

St. Gerard

Preschool Child Care



Family Handbook

St. Gerard Catholic School
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Preschool Website: www.stgerardpreschool.org

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St. Gerard Tax-Exempt #: 38-6038198

Revised October, 2017

The faculty and administration welcome you and your family to St. Gerard School as we begin another academic year. The catholic school difference is reflected in our mission that permeates the total formation and educational process and lives of our students, families and faculty.

At St. Gerard, we strive to be a community of believers sharing in experience of faith and values. These values lead to solidarity with the people of God, promoting the dignity of the human person, the importance of family, an option for the poor and vulnerable and acts of charity and justice.

The family and school serve important functions in the formation and education of all of our children. We see this as a partnership. The quality of parent-teacher relationships during this time will have an influence upon your child throughout their formative years. Parents are asked to be as actively involved as possible within the school community. Volunteering your time and talents will mean something special to your child. We wish you and your family a successful and faith-filled year at St. Gerard. May God continue to bless your family and the St. Gerard community always.

Sincerely,

Shelly Piecuch
Principal

Welcome to St. Gerard Preschool and Child Care. We are excited to offer a quality program for the children and parents in our community. We strive to continue the exceptional tradition that is evident throughout our school.

Our staff continues to work hard implementing the latest strategies and developmentally appropriate techniques for teaching and working with children, in a Christ centered environment.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year and many new and exciting experiences. Our doors are always open.

Chris Ehrenberger
Preschool Director

David A. Gutierrez
Child Care Director

This is a combined preschool and child care handbook. Many of the procedures outlined here are the same within both programs. Any procedural differences are clearly noted. After the Program Mission Statement, Philosophy, Governance and Foundations of Our Programs sections, all information headings are listed alphabetically.

MISSION STATEMENT

St. Gerard Preschool and Child Care are part of the St. Gerard Catholic community whose purpose is to nurture children and encourage growth and development spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Within this Christian environment, students will recognize God's goodness in themselves and others.

PHILOSOPHY

We focus on developing the whole child to build on new experiences and skills. It is our goal to facilitate a balance between child-directed and teacher-supported interactions where children can explore their interests and engage with their peers.

GOVERNANCE

Child Care and Preschool are auxiliary programs of St. Gerard School, operated for the benefit of our students under the authority of St. Gerard Parish. We are licensed by the State of Michigan and adhere to the laws and standards set forth by the State of Michigan Children and Adult Licensing Division. Policies are coordinated between school administration and the directors of the Preschool and Child Care Programs. Please read this booklet carefully, and review the material with your child.

FOUNDATION OF OUR PROGRAMS

The Child

Provide experiences for learning about God.

Provide for a well-rounded education in the areas of social, emotional, physical and intellectual development.

Provide children opportunities for success that will help develop self-confidence and build self-esteem.

Provide opportunities for discovery that will unlock creativity and challenge independent thinking.

Nurture children and help them become active members of the group.

The School

Experience the joy of school in a Catholic environment.

Provide a safe, organized, happy atmosphere where children feel comfortable and secure.

Promote an atmosphere of respect for self and others.

Ensure that the child's first school experiences are successful and happy.

The Curriculum

Provide a good foundation of spiritual development.

Provide a strong foundation for educational success.

Provide a curriculum that promotes an understanding of children as individuals.

Develop social, emotional, physical and intellectual skills by providing hands-on experiences.

Provide a relaxed, interactive atmosphere with opportunities for play.

Teach positive, non-violent means of conflict resolution.

The Family

Help families guide their children in the development of their faith.

Provide an open communication with families.

Promote the understanding that family support is critical for the success of the child and school.

The Staff

Surround our children with caring, dedicated, qualified adults that have a unique love for working with children and can see the wonder of God through the eyes of a child.

ADMISSION / WITHDRAWAL POLICY & FEES

New preschool students must be 3 years old or 4 years old on or before September 1 of the school year in which they are enrolling. A birth certificate and a baptismal certificate must be presented at the time of registration. A complete immunization record and health appraisal form must also be presented by the first day of school. Any restrictions shall be noted

The St. Gerard Child Care Program is for the use of St. Gerard School students. Every child must be registered in the school to participate in the program (with the exception of the summer program). There is **no drop-in care**.

