



Preschool Family Handbook

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Preschool

215 W. Wilson

Gallup NM 87301

505-863-3145

Mission Statement

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic [Preschool](#) is a ministry St. Francis of Assisi Parish dedicated to providing quality early childhood education, anchored in the Roman Catholic tradition, accessible to other faith heritages and sensitive to all cultures. Adhering to the standards of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gallup and licensed by the State of New Mexico, St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Preschool strives to nurture Catholic values and promote excellence in early childhood education to form children into life-long learners and servants of God.

Vision Statement

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Preschool creates an environment “Where faith and education go hand in hand” to develop leaders within families, church organizations, communities, and the world.

Philosophy

The faculty, staff, and administration of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic [Preschool](#) believes that quality early childhood education is grounded in the following beliefs:

- Each child is a unique creation of God and is responsible for his/her actions to self, to others, and to God.
- Faithful teaching of the beliefs of the Roman Catholic faith enhance an academic curriculum by infusing the Gospel message of Jesus Christ into all classroom learning and experience.
- Parents are the primary educators of their children; it is the educator’s role to work with the parents in the best interest of the child.
- Competent, well trained teachers provide opportunities for all students to fulfill their potential
- A Safe Environment and caring atmosphere ensures understanding, acceptance, and respect of each student’s diverse culture and needs.
- The development of the whole child, body, mind, and spirit will enable him/her to develop the natural skills and talents gifted by God and to use these to lead a fully Catholic life in the services of God, family, and community,
- Structured choices within the classroom provides each child with self-satisfaction in learning and helps one to develop self-confidence.
- Young children learn many of the social, emotional, academic, and physical skills they need for future success through play and interactions with others.

Objectives

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Preschool will:

- Provide a unique, contemporary, Catholic atmosphere in which children can develop a personal relationship with Jesus so as to witness him to the world around them.
- Teach children the basics of their faith so they may grow in their knowledge and love of God.
- Provide multi-culture and community services experiences
- Academically challenge each student so he/she will perform to the best of their ability.
- Stimulate administrators and teachers toward ongoing professional growth.
- Prepare students for their future.
- Engage and retain teachers who are knowledgeable in their field, enthusiastic in their teaching, and role models for students.
- Foster a spirit of unity among parents, parish community and the diocese.
- Participate in parish, diocesan, and community events conducive to the benefits of our youth.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Preschool is located adjacent to St. Francis Parish in Gallup. The preschool is licensed by the New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD), and is in candidacy for accreditation with the Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA). The preschool is a 5-Star Focus Certified Center serving 2, 3, and 4 year-old children and their families.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Preschool is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 AM until 5:30 PM. The regular preschool program runs from 7:45 AM to 2:45 PM. Extended Care is available from 2:45 PM to 5:30 PM for parents who need it. Please refer to the annual school calendar for holidays, in-service days, and days on which Extended Care is not available.

Director: Jodi Thomas

Revised 7/26/17

GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

The administration of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Preschool reserves the right to amend, adapt, or suspend any policy in the Preschool Handbook if it is deemed necessary to do so in the best interest of a student or the entire Preschool community.

The Daily Schedule

- 7:30 Preschool doors open (students must be signed in by parents/guardians)
- 7:45 Preschool Day Begins (*Students are tardy after 7:45 & must enter through the main entrance)**
- 7:30-8:20 Arrival, Take Attendance/Learning Centers/Dramatic Play (Free Choice)
- 8:20-8:30 Restroom Break/Wash Hands
- 8:30-9:00 Breakfast
- 9:00-9:30 Table Work Circle Time (Teacher Directed)
- 9:30-11:00 Learning Centers/Dramatic Play (Free Choice/Teacher Directed)
- 11:00-11:30 Pray/Restroom Break/Wash Hands
- 11:30-11:50 Lunch and Recess periods (gross motor)
- 11:50-12:00 Restroom Break/ Get Ready for Nap
- 12:00-2:00 Rest Time
- 2:00- 2:15 Snack
- 2:15 No More Early Check-Outs**
- 2:15-2:40 Dramatic Play/Get ready for Dismissal
- 2:45 Dismissal**
- 3:00-5:30 Extended Care -- Learning Centers/Dramatic Play (Free Choice)

All Students need to be signed in and out by parent/guardians no exception

Academic Program

St. Francis of Assisi Preschool follows the Early Learning Guidelines approved by the State of New Mexico. Giving the children the freedom of choice is very important to the structure of our Preschool; as a result, learning centers and dramatic play are utilized frequently.

