



St. John's Lutheran School
Preschool Handbook
2021-2022
"Loving and Leading all to Jesus"

August, 2021

Welcome to St. John's Lutheran School!

We are excited to be partnering with you and your family in the Christian Education of your child.

It is our goal, with the help of God, to provide a safe, nurturing, and educational experience for your family in which your child can reach their greatest potential.

There are over 100 ways in which children learn and express themselves. Our preschool program is designed with this in mind. Themes, lessons, and activities are planned to help children grow spiritually, emotionally, socially, cognitively, and physically. Our mission at St. John's is to nurture the whole child in a Christ-centered environment.

This handbook will help guide you throughout the school year with information about our program, school visits, supplies needed, and the overall plan for our time together.

If you have any additional questions, please contact me any time. Your partnership is desired and appreciated.



God's blessings to your family!
Diane Caughlan
Early Childhood Director
636-464-7303 ext. 119
dcaughlan@sjlarnold.org

Lead teachers:

Ms. Solveig Bolstad: sbolstad@sjlarnold.org
Preschool 3 and 4

Mrs. Anna Auer: aauer@sjlarnold.org
Preschool 5 - Full day

Mrs. Jenn Castens: jcastens@sjlarnold.org
Preschool 4 and 5 - Half Day

When does the school year start?

School starts Wednesday, **August 18th**. The *school day* runs from **8:00 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.** The *half day* runs from **8:00 to 11:30**. There are three optional add-ons that can be selected with enrollment:



- Morning care: 6:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. *Students are released to their classroom at 8:00 a.m.*
- Lunch Bunch: 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. *Add-on for half day only*
- After Care: 3:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

When will we meet the teachers and see the classroom?

Open Houses will happen with the following schedules:

Mrs. Auer's Class - Thursday, Aug. 12th 3:45 - 7:15 **Sign up Here:** www.wejoinin.com/SJLS

Ms. Bolstad's Class - Saturday, Aug. 14th 10:00 - 12:00 **Sign up Here:** www.wejoinin.com/SJLS

Mrs. Casten's Class - Thursday, Aug. 12th 3:30 - 5:00 **Sign up Here:** www.wejoinin.com/SJLS

What supplies will be needed?

Please make sure that your child's name is on all items.



- Backpack - Large enough to hold a 9 x 12 folder. A simple zipper top design is easiest for both teachers and students to manipulate. Please label with a name on the outside top of the backpack if possible.
- Full change of clothes, including underwear, in a Ziploc at the bottom of your child's backpack.
- Water Bottle with a covered or retractable mouthpiece.
- \$25 Walmart, Amazon or Target Gift Card - Due to a lack of storage space, we are asking each family to purchase one - \$25 gift card (can be done through the St. John's SCRIP program) We use these cards to purchase cleaning supplies, sensory supplies, cooking supplies, and room supplies.
- Pair of Garden Boots to be kept at school for use in the outdoor classroom. Please label.

If your child will be staying a **full school day** they will need:

- Lunch Box - and a freezer pack, too.
- Nap Mat - to conserve space, we prefer a one piece pillow/blanket "bed roll" design. They can be purchased online through Amazon, Walmart, or Target. Bed rolls will be sent home *each week* to be laundered.

Some parents have asked if they can donate extra needed materials. Our wish lists always include: Sheet protectors, fun stickers, sidewalk chalk, bubbles, sandwich and gallon size Ziploc bags, rice beans or noodles for the sensory tables, and white or colored cardstock paper.

How will I communicate with the teacher? How will I know what my child is doing?

- Teachers will be available in the classroom/school from 7:45 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. (Half Day until 1:00)
- Private class Facebook groups will be established for each class. You will receive an email invitation to join the class's private group.
- Weekly email - or Facebook updates. You will receive communication summarizing our learning from the week and highlighting events or needs for the upcoming week.
- We publish a school newsletter each week. Please take the time to read it since it contains important information about our school. You will also receive text messages from school.
- Parent Teacher Conferences - We will meet "officially" in October and again in April. We can also schedule a meeting anytime that you need an update or have a concern.
- We will check emails and voicemails each day. Calls and emails will be returned as soon as possible. If you need to reach staff during the day, please call the school office and they will connect you.



Will my child have a snack at school?



Yes! We rotate through the class so that each family takes a turn as “snack helper.” You can find the assigned snack helper on the class monthly calendar or communication. Your family will provide a snack for each child in class for five days. You will receive class enrollment numbers and snack suggestions when you come in to visit. **Snacks will need to be store bought and individually wrapped.**

What about my child's birthday? Can we bring in a treat? Certainly! We will sing and celebrate with your child as they enjoy this special occasion. Please speak to your child's teacher at least a week before, and we can decide on a day to celebrate. **Birthday treats will need to be store bought and individually wrapped or purchased through the school lunch program.**

What should my child wear to school?



- Students should wear comfortable play clothes that they can move well in, possibly get messy, and be able to manipulate for toileting. Girls should wear shorts under skirts. Please no spaghetti straps.
- All students should wear closed toed shoes. **Preferably tennis shoes** daily. No flip flops or backless shoes.
- Please keep an extra set of labeled clothes (including socks and underwear) in your child's backpack. Spills and accidents happen and emergency clothing is limited.

What is the morning procedure? Where should we go?

- **If you are signed up for Before School care** you will enter through the front school doors. Students will be dropped off in the cafeteria until 7:15 a.m. After 7:15 they can be brought to Room 115 which is directly off the school lobby. Students will be taken outside or to their classrooms by their teachers at 7:45.
- Students enrolled for half day and school day may join their classes beginning at 8:00 a.m.