Registration fees (as outlined in the registration packets for both programs) are non-refundable. Our school year program operates on a **monthly billing system**. We average the cost of the program over a 9 month period. This makes billing consistent for families. Some families have more days than other. Effectively, there is no daily rate, with the exception of Extended Care Days.

December may have 15 days of school or care while March may have 20. Yet the fee per month is the same. Additionally, there is no monthly charge for child care at the end of the school year (June dates). These days in June help offset any potential snow days. (Credit will not be issued for snow days). In the event that child care is closed for more than 6 days, we will offer a 10% discount for the month of March child care.

All families are required to pay the annual registration fee per student/per program. Billings occur August 15th – April 15th. Fees are due monthly and in advance of service. Fees are based on enrollment, not attendance. There are no adjustments for absences.

Anyone withdrawing from either program forfeits all registration fees. Anyone wishing to reenter the program must pay another registration fee. These fees are used for the purchase of equipment for the programs. Current participants have priority for the following year. Registration in either program is complete when the following conditions are met:

- Completed Payment Agreement (child care)/Completed Enrollment on SMART Tuition (preschool)
- Registration Fee paid
- All enrollment forms completed and turned in
- Child Care enrollment for school year requires confirmation of St. Gerard School enrollment

Withdrawal requests, for both child care and preschool must be made in writing at least two weeks prior to the child's last day. All credits due to withdrawal will be returned by way of check or credit towards any school program that the child continues to be enrolled in. All balances due must be paid prior to the child's last day in a program.

All payments should be paid through SMART Tuition. SMART Tuition fees are due on the **15th** day of each month. If fees are not received, a \$25.00 late fee will be assessed. If fees are not received by the 25th day of the month, the child will not be allowed to attend the program until the fees become current. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to see that fees are paid when due. When an account is late two consecutive months, the child's placement in the program will be reevaluated. If a check is returned for insufficient funds, there will be a \$30.00 service fee.

Fees are based on enrollment, not attendance. There is no adjustment for absences. Vacation days, half days, and early release days are not calculated into the monthly fee. Child care families will be notified in advance and given the opportunity to sign up for these special days.

Summer care is scheduled by families on a monthly basis through SMART Tuition, with schedules and payment due by the 15th of the month prior to the month that care is provided. A separate registration packet and other required documents must be submitted prior to attendance.

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Preschool children should be dropped off and picked up at their child's scheduled preschool start and end times. The parking lot in front of the school (North lot) is reserved for preschool families to park and bring children in and out of the building. Please park in this area only. The circle area is reserved for buses. Do not pull up at the door to drop your child off and under no circumstances leave your car running when dropping off or picking up. Please be on time for preschool drop off and pick up. If we are all patient and follow the rules, everyone's day will be off to a great start and our little ones will remain safe.

When dropping children off or picking them up please enter or leave in the lot designated for parent/guardian parking. Parents/guardians are expected to respect the flags that are placed across driveways during the school day and during child care hours for the protection of all of our children. It is extremely important that parents/guardians sign children in when dropping off at child care, making certain that an adult is present. Parents must also sign children when picking up.

Preschool and child care children will be released *only* to a person specified on the Child Information Record. Notice must be given to a staff member if a child is to be picked up by a person not designated on the emergency card. **Anyone picking up a child may be subject to a check of his or her picture identification.** If a person without permission attempts to pick up a child from care, the center reserves the right to call the police in the matter. Please know that these rules are for the protection of our children.

Preschool and child care staff work together to ensure that preschool children attending child care are picked up and dropped off accordingly. Child care staff are responsible for transitioning children to and from preschool when enrolled in the child care program.

Children are to be picked up at child care by the normal closing time of 6:00pm each evening. A late fee of \$25.00 (per family) will be charged if a child is picked up after 6 pm, but prior to 6:15 pm. After

6:15 pm, the late fee will increase to \$50. Constant disregard to this policy may result in disenrollment from child care.

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential to a student's adjustment to preschool. It is also important for the purpose of skill building and maintaining routine procedures.

A child should not come to school sick. If a child will be absent from the program, whether that absence is due to illness or activities, parents/guardians must contact the child care office if the absence pertains to the child care program and contact the school office if the absence pertains to the preschool program. It is important that the staff know whether or not to expect a child. If you decide to make a change in your child's enrollment or withdraw from the program, you must notify the office in writing at least two weeks in advance.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

It is very important for emergency and administrative reasons that every student maintains an up-to-date address record at the school office, child care office and preschool classrooms. Notify the school immediately if you have a change of address or if your emergency numbers change during the school year. Please note that a separate notification must also be made to the child care and preschool programs.