Admissions

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Preschool is open to all children whose parents are in agreement with the Preschool's philosophy and objectives. It is also necessary that the parent is willing to become involved in their child's education and that the child is willing to assume the role of a responsible student.

Students applying for Pre-K must be 2 years of age by the time of admission, however, they do not need to be potty trained at admission time.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Preschool admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at each Preschool. St. Francis of Assisi Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admission policies, tuition assistance programs, and other Preschool administered programs.

Attendance

Attendance is a key factor in student success. Therefore, St. Francis of Assisi students are expected to be present each day that Preschool is in session.

PARENTS ARE ASKED TO CALL THE PRESCHOOL BETWEEN 7:30 AND 8:30 IF A STUDENT WILL BE ABSENT. Verification of a student's absence must be made by written notice (undated notes and emails are not accepted) from the parents to the Preschool on the day the student returns to school. The written notice must include the reason for the absence, date, parent signature and phone number, and will become a part of the child's attendance record.

** A Doctor's note is required after three (3) consecutive days of absence.

When a student has accumulated 3 unverified absences a letter will be sent home notifying the parent or guardian.

Five (5) consecutive unverified absences will result in the child's disenrollment from the program.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Preschool is very careful to publish well in advance of the school year the anticipated vacations periods. The Preschool **strongly encourage** families to plan vacations, etc. during scheduled break periods so students do not miss important instructional time.

Childcare Fees

Childcare fees for the Preschool year are due and payable upon registration; however, monthly payments are available to help make tuition more affordable for each family, under the following provisions:

1. A \$225 non-refundable registration fee per student is due at the time of registration.
2. Monthly payments will begin on August 1 of the new school year and must be completed in ten (10) consecutive monthly installments through May 1 of the following or twelve (12) if continuing through the summer.
3. Monthly payments are due in the school office on the first of every month and will be considered late if not posted by the close of business (3:00 PM) on or before the 15th of each month. No post dated checks please.
4. A late payment penalty of \$30.00 will be assessed to each delinquent account posted after the 15th of each month. After the twentieth (20) day of the month the child will not be allowed to attend Preschool without a payment being remitted.
5. Three late payments during the course of one school year will result in total tuition becoming due at the end of the month following the third violation. Non-payment of the entire balance by the end of that month could result in dismissal of the student(s) from the Preschool.
6. **If tuition is not paid in accordingly to monthly payments or paid in full by the last day of the school year by the Responsible Party (Register Parent) legal actions will be taken. A court order will be issued to have monthly garnishments of the Responsible Party Income, to pay off the remaining balance. Child/Student will not be able to re-enroll in the Preschool until balance is paid in full.**
7. Checks returned to the Preschool for insufficient funds will be assessed a \$30.00 processing fee. Two returned checks will result in a cash-only account.
8. If a student is withdrawn for any reason (moving, transfer, expulsion, etc.) midway through the month, the entire amount of the tuition due for that month will be retained by the school. There are no refunds or discounts for partial attendance.
9. Upon withdrawal, students records will be held until all fees and past due payments are made in full. This includes Childcare Fee, Extended Care, Meal Program Fees and Late Fees.
10. CYFD assistance is available for families who qualify.

Enrolling your child with St. Francis of Assisi Preschool requires a careful balance of faith in God and good financial stewardship. It is a responsibility that should not be taken lightly.

Dress Code

The Preschool uniform must be worn at all times throughout the day unless specifically indicated otherwise by the teacher or administration.

