. We ask that you please not begin to line up any earlier than 1:20PM.

3 Year Old Class ~ Enter via Gold Street parking entrance ~ Proceed to pick up location between SJES and RBC

4 Year Old Classes ~ Enter Peters Place via Broad Street towards main entrance of school

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TK Class ~ Enter via Gold Street parking entrance ~ Proceed to pick up location between side playground and SJES

At both arrival and dismissal we ask that you do not get out of your cars but rather pull up to designated area in caravan style. Aides will put children in the car but will not buckle. Please pull forward towards the playground, away from the caravan line, in order to safely buckle your child. You may also park on an adjacent street and wait for your child at the front entrance of the school.

Please do not make U-turns on Peters Place but proceed down Peters Place to Maple Avenue.

Emergency Numbers:

If an emergency occurs at school, parents are called first. If you cannot be reached, we will call your emergency numbers (on registration form) to pick up your child. It is crucial that you or your emergency contact is accessible by phone. Please list two relatives or friends who are in the area of school and are available to come for your child quickly during school hours. It is crucial that you or your emergency contact is accessible by phone. Please update emergency contacts as needed during the school year.

Holiday Parties:

We celebrate four holidays in Preschool- Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. Parties are usually planned for the school day closest to the holiday itself. Room parents will call several parents for donations of cookies, juice and paper goods for each party. Our room parents in each class will also call you periodically during the school year to tell you about special plans or events.

Photo Release:

During the course of the school year Saint James will use photographs of our preschool students on display boards in our foyer, in our monthly preschool newsletter, Facebook and preschool publications that are sent home. Any such photos would highlight the students demonstrating learning techniques or participating in school activities. In accordance with school policy, names of individual students will not be released with any photographs.

If you prefer that your child's photo not be used in any school activities, please indicate your wishes on the photo release form that you will receive at the beginning of the school year.

Saint James Before and After School Care

Saint James Preschool offers both before and after school care for children who are currently enrolled in the school. Our program is designed to be a safe, stimulating environment for students whose family situations or schedules require childcare before and after school.

We truly hope to make our extended day program as close as possible to a day at home. We want the children enrolled in the program to feel comfortable and relaxed. We want our working parents to feel and know that their children are being cared for in a warm, caring, and safe learning environment under the guidance of a loving and dedicated staff.

Our program will operate only on days when school is in session. In order for your child to attend, your child must be registered for this program. Please call the Business Office at 732 741-3363 for more information.

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- Before school program hours are 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM. This early morning program will offer a low-key atmosphere that provides children with a positive transition to the school day. Children can choose activities such as quiet reading/story time, arts and crafts and table games. Parents of preschool students using the early drop off program must walk their preschooler to the front entrance to meet staff.
- After school program hours are 1:45 PM - 5:30 PM. This afternoon program offers children an opportunity to wind down from the school day. The program includes a nutritious snack, quiet time, and arts and crafts. Our staff encourages creativity, socialization and exploration, outdoor and indoor free play in an independent, and/or teacher directed classroom type environment.

School Messenger - Instant Parent Contact

Keeping parents informed and involved helps to assure student safety and improve student success. With today's on-the-go lifestyles, it has become more difficult for schools to reach families quickly and effectively. This is why our school has implemented a system called School Messenger - Instant Parent Contact System.

School Messenger is an essential tool for notification and communication. Within minutes of an emergency, school officials can use this telephone broadcast system to deliver a single, clear message to the students' parents or guardians by telephone, cell phone, or e-mail in any combination. The system can be used to notify you of a school closing, or early closing, schedule changes or important school information.

Snack and Lunch

Bring a backpack every day to hold personal belongings and a small lunch box for snacks and lunch. Children will have a small snack in the morning. Be sure the nutritious snack is something your child can open, handle easily, and can be eaten in 15 minutes. On the early dismissal days, children will bring snack and drink only, no lunch is necessary. Please be aware that we cannot refrigerate or heat up a child's lunch. Be sure to label all lunch boxes and water bottles.

If your child is on a special diet or has food allergies, please see the teacher. Saint James Preschool is a nut free zone.

All food must be free of nuts and nut products.

Snow Closing /Emergency Closings:

Our website www.mysaintjames.com will also alert parents to the status of school in the event of inclement weather or a school emergency which would result in early dismissal or late arrival of students. School closings are also announced through our emergency contact system, School Messenger, via phone, e-mail and text. Information is also posted on the Saint James Facebook Page.

Our Preschool Staff

Principal Mrs. JoAnn Giordano

Vice-Principal Mrs. Catherine Golden

Early Childhood Director Ms. Kira Nelsen

Preschool Teachers

Mrs. Tara Cavendish
Mrs. Elizabeth Hempstead
Ms. Julia Lista
Mrs. Catherine Villani
Mrs. Cara Pearsall
Mrs. Nancy Gray

Preschool Aides

Ms. Alexandra Antico
Mrs. Denise Burke
Ms. Jillian Casey
Mrs. Carole Costell
Mrs. Karen Kane
Mrs. Jill Kozack
Mrs. Rebecca Roberts

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EARLY DISMISSAL DAYS FOR 2020 – 2021

DISMISSAL IS AT 11:30 AM.

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday 9/1
Wednesday 9/2
Thursday 9/3
Wednesday 9/23

OCTOBER

Wednesday 10/14
Wednesday 10/30

NOVEMBER

Wednesday 11/11
Wednesday 11/25

DECEMBER

Wednesday 12/9
Tuesday 12/22

JANUARY

Wednesday 1/20

FEBRUARY

Wednesday 2/24

MARCH

Wednesday 3/31

MAY

Wednesday 5/5
Friday 5/38