COMMUNICATIONS

It is extremely important that ongoing communication takes place between school and home. Methods of communication include:

- Newsletters: Frequent newsletters will keep families up to date with teaching themes and activities within our programs.
- Calendar: Preschool snack and activity calendars will be sent home monthly. An all-school lunch and activity calendar, as well as a child care calendar will also be provided.
- Parent Volunteer Sign Up: Parents will have the opportunity to volunteer in the classroom. Sign up forms will be provided periodically.
- Conferences: Parents will be notified when preschool conferences are scheduled in the spring.
- Website: St. Gerard's website, www.stgerardschool.org is a good source of information for a variety of St. Gerard programs. Preschool also have a separate website, www.stgerardpreschool.org, which can be accessed through the school website. The websites are updated regularly.
- School Messenger: Frequent updates, by email through School Messenger, will be sent out by child care to keep families up to date with important information and activities.

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

All staff are held to a confidentiality agreement. All documents and information provided for the programs are kept confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone other than the parents/guardians. Parents/guardians and caregivers visiting the classroom will abide by the confidentiality policy of the programs in regards to children in the classroom. Matters involving student's names, family information, or anything discussed in the classroom are to be kept confidential.

CULTURAL COMPETENCY / SPECIAL NEEDS PLAN

Part of the mission of St. Gerard Preschool and Child Care, is to instill the importance of understanding and respect for individual differences, whether those differences are based on gender, national origin, religion, race, culture, ethnic background, age, disability, physical characteristics, or other factors which are unrelated to the individual's education. Discrimination, inappropriate statements, or conduct on the basis of such differences is not only contrary to law, but is expressly contrary to the principles and the mission of our programs. We therefore prohibit actions indicating a lack of tolerance, any harassment or other inappropriate statements or conduct toward individuals on the basis of any of the foregoing factors. Should such an incident occur, children are encouraged to bring it to the attention of a staff member, and staff members are encouraged to intervene on behalf of those who are the target. Any individual who demonstrates a lack of respect for individual differences may be subject to educational and corrective action by the programs. Corrective action may range from a conference with school administrators to expulsion from the program. Educational action may include required participation in activities or programs designed to increase understanding and respect for individual differences.

When staff or parents/legal guardians feel that a student demonstrates a behavioral or learning disability, the following steps are followed during the referral process:

1. Identify the child's behavior/learning disability or parent/legal guardian request.
2. Collect data about the child's behavior/learning disability.
3. Seek resources within our building (i.e. staff and materials).
4. The school team provides a necessary plan for the individual child.
5. Parents/guardians and the school team work together to provide a specific plan for the child.
6. The school team implements the specific plan.
7. Parents/guardians and the school team meet to reevaluate the plan and make necessary changes.

Regardless of the level of need of a child, staff will work in partnership with the child's parents/guardians and school specialists to ensure that the best possible environment is provided for their child.

CUSTODY SITUATIONS

In cases of custodial situations, the custodial parent/guardian must be the parent/guardian to fill out the registration papers and emergency cards. In cases where the non-custodial parent/guardian is not allowed to have contact with the child, the school will need a copy of the divorce decree or

restraining order. The school needs to be notified of any changes in custody arrangements. The custodial parent/guardian will be notified in all cases requiring parental/guardian contact.

DAILY SCHEDULES

Daily classroom/program schedules may vary. A daily classroom schedule is posted within each classroom. Posted schedules are for guidance only and may be altered at any time. Below are samples of preschool and child care schedules:

3 and 4 Year Old Preschool

- Arrival
 - Carpet Time
 - Stories/Songs
 - Centers
 - Snack
 - Religion/Music/Recess/Gym
 - Free Choice
 - Large Group
 - Dismissal
- ***Times and order of activities
may vary between classrooms.