Shirts: Polo's Green, Yellow, Navy Blue, Pink, White, Light Blue, Purple

Pants/Shorts: Navy Blue or Khaki

Jumpers/Skirts: Navy Blue or Khaki

Shoes: No flip flops, no high heels, no boots, or any kinds of open toes shoes (kids will be running around and these types of shoes cause them to fall).

Mass Days- Navy Blue polo shirt, with Khaki pants, skirts or jumpers. NO SHORTS.

Friday- casual day, no uniform required.

All Preschool students need to bring a change of clothes. This should be placed in a bag and labeled with the student's name. Please be sure to update this throughout the year as the child grows out of and into a different size of clothing.

Early Dismissal/Release of Students

Early dismissal of students from the office ends at 2:15. Students will only be released to his/her parents or to persons authorized for pick-up on their authorization pick up form. **Any changes to custody arrangements must be communicated promptly to the office by providing a certified copy of the court document.**

If you need to make other arrangements for your child it must be done in writing prior to your child coming to school that day. Phone calls are not acceptable. E-mails or faxes from and address/phone number the school can verify as yours will be accepted.

Parents coming to check out the child must first come to the office. Students must be signed-out prior to leaving the building.

Emergency Management Plan- Fire Evacuation

Each teacher is responsible for thoroughly familiarizing his/her students with the details of the fire evacuation plan and for the display of appropriate conduct during each drill. The signal will be one continuous siren ring of the fire alarm. Always exit the building by using the nearest or clearest exit. When all exits are open, use the assigned exits. Fire drills are regularly conducted to practice appropriate procedures.

When the fire alarm sounds:

1. Cease all activity immediately.

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2. Walk quickly and quietly in a single file to the nearest exit.
3. Close the doors, after all students leave the room (if time permits close windows).
4. Take sign in sheet for attendance and emergency contact sheet/numbers.
5. All personal must move quickly to the assigned area is reached.
6. Once outside stay in designated area and check all students are present.
7. If a child is missing let building administrator know ASAP DO NOT reenter the building to look for the child(ren).

All teachers are responsible to see that an emergency evacuation plan is posted within the classroom. Exit plans and strategies are reviewed at the beginning of the year teacher-in-service.

Fire Drills: are practiced once a week for the first month and thereafter once a month according to state law. All fire drills are time and recorded.

Disaster Drills: Students will be instructed in the proper procedure to follow and at least three disaster drills will take place yearly.

Guidance Policy

Discipline is a positive, on-going process which teaches children how to effectively relate to others. IT encourages the use of self-control, redirection, problem-solving, and cooperation. These methods are utilized to teach children how to be accountable for their own behavior. By focusing on the child's behavior as opposed to the child ("you are good, your behavior/choices were not), the staff believes the result is positive self-esteem.

When a behavior problem occurs in the classroom, teachers will try to re-direct within the flow of instruction. If this is unsuccessful, a "time out" is given to a child (up to 5 minutes sitting away from the group but within eye-sight of the teacher), then appropriate behavior is discussed. Separation from the group will be brief and appropriate to the child's age. The staff will remind the child of the rules, and allow the child to return to the group.

Minor behavioral problems are reported to the parents and they are asked to help correct the situation. For a more serious or repeated behavioral problem, a written notification may be given by the teacher to the parents with the approval of the preschool director.

If the behavior continues after notification to the parents, a conference will be held between the parents and the teacher and director to develop a method of treatment for the problem. The director may suggest the consultation of local support services or agencies to the parents. Written warning of possible dismissal may be given to the parents at this time.

Discipline is seen as supportive of social learning. The staff strives to develop a positive relationship and rapport with each and every student. Discipline is based on positive praise and reinforcement to build social skills and self-esteem. Positive guidance, support, and redirection will be blended with consistent reinforcement and celebration of positive behavior and accomplishment.

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Health Policies

Communicable Diseases

Parents must notify the Preschool when a health care provider makes a diagnosis of a communicable condition. The Preschool will follow state guidelines for sharing this information about the exposure to the disease with other families, faculty, and staff.