For students beginning at 8:00 A.M.:

PLAN A - All preschool classrooms will start their day in the outdoor spaces.

- Parents will park in the upper church parking lot. (Jeffco side)
- Parents will drop off students and backpacks with teachers by entering the gate at the outdoor classroom.
- Please make contact with teachers who will sign in students and record lunch options.
- Help your child find a choice and begin your goodbye routine.

PLAN B - If Weather prohibits starting in the outdoor spaces, our start will be in classrooms.

- Parents will park in the upper or lower parking lots.
- Parents will enter through the school main entrance. Parents will take students to classrooms and connect with teachers to sign in and make lunch options.
- We ask that you limit your time in the classroom and establish a goodbye routine with your child.

If your child will not be attending school or will be late on their scheduled day, **please** call or email the school or teacher so that we are aware of their absence. If your child is seen by a doctor and diagnosed with an illness, please let us know **as soon as possible** so that we can take proper precautions for the class.



Where will I pick up my child?

- Children signed up for Half Day will be brought down for the carline at 11:30. You will be given a sign for your vehicle to use for carline pickup. You will line up in your vehicle to pick up your child at the school main entrance. Teachers will bring out your child with their belongings and help them to get into vehicles. You may need to pull forward and help your child get buckled into their car seat.

- Children signed up for Lunch Bunch will have two plans for pick up:

PLAN A - Students will be taken to the outdoor classroom at 12:45 with their belongings. Parents will park in the upper church parking lot and pick up their students from the teacher in the outdoor space.

PLAN B - If weather prohibits the use of outdoor space, students will be picked up from the classroom.

- Children signed up for School Day will be taken to carline in the gym and can be picked up between 3:15 and 3:30. You will be given a sign for your vehicle to use for carline pickup. You will line up in your vehicle to pick up your child at the school gym entrance. Teachers will bring out your child with their belongings and help them to get into vehicles. You may need to pull forward and help your child get buckled into their car seat.

If you would rather pick up your child in person as the car line begins, you are welcome to wait outside the gym doors. Students with parent pick-up will be called first before the carline begins starting at 3:15.

- Children signed up for After Care will be picked up between 3:30 and 6:00 from the designated preschool classroom or outdoor learning space. Students will have their belongings with them in the outdoor learning space. Parents should first check if students are in the outdoor learning space before coming into the building.

Please take note: Staff will need to see the school issued car line signs for carline pickup and anyone picking up students from the classroom or outdoor spaces will need to present a picture ID until our staff is familiar with who is picking up.

What if someone besides me will be picking my child up from school?

If someone other than a parent will be picking up your child, please communicate this to the classroom teacher so it can be documented on the daily sign-in sheet. If a change for pick up occurs during the school day, you can call or email the school office. Please inform anyone picking up your child that we will need to see photo identification before releasing your child.

What is the illness policy?

- Please familiarize yourself with the Health and Safety Plan for the 2021-2022 school year. This will give you the policy information for daily illness screening, illness at school, and COVID-19 related policies.
- The state of Missouri requires that **immunizations** are up to date and on file with the school. Please be sure we have a copy of this record before the start of school on August 18th.



Will there be opportunities for me to participate in my child's preschool experience? YES!

- Fun family projects or activities sent home.
- Classroom parties and events.
- Family Fun nights.
- Special school-wide volunteer/service opportunities
- SCRIP, Box Tops for Education, and Scholastic Book Clubs



To learn more about SCRIP and Box Tops for Education: <https://www.stjohnsarnold.org/copy-of-scrip>

What about visiting church? What things are in place for Faith formation?

- We will attend Preschool Chapel Chat twice a month in the sanctuary. We will communicate the planned dates to you in our newsletters.
- Our school supports monthly "mission projects." You will have an opportunity to support these missions with offerings and donations.
- Students receive visits in their classrooms by our pastors, DCE, and school leadership to sing, visit, and pray together at least once a month.
- We will celebrate baptismal birthdays at our monthly Chapel Chat service.
- We will celebrate our faith by sharing songs with the church congregation, and by participating in Christmas and Easter activities.
- We want to empower you in your family's faith walk. We want to encourage church attendance, devotions, prayers, service projects, and reading the Bible. We will provide you with resources throughout the school year. If you do not have a church home, we welcome you to learn more by visiting our church website: <https://www.sjlarnold.org/>



Can my child bring in toys from home?

In general, we ask that toys, books, and other special items **not** come to school. If teachers would like this to happen for a special occasion it will be highlighted in the teachers communication. Your child may have a small "resting buddy" or "lovey" for naptime if needed. This item will be kept in your child's backpack until rest time.

What if my child struggles? How do you discipline?



You love your child, and we do too! We all want what is best for them. God blesses us with children and then charges us to "raise them up in His way." We work with children each day so they are **safe, responsible, and respectful**. It is a goal that they learn to display God pleasing behaviors with all of their choices.

Some children have never been in a structured learning environment. Some children are experiencing their first social interactions outside of family. It is our job to give children "tools" for growing their social skills and to lay a good foundation at an early age.

Students will receive consistent encouragement and verbal praise along with individual and group incentives and rewards. Consequences for inappropriate behaviors may include verbal reminders, redirection of attention, warning of consequence, loss of object or choice, a break from the group, or one-on-one time with the teacher.

You will be aware of behavior through communication with your child's teacher. This may be in the form of a daily calendar in their folder, or a text/email from the teacher to communicate both celebrations or opportunities for change. If there are repeated disruptions or behavior concerns, you will receive an email or phone call from the teacher.