3 and 4 Year Old Child Care

7:00-8:15	Welcome and Choice Time (AM preschool children transition to preschool from 7:45-8:00)
8:15-9:00	Large Group Time and Additional Activities
9:00-9:30	Snack Time
9:30-10:00	Small Group Activities
10:00-10:40	Recess (AM preschool children arrive at child care at 10:20)
10:40-11:00	Large Group Time
11:00-11:45	Lunch (PM preschool children transition to preschool from 11:30-11:45)
11:45-12:20	Choice Time
12:20-12:50	Recess
12:50-2:20	Rest Time (PM preschool children arrive at child care at 2:20)
2:20-3:00	Snack Time
3:00-3:45	Recess
3:45-4:30	Large Group Activities
4:30-6:00	Choice Time

Before School Child Care (Grades k-7)

7:-7:40	Welcome and Choice Time
7:40-7:45	Children escorted to classroom lines in preparation for going to school

After School Child Care (Grades K-7)

2:40-3:10	Sign in / Snack (children may also change out of school uniforms)
3:10-4:00	Recess
4:00-4:45	Homework Time / Crafts
4:45-5:00	Transition to combined child care classrooms
5:00-6:00	Choice Time

DISCIPLINE

The discipline, language, and harassment policies that are contained in the St. Gerard School Parent/Guardian Handbook will be followed in the preschool and child care programs.

Diocesan Regulation #5414 states: The essence of Christian discipline wherein a student is brought to an awareness that true freedom and the ability to direct one's actions responsibly are synonymous. In order to assist the student in achieving such discipline, clearly stated expectations and responsibilities as well as consistent and patient direction by teachers is necessary.

Love and Logic lends itself to a philosophy of discipline for children that reinforces diocesan goals of self-discipline. LOVE allows children to grow through their mistakes. LOGIC allows them to live with the consequences of their actions.

Discipline is NOT punishment, but a means to encourage self-control and personal responsibility for one's own actions. Our staff will maintain consistent, reasonable rules and boundaries for the children, as well as model and encourage appropriate behavior. At no time will physical punishment such as spanking, pinching, or slapping be used on any child while in care. Staff members will not intentionally humiliate or shame a child. Children will not be denied meals, snacks, rest, or use of toilet facilities as a means of punishment.

The following practices will be in use:

- Rules and expectations will be clearly communicated.
- Inappropriate behavior will be dealt with on a non-threatening individual basis. Helping the child to understand the inappropriateness of his/her actions and giving the child the opportunity to correct his/her behavior will be emphasized.
- The staff will redirect when necessary. During redirecting, the child will be asked to think of a more appropriate way to act, and how the problem could have been avoided. The staff member and child will process the problem until the child is able to articulate positive alternatives. Appropriate choices will always be provided.
- Families will be notified of any ongoing problems so that staff and families may work together to remedy problems.

Our programs are a very positive experience for most children. However, they may not be the appropriate experience for every child or for the same child at different stages of development. Every effort will be made to communicate and solve behavior problems. However, we reserve the right to ask any family to dis-enroll their child from our programs for the welfare of the child or of the group.

DRESS CODE / EXTRA CLOTHES

The children in child care and preschool will spend much of the time in active play. Children should be dressed in clothing that is neat and clean, yet comfortable. Jeans, t-shirts and sweats are acceptable. Midriff-baring tops and t-shirts printed with violent or inappropriate pictures or messages are not acceptable. Tennis shoes are preferred. Flip flops, sandals and knee-hi boots are a danger. Clothing for outdoor play is required when weather permits.

We ask that parents/guardians supply a complete, labeled change of clothing, including extra underwear and socks. School-age children will be provided an opportunity to change from school uniforms to street clothes at the beginning of after school care each day.

Every attempt will be made to provide a time for children to play outdoors on a daily basis. Please make certain that your child has appropriate clothing for cold weather, and that all boots, caps, mittens, snow pants, etc., have your child's name on them. We will only stay inside if there is inclement weather or if the temperature falls below 20° for preschool-age children or 0° for school-age children. The wind chill and other weather factors are taken into consideration when ultimately making the decision to go outside or not.

EMERGENCIES AND SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Cancellation of school takes place only during extraordinary circumstances such as extreme weather, equipment failure or public crisis. The school administration is well aware of the hardship that can be caused by an abrupt cancellation. Therefore, school will not be closed unless a significant safety risk has been created by unusual circumstances. Every practical means is used to notify families of an impending cancellation including public service announcements on TV, school messenger, the school website, and possibly other social media outlets. If St. Gerard School closes due to inclement weather, preschool and child care are also closed.