Head Lice

Students may be subject to inspection for head lice when warranted. Parents will be notified if their child is suspected of having head lice and the child will be sent home at the end of the day with information from the Health Department about treatment options. The child may return to school after the first treatment has been completed. Parents shall be notified should a case be diagnosed in their child's classroom and provided with Health Department information about the identification and treatment of lice.

Illness

If a child becomes ill during Preschool hours or needs special medical attention, parents will be contacted. If the need is urgent and parents cannot be reached, persons listed in the emergency form will be contacted. Please be sure all numbers are current for parents and emergency contacts.

If a student has been ill with fever, vomiting, cold, flu, pink eye, skin rash or eruptions, etc., the student should not be in Preschool. The reason for this policy is the safety and well-being of all of our students. All students must be free of illness and/or fever without the benefits of fever-reducing medications (Tylenol, Advil, etc.) for twenty-four (24) hours before returning to Preschool.

A child should not be sent to Preschool complaining of any ailment. If a child is not well enough to say in class, a parent will be contacted to pick up the child and take him/her home. If a student vomits at Preschool, he/she will be sent home.

Medications

The Preschool will not dispense medication to students except when prescribed by a doctor and provide by the parent. No other medication of any kind will be administered at the Preschool or by Preschool personnel. While the Preschool would like to be able to administer antibiotics, cough, medicines, etc., the Preschool does not have the personnel to do so. Consequently, only those students with a permanent condition (not a temporary illness or infection) requiring daily medication will be able to have medication administered at school.

If parents would like for sunscreen, insect repellent, or diaper cream used on their child, the parent must provide it and the Diocese of Gallup's Consent and Release for Non-Prescription Medication to the preschool.

If a child is on medication for a permanent condition, including asthma, and the medication must be administered during Preschool time, the parent must submit the following information on the Diocese of Gallup's Consent and Release for Prescription Medication Form (available in the Preschool office):

1. Name of Student
2. Date
3. Medication
4. Dosage
5. How the medication is administered
6. Time(s) to be administered
7. Physicians signature

All medication must be in the **original prescription container** with a current prescription and will be stored in the office. Epi-pens and inhalers fall under this policy. All medicines must be brought to the Preschool office at the beginning of the day by an adult. Students may not carry medicine, including inhalers or epi-pens, in his/her backpack. Epi-pens and inhalers will be stored in the office until needed, unless different arrangements are required by the doctor.

Immunization Forms

Health Information forms and immunization are required of all pre-Preschool students. It is unlawful for any student to be enrolled in Preschool unless he or she has been immunized, as required under the rules of the Health and Social Services Department and can provide satisfactory evidence of such immunizations. Immunizations requirements may be obtained by visiting the New Mexico Immunization Program website at: www.immunizenm.org/sched.shtml or by calling the NM Vaccine Flu Hotline at: 1-866-681-5872. A child will not be able to start class until all required health forms have been completed by a physician and returned to Preschool.

Meals

Breakfast/Lunch

A hot breakfast/lunch is offered daily in the school cafeteria. The Preschool participates in the government lunch program and can furnish the students a well-balanced meal at a reasonable price. The price of a full meal and all other items is established at the beginning of each school year. Menus will be available in the Preschool office.

Lunch may be brought from home, **meals from fast food-restaurants are not permitted**. This is due to our participation in federal lunch program funds.

Student lunches will be billed each month for the previous month. **Unpaid charges will result in the withholding of records until the charge is paid.**

Free and Reduced Meal Applications

At the beginning of the school year, Federal Free and Reduced Meal applications will go home to all students. It is important to return these in the first week of school. The forms will be processed and determination letters will be sent out within 7 business days.

Even if you do not wish to participate in the program, please complete the form, stating that you do not wish to participate in the income area. This form helps our Preschool receive additional Federal Funding through the school year.

If there is ever a change in your income status, please let the Food Service Director know and we can complete another form in the Preschool year and see if your family can qualify for Free or Reduced Meal prices.