Tornado, Fire, Crisis Management, Natural or Man-Made Disasters, Lockdown and Serious Accident/Illness/Injury procedures are posted in each classroom, and are on file in the child care and preschool director's offices. In an emergency, a parent/guardian will be called to pick up children as soon as it is safe to do so. We are not able to allow individuals in or out of the building during actual or practice lockdowns.

FIELD TRIPS

Preschool field trips to nearby points of interest may be scheduled by teachers throughout the school year. Preschool field trips require parent-transport. Child care field trips will be scheduled for the summer child care program only. Guidelines for trips outside the building will be explained before the trip. All field trips require parents/guardians to complete a permission slip in order to participate. These permission slips are provided in a timely fashion, prior to the trip. Additional field trip fees may apply.

FOOD SERVICE POLICY

Lunches may be purchased through the hot lunch program at St. Gerard School for preschool children that attend child care, or students may bring a sack lunch. **Please refrain from sending food that needs to be warmed up. Our child care lunch time is a very busy time and warming meals up poses a difficulty for our program.** Milk may also be purchased. Hot lunches and milk are ordered online from the 18th-25th of the month for the next month. You may access the hot lunch program through the St. Gerard School website. Families will receive a school lunch calendar each month.

Child care provides both a morning and afternoon snack for children attending child care during snack time. A monthly snack menu is posted at the parent/guardian table within the child care hallway. Preschool snacks are provided by families as indicated by preschool teachers.

If your child has any special dietary needs or food allergies, please provide written documentation and discuss thoroughly with the preschool and child care staff accordingly. We will comply with licensing rule 400.8330(3) to ensure children with special dietary needs receive meals/snacks in accordance with the child's needs. No child will be deprived of **any** meal while in attendance of one of our programs.

GRIEVANCE POLICY

The goal of the Child Care and Preschool Programs is to provide a high quality educational experience and care for all children. We believe that each child and family is entitled to a warm, welcoming and caring environment where all children can learn and develop through play and exploration.

All families are encouraged to express their concerns about either program to the classroom staff or administration at any time. This may be done by email, letter, phone or a conference. We believe all children and parents/guardians are entitled to prompt and careful attention to any concerns or grievances that may occur. We welcome suggestions on how to improve our programs and will give serious attention to any concerns. We anticipate that most concerns will be resolved quickly and in the best interest of all those involved.

HEALTH CARE PLAN (R.5111B)

The safety of the children is our main focus at St. Gerard. The following is a preschool and child care health plan that has been put in place to help reduce the likelihood of infection, decrease the occurrence of contamination, and provides a plan of attack if illness or contamination does occur.

Hand Washing

Staff are constantly washing their hands to help prevent contamination and the spread of infection. The staff especially wash their hands before and after serving snacks or lunch (gloves are also worn when serving food to the children), after touching contaminated items, such as clothing or toys, after using the restroom, and any other time we see fit.

Our staff also encourages the children to wash their hands frequently. Children are required to wash their hands before and after eating, after playing outside, after blowing their nose, after using the restroom, and at any other time we see fit.

Hand Washing Steps that are used :

(These Steps are also posted by every hand washing sink at preschool and child care)

- Use liquid soap and running water
- Rub hand vigorously for at least 10 seconds, washing everywhere:
 - Back of hands / Wrists / Between Fingers / Under Fingernails
- Rinse well
- Dry hands with paper towel
- Turn off water using paper towel, not clean hands

Handling children's bodily fluids

When handling children's bodily fluids, there are many precautions we use. These precautions include:

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- Using a barrier, such as disposable gloves, when there is anticipation of touching blood, bodily fluids, or contaminated surfaces and avoid touching the outside of contaminated gloves upon removal.
- Discarding of used gloves or any other contaminated material in an appropriate container or place.
- Contaminated clothing placed in a sealed leak proof bag or container and placed where it can be secure until parents/guardians are able to pick it up for disposal.
- Washing hands /other skin surfaces immediately after contact with blood or other bodily fluids.
- Disinfecting of any contaminated surfaces or objects with a germicidal agent.

If a staff member or child does happen to become exposed to blood or other bodily fluids, the affected skin is immediately washed with soap and warm water and eyes and exposed mucous membranes are flushed with large amounts of water. If a staff member has become exposed, any necessary treatment will begin immediately. If a child has been exposed, any necessary treatment will begin, an incident report is filled out, and parents are notified.

Cleaning/sanitizing equipment, toys, and surfaces

Tables and surfaces are given a general cleaning daily. Tables are washed with a germicidal agent after each use, whether arts and craft related or food related, and then again at the open and close of the day. Toys and equipment are thoroughly sanitized by a bleach and water mixture (1/4 cup regular bleach to one gallon of cool water) or laundered and checked for damage regularly throughout the year. However, routine cleaning and damage evaluation of heavily used toys is performed daily using a proper germicidal agent. If a toy has been used by an ill child or put into a child's mouth, the toy is sanitized with a bleach and water solution (one tablespoon bleach to one quart of cool water).

Controlling Infections (Universal Precautions)

All staff will be Blood Borne Pathogen trained within 6 months of hire, to ensure knowledge of controlling infections and using universal precautions. If staff member comes into contact with blood or other bodily fluids they are considered infectious and protective equipment, i.e. gloves, will be worn, all materials will be removed and disposed of in proper containers and the area will be appropriately disinfected before use by others.

All children enrolled in St. Gerard are required to have immunizations showing a minimum of 1 dose of each immunizing agent specified by the Department of Community Health (or a waiver) and all St. Gerard preschool and child care staff are required to have on file a report, signed by a licensed physician, stating that they are free from communicable tuberculosis.

If a child becomes ill while attending St. Gerard Child Care, he/she will be separated from the other children, and parents (or other authorized adult if parents are not able to be reached) will be notified to pick up the child.

St. Gerard School Health Policy

SYMPTOM	POLICY
Temperature of 100 degrees or above	Child must be picked up immediately. Child may return after 24 hours of normal temperature without medication (i.e. Children's Tylenol, etc.).
Untreated eye infection (pink eye)	Child may return after 24 hours with medication.
Rashes	Unidentified rashes need a doctor's written confirmation that it is not contagious. If treatment is needed, child/employee may return after 12 hours.
Scabies/lice	Child may return after 24 hours of treatment. Classroom parents will be notified.
Recurring diarrhea	Child may return after 24 hours without a repeat incident or with a doctor's confirmation that the condition is not contagious.
Vomiting	Child may return after 24 hours without an incident
Contagious disease (chicken pox, measles, mumps, roseola)	Child may return after sores have scabbed over. Classroom parents will be notified.
Strep throat/tonsillitis	Child/employee may return after 24 hours of treatment with medication.

These policies have attempted to address the most common illnesses. This list is not all-inclusive.

In the event a child becomes **ill or injured** at school, the child will be cared for temporarily by a staff member. School personnel will render first aid treatment only. If emergency medical treatment is necessary, parents/guardians will be contacted. If parents/guardians are not available, the child will be transported to the emergency room of the nearest hospital. Parents/guardians will be responsible for any financial liability incurred from this transportation.

All **illnesses, accidents, injuries or incidents** will be reported to parents/guardians in a timely fashion. In some instances, parents/guardians may be required to sign an illness, injury or incident form to acknowledge that they have received notice of such from a staff member. Copies of all

reports are available upon request. In the event that an incident or injury involves another child, staff are not permitted to share the identity of that child in discussion or in written reports

HOURS OF OPERATION

Hours for the Child Care Program are 7:00am-6:00pm. The Child Care Program is open every day that school is in session. On Extended Care Days (days in which school is not in session or is released early), child care may be available at an additional cost. The Child Care Center is closed for much of Christmas Break and all of Spring Break. The Child Care Center is also closed for the following holidays: Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving, Good Friday, President's Day and Memorial Day.

Preschool is in session 8 AM-10:30 AM (doors open at 7:50 am) and 11:45 am-2:15 pm. 3 year old preschool operates Tuesday through Thursday and 4 year old preschool operates Monday through Thursday.

ITEMS FROM HOME

Items brought from home are often difficult to share and may easily become lost or broken. For this reason, we discourage bringing these items to school. Special stuffed toys or blankets are fine to bring for use during child care rest/nap time.

MANDATED REPORTERS

Under the Child Protection Law, 1975 PA 238, child care/preschool providers are mandated to immediately report any instances where there is reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or neglect to Children's Protective Services. Failure to report abuse or neglect is a crime that can result in legal penalties.