Afternoon Snack

The students may bring a snack from home for an afternoon snack, however we will be providing snacks at 2:00 P.M. for the afternoon. The students will be allowed a water bottle in the classroom; which they can drink from throughout the day.

Parent Participation

Parents at St. Francis of Assisi Preschool are valued as an integral component of the faith community. As the first teachers of their children, parents are respected as co-educators in the endeavor of Catholic education.

Parent volunteers are welcomed and valued. However, during the Preschool day, parents should not bring other children to the classroom at any time. Parent visitors must sign-in and out in the school office. Visitors unfamiliar to the staff will be asked to show photo id and justify their reason for being at the school. Those wishing to be volunteers must meet the guidelines of the Diocese of Gallup to do so; those who are only occasional visitors do not.

The Diocese of Gallup Policy for the Protection of Minors requires that all volunteers submit to a criminal background check and have training in the practices of maintaining a safe environment for children (*Virtus*) prior to having contact with children enrolled in our program. Volunteers are also required to sign the Diocesan Code of Ethics acknowledging their understanding of the policies and procedures of the Diocese in relation to the safety of students.

All parents must understand that the same standards of courtesy, respect, and charity, which govern the staff and students, should govern their behavior as well. Abusive language, sarcasm, and other forms of harassment of staff or other students will not be tolerated in any form or for any reason.

Should parents have concerns, questions, or suggestions to enhance their child's educational experience which they feel need addressing, they should bring it to the attention of the appropriate personnel in a fair, courteous, and just manner. The teachers as well as the preschool Director maintain an "Open Door Policy". Please contact the teacher of your child or

the Director to schedule a meeting. Please understand that in most circumstance, it is in everyone's best interest to have a conference where all parties are present.

It is imperative that students be convinced that his/her parents fully support the Preschool and expect the students to adhere to the Preschool's rules. Without this understanding, the student may think the home and Preschool bear no relation to one another. This can cause the student to behave/communicate differently at home and Preschool.

Should a difference of opinion arise between a parent and teacher, the parent and teacher should do their best not to make the student aware of the situation and should try to work out a reasonable solution. It is in the best interests of the student that parents and teachers come to an understanding which will safeguard the student's respect for parental and preschool authority.

All disputes will be resolved pursuant to Diocesan Policy 2500- Dispute Resolution. A copy of this policy can be obtained from the preschool director.

Parties

Class parties may be planned for Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day. These are planned by the teacher with the help of the classroom parents, and **should be limited to the last hour of the Preschool day on which they occur. Parties may include light refreshments only (cupcakes, cookies, punch, vegetable/fruit trays etc.) and not meal style or buffet style food. Parents should not bring other children to the classroom parties.**

Parents may also plan a birthday party for their child by setting up a convenient time for the party with the child's teacher. Please be aware to respect the limits/requests regarding food in the classroom as these often are due to food allergies of your child's classmates.

School Closure or Delay (snow or other emergency)

We follow the Gallup McKinley County Schools closing due to inclement weather.

Please be sure to watch or listen to the local news reports each morning or check on their website at <http://www.gmcs.k12.nm.us/>. If the public school district announces a closure, we will also be closed. If they announce a school delay, we will be delayed, with the preschool opening at 10:00 AM (breakfast will not be provided on these days).

Should inclement weather begin during the Preschool day, information will be provided through School Reach (it is important we have up-to-date numbers). This will allow the Preschool to contact parents through an automated phone message system, to inform you of any closings, emergencies, or delays etc. **Please wait to hear the entire message. Do not call the Preschool.**

For the security and safety of your child(ren), if the early closing of the Preschool has been ANNOUNCED, please follow the following procedure:

No extended care will be available. You will need to pick up your child from Preschool immediately.

NO student(s) may leave their classroom with anyone other than a parent or designated person who has been listed on the authorized pick-up list. Teachers will have copies of the student release information completed at registration by the parent, stating to whom the child may be released. **They will not release your child to anyone not listed on your release form. There will be NO EXCEPTIONS.**

If, at any time, you need to make changes to your release form you may contact the office for a new form or come in to make changes on the existing one. Changes may not be made by phone or in writing the day of the early closing of Preschool.