MEDICATION

Medicating an individual is a serious responsibility. If you must bring medication to school, the following requirements must be met in accordance with Law SB 261, Section 378:

1. The parent/guardian must bring the medication to school and give to a staff member.
2. The container of medicine must be clearly marked as to dosage and directions for administering.
3. For non-prescriptive medications, written directions should be given instructing the designated person to administer the medicine.
4. A "Medication Release Form" must be signed by the parent/guardian to permit the designated person to administer the medication.

We are not permitted to dispense any medication without the written consent of the parent/guardian, including aspirin, ibuprofen or acetaminophen. Please do not ask for an exception.

NOTIFICATION OF LICENSING NOTEBOOK REQUIREMENT

Child Care Organizations Act, 1973 Public Act 116

The Child Care Organizations Act, 1973 Public Act 116 mandates that childcare centers must maintain a licensing notebook which includes **all** licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans (CAP). The notebook must include all reports issued and CAPs developed on and after May 27, 2010 until the license is closed. This notebook is located in the child care hallway (on the parent/guardian information table) and is available to parents/guardians for review during regular business hours.

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.

PERSONAL PARTY INVITES

We do not distribute personal party invitations for families within any of our programs as this can sometimes result in hurt feelings.

PESTICIDE NOTIFICATION

As part of St. Gerard's pest management program, pesticides are occasionally applied. Parents/guardians have the right to be informed prior to any pesticide application made to the school or child care grounds and buildings. In certain emergencies, pesticides may be applied without prior notice, but you will be provided notice following any such application. If you need prior notification, a Pesticide Notification Request Form is provided at both school and preschool registration. This information is then shared with the child care program. In the event that your child attends the St. Gerard Summer Child Care Program, but is not enrolled in St. Gerard School, a form will be provided at registration.

PHOTO RELEASE

All families are required to complete a photo release form when they register for school. These forms allow parents/guardians to grant or deny permission to display their children's photos in any fashion, whether it be on paper or digitally. Granting or declining of permission to the school carries over to the child care program, so child care does not require families to complete a separate form, with the exception of those children that attend the St. Gerard Summer Child Care Program, but are not enrolled in St. Gerard School.

PLAYGROUND USE

Our school playground has been inspected by a certified playground inspector as required by the State of Michigan Child Day Care Licensing Requirements that our licensed preschool and child care programs must meet. Our playground is safe for use by our children and is inspected for wear and tear on a regular basis by school personnel to ensure safe outdoor play experiences.

In accordance with child care licensing requirements, children may only play on age-appropriate equipment. The play equipment located within the fenced in portion of the playground is rated for 3 and 4 year olds. All other equipment is rated for 5 years of age and up. Therefore, all 3 and 4 year olds are only permitted to play on play equipment located within the fenced in area while under our

supervision. Children that turn 5 years of age while still attending 4 year old child care may occasionally have the opportunity to play on the play equipment rated for 5 years and older, but only when we have adequate staff in attendance so as to stay within our staff to child ratios.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Public relations are an important part of the St. Gerard Preschool and Child Care Programs. We encourage suggestions and support from our school and parish community

STAFF

Staff qualifications meet the requirements of the State of Michigan Children and Adult Licensing Division. All staff members have completed a State Police Criminal History Search and a Child Abuse/Neglect Central Registry clearance. Staff members, regardless of position and education, are required to obtain 16 hours of annual professional development training, 3 of which focus specifically on cultural competence and inclusive practices. In addition, all staff members are trained in first aid, CPR, and prevention of child abuse and neglect.

All Preschool and child care programs licensed by the State of Michigan are required to abide by a minimum staff:child ratio. While we strive to provide a lower staff:child ratio than is required by the State of Michigan, the minimal ratios are:

- 3 year olds staff:child ratio of 1:10
- 4 year olds staff:child ratio of 1:12
- 5 years and up staff:child ratio of 1:18

SUBSTITUTES

Every student will be taught by a substitute at some point in the school year. The most common reason for using a substitute occurs when a regular staff member is ill. Our school uses only professionals as substitutes. Child care substitutes are interviewed and hired by the child care director and meet all the State of Michigan Child and Adult Licensing requirements.

SUPPLIES

Parents will be sent a list during the summer of supplies needed for preschool. Supplies will need to be replenished from time to time. Child care may ask for supply donations from time to time or ask families to provide a specific item to be used in a project or activity.

TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY

The Diocese of Lansing, Department of Education and Catechesis encourages and strongly promotes the use of technology in the Catholic school and parish programs. To ensure that students can make full use of the technologies available, all use of technology must have proper authorization and follow the diocesan, parish and school terms, conditions and regulations for the use of the Internet and all other technologies. These forms must be completed at school/preschool registration. These policies will carry over to the child care program. A form will be provided at child care registration for those children that are registered in the St. Gerard Summer Child Care Program, but do not attend St. Gerard School.

TOILET TRAINING POLICY

It is the intent of St. Gerard Preschool and Child Care, as it relates to toilet training, to develop consistent routines while working closely with families. There are new schedules to establish and new habits to practice. At no time will a child be reprimanded or embarrassed for having an accident. We are here to help everyone over the hurdle of school adjustment. Accidents most often happen at the beginning of the school year. Your reaction to an accident as unfortunate, but not bad, will be an important support to your child's growing self-confidences and independence.

Children must be independently toilet trained.

This means they must:

- Recognize the need to go to the restroom and get to the toilet in a timely manner without having "potty accidents"
- Be able to adjust their clothing accordingly
- Be able to get on the toilet seat or use a urinal if available
- Wipe themselves in an appropriate manner
- Be able to wash their hands

Children must wear traditional underwear to school and child care, not pull-ups or other absorbent undergarments. It is our experience that some children who are trained at home may not be ready to use these skills at school or child care. *Learning these new skills can be challenging for both parent child.* Our aim is to always keep open communication with parents.

The following steps will be useful for parents, teachers and children:

If a child has a "potty accident" at school or child care, a report will be sent home indicating the date and place of the accident. It will include a reminder of the policy as written above. This form is to be signed by a staff member and sent home. The form is to be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to school or child care the next day. The same procedure is followed for a second "potty accident".

In the event of a third "potty accident" at school/child care or the recognition that one of the above criteria are not being met, a meeting will be scheduled with parents/guardians, teachers and administration to discuss whether or not a consistent routine has been established. At that time *we may* review your child's readiness for school and determine if the child may continue in attendance.

We will always continue to dialog with families to do what is best for the child. We will also share information and/or strategies between preschool and child care to make transitions smoother. Toilet training is a big step especially for younger children.

**Please send in a change of clothes in a zip-lock bag with your child's name on in so we may always be prepared.*

TOURS/VISITS

We strongly encourage tours/visits before enrolling your children in either of our preschool or child care programs AND that you bring your child with you. Please contact Chris Ehrenberger (preschool director) for a preschool tour or David Gutierrez (child care director) for a child care tour. Please note that preschool tours will include a tour of the child care facilities.

Visits to our programs/facilities are very beneficial to both the families and children. Some young children struggle with the transition into a new setting or experience. Providing them the opportunity to visit prior to the first day of attendance may go a long way in relieving the anxiety that the transition may cause. Our staff are really good at working with children as their confidence and comfort grow in this new setting.

When visiting, we suggest that families take the opportunity to take their children into all the spaces that they will utilize when in attendance. For example, some young children may find using our child care restrooms a bit scary at first as the rooms have an echo or may be larger than what they are used to using. Preschool restrooms, on the other hand, are much smaller and more along the lines of what they are used to.

VOLUNTEERS

St. Gerard considers its parent/guardian volunteers a very special resource. Parents/guardians will have the opportunity to help in preschool classrooms on a regular basis and in child care on occasion.

Upon arrival, please report to the main office to sign in on the visitor log and receive a visitor sticker. All visitors must wear a visitor sticker while on campus. Please return to the office at departure time to sign out. The volunteer's role is to assist the staff with activities in the classroom. Occasionally children have a difficult time when the parent/guardian is present in the classroom. Parents/guardians and staff should always have the best interest of the child and the classroom in mind, so alternate volunteer arrangements may need to be made in some instances. Additionally, for safety reasons, younger children should not accompany volunteers working at the school.

Volunteers working with children may have to fulfill the following requirements (dependent on the amount of involvement with children, i.e. responsible for a group of children on their own for an activity or event):

- VIRTUS Training
- ICHAT (Internet Criminal History Access Tool)
- Signed Parent Code of Conduct Form.

NOTES