Student Confidentiality

A student who asks a teacher to keep something confidential before revealing information must be told that the teacher will need to use his/her own judgement based in the information that the child shares with the teacher. The teacher may not keep confidential any information that endangers the safety or potential safety of the child or other individuals.

Students records are the property of the Preschool and are confidential and properly protected. Parents who wish to examine student records may request an appointment to do so. All records of a student will be mailed directly to the next school at which the child will be enrolled. **These records may not be hand carried by the parents.**

Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect

Any person, including teachers, administrators, and support personnel, who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child or a student has been abused, abandoned, or neglected shall report such knowledge or suspicion to the Department of Children Youth and Families in the manner prescribed by law. **N.M.STAT.ANN.324-4-3.**

the proper procedure for reporting known or suspected cases of child abuse, abandonment, and neglect is:

- A. Report immediately by telephone to the Department of Children Youth and Families central abuse hotline, using the single statewide toll-free telephone number: **1-800-96-ABUSE(1-800-962-2873)**. Preschool personnel reporting such cases are required to provide their names to the hotline staff. The name of the reporter shall be entered into the record of the report, but shall be held confidential as provided by law.
- B. Preschool personnel may report their knowledge or suspicions to the preschool director.
- C. Preschool personnel are advised that reporting their knowledge or suspicions of suspected abuse to the preschool director does not comply with the mandatory reporting requirements of the law.

- D. No employee of the Preschool shall be subject to reprisal because of his actions in reporting abuse or neglect pursuant to the requirements.

Transfers and Withdrawals

We realize that home and employment changes create situations where it becomes necessary to withdraw a child from our Preschool. If there is any way we can help with you with this decision, please call on us. Financial difficulties can often be resolved without removing the child from the Preschool. We have a moral obligation to live out our love for the child by working with families as much as possible.

Should a withdrawal be unavoidable, it is important that parents notify the Preschool office in advance to fill out a withdrawal form. The Preschool will need 24 hours to collect materials, records, etc. All charges must be paid up to date before records can be released.

Reminder: A childcare contract is signed by each family at August registration. This is an annual contract that binds the signee to payment of the full annual childcare and other accrued fees if the family withdraws before the end of the contracted Preschool year.

The Preschool may also request that parents withdraw their child from the program. This could include (but is not limited to) disciplinary issues, non-payment of tuition and fees, lack of cooperation on the part of the parents or student to adhere to the policies, procedures, and practices of the preschool, or the preschool's realization that they are unable to meet the needs of the student. The preschool director will notify the parent with written notification of the reasons for dismissal from the program and arrange for a conference with the parent. However, some situations may occur that jeopardize the welfare of the children and/or staff, requiring immediate removal of the student from the program. The director retains the right to immediately dismiss a student if such an incident occurs.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Preschool

Handbook Acknowledgement Page

2017-2018 School Year

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Preschool Family Handbook. While I understand that the Family Handbook is neither a contract nor a legal document, I recognize that it is my responsibility to read and understand the policies, provisions, and procedures contained in the Family Handbook.

In addition, I understand that the contents of the Family Handbook are subject to change. I acknowledge that the Family Handbook will be revised in accordance with the rules or regulations of state, federal, and accrediting entities, best practices for child care service providers, or at the discretion of the administration of St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Preschool. I recognize that any such revisions will supersede, modify, or eliminate the current contents of the Family Handbook.

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to stay informed of policy and procedure revisions to the Family Handbook. Revisions will be noted in communications from the preschool. I understand that I can obtain a copy of the updated Family Handbook upon request to the Preschool Director.

Moreover, I recognize that it is my responsibility to contact the Preschool Director for any questions I might have about the contents of the Family Handbook now and in the future.

Please Print

Student Name: _____

Class: _____

Student Name: _____

Class: _____

Student Name: _____

Class: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Please return this completed page to the school office within the first week of school.