

# St. Justin Martyr Catholic Preschool

## *Parent Handbook*

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## **ST. JUSTIN MARTYR CATHOLIC PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK**

*“Where Little Angels are our Business”*

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Justin Martyr Catholic Preschool is dedicated to providing an opportunity for young children to learn, work and play in a safe, loving, Christian environment. We minister to the whole child, striving to meet each child’s physical, emotional, social, spiritual and intellectual growth with developmentally appropriate curriculum.

### **PHILOSOPHY**

Our program is designed to create a learning atmosphere that meets the developmental needs of young children ages 2 through 4 years old. It provides experiences that enrich and enhance each child’s cognitive, language, social, emotional, spiritual, physical and creative development. Each child has the opportunity to create, explore the environment, learn problem solving skills, as well as personal interaction skills throughout the day. We will assist the church in its responsibility to minister to the community through Catholic training. Our staff serves as positive role models and provides care that is warm, nurturing, supportive and responsive to each child’s individual needs. We believe parents and teachers are partners in a child’s care and education.

### **STAFF**

All of the teachers and staff at St. Justin Martyr Preschool meet the requirements of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for working with young children. All staff members complete a minimum of 24 clock hours of early childhood training annually. The staff continually participates in programs and studies for early childhood education and studies for professional development throughout the year. Early childhood research and education is ever changing and we strive to stay current on what is best for the children in our program.

## PROGRAM & CURRICULUM

St. Justin Martyr Preschool program provides an opportunity for young children to learn, grow and play in a loving Christian environment. **We are a nine month program open September to May, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 to 2:00. Extended hours are available 8:30 to 9:00 and 2:00 to 5:00.** Our program promotes the development of knowledge and understanding, processing skills; as well as the disposition to use and apply skills and to continue learning. It builds upon what children already know and are able to do and fosters their acquisition of new concepts and skills. Lessons are planned based on the knowledge of child development and learning, assessing the individual needs and interests of each student. Our curriculum is based on weekly themes/units. Each unit utilizes developmentally appropriate materials to engage children in active and meaningful learning in the areas of language, art, math, science, music, motor and religion. Our teachers have clearly defined goals and objectives and assess the skills and progress of each child through the use of observation, assessment tools and activity records. Teachers also identify children who may experience difficulties in development and/or behavior and will develop a plan to assist them with these difficulties. St. Justin's follows the guidelines of the National Association of Education for Young Children (NAEYC). As an integral part of St. Justin Martyr Catholic Community we adhere to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Your child's Catholic education is developed in our daily life at school. Our teachers and staff foster an environment of love, thankfulness, patience, joy, honesty, kindness and fairness. Our students learn to accept those who are different from us, to treat each other with respect and show compassion and concern for those less fortunate. Through song, Bible stories and prayer children express their love for God and affirm his love for them.

## ADMISSION POLICY

St. Justin Martyr Catholic Preschool enrolls in a non-discriminatory basis regardless of race, religion or national origin. All faiths are welcome. Children are enrolled in a classroom based on their age and our licensing guidelines. All children needs are assessed and within the limits of our resources we will work to meet the needs of each child. Each child's progress will be evaluated and monitored. Therefore, participation in our program can be adjusted if necessary for the benefit of your child and our program. Children are enrolled in class based on their age as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, no exceptions. We do our best to meet the needs of all children enrolled however; sometimes a child's needs may be beyond the limits of our resources. (see referrals pg. 4) **The preschool director may withdraw a child when deemed appropriate for the benefit of the child, the other children in class or the program. A child may be withdrawn from the program for failure to follow school policies or failure to maintain financial responsibility.**

## REGISTRATION

Families with children that are currently enrolled are offered early registration starting in February. Open registration begins in March. **Enrollment paperwork and application fees are required annually. Your child's place in class for the fall is secured once the application fees are submitted with the enrollment form.** Your child's place in class is then held until the enrollment date stated on the enrollment form. **If your child cannot start on the stated date you must notify the school or forfeit your child's place in class. Application fees are non-refundable.**

## ENROLLMENT FORMS

St. Justin Martyr Preschool is licensed through the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. All of the enrollment paperwork you fill out is required by our licensing and must be filled out entirely and turned into the school office prior to your child's admission to class. **Failure to turn in all paperwork will forfeit your child's place in class.**

## CLASSES

Our classes are based on the child's age as of September 1<sup>st</sup> of the academic school year. Placement is made by the administration. **All classes begin at 9:00 a.m. and dismiss at 2:00 p.m.** Our school operates during the school year and closes during the summer months. All holidays and early – release days are published on the school calendar. Children may only attend class on the days they are enrolled. Changing their schedule will result in an additional fee. All schedule changes must be made with the office.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance and being on time for class is important to your child's development. Children need consistency in their daily routines. Children arriving late to class miss out on important morning routines. Tardiness interrupts the educational process and also causes a disruption of classroom instruction. We want your child to receive the fullest benefit from our program, so being on time for class is very important. **We do not offer make up days for absences. If your child is going to be absent for an extended period of time during any month you will be expected to pay ½ month's tuition in order to hold your child's place in class.**

## **FEE POLICY**

St. Justin Martyr Preschool is a non-profit program. Our tuition is based on the annual costs of operating the school. These costs are calculated based on number of students enrolled, days of operation in a year and divided into monthly tuition payments. **Tuition and fees are required monthly regardless of scheduled holidays and/or your child's absence from class.** All fees are due on or before the **first day of each month.** Personal checks, MasterCard, Visa, Discover and cash will be accepted. Checks should be made payable to: **St. Justin Preschool. Your child's full name should be written in the memo section to ensure proper credit in your account. If you choose to pay in cash you must have the exact amount, otherwise change due will be applied to your account as a credit. We cannot make change.** A \$25.00 late fee will be assessed on all payments received after the 5<sup>th</sup> of any given month. **If payment is not received by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, you will be asked to withdraw your child from school.** Returned checks will be charged back to your account and a \$25.00 returned check fee will be assessed. A cashier's check, money order, cash or credit card is to be presented for the amount of the tuition plus the \$25.00 late fee. All tuition and fees are non-refundable.

## **STUDENT ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

**When entering the parking lot please drive slowly and refrain from using your cell phone!**

**Always hold your child's hand in the parking lot.**

Class hours are 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Teachers are not in their rooms prior to 9:00 as they are busy preparing for their day therefore; **children will not be admitted to class prior to 9:00 a.m.** If you arrive before this time you may wait in the hallway. Children must **never be dropped off at the door** or left **in a classroom unattended.** If you need to pick up your child prior to the 2:00 p.m. dismissal, we ask that you notify us in advance. Children will only be released to authorized adults (18 years or older). You will be charged \$1.00 of late fee for every minute after 2:05 p.m. **The atomic clock at the front desk will be used to determine lateness.**

## **TUITION DISCOUNTS**

St. Justin Martyr Catholic Preschool offers a sibling discount. This discount is applied to the youngest sibling's tuition. No discounts are given on supply fees or extended day services. No scholarships are available.

## **EXTENDED CARE PROGRAM**

Extended care services are available for our students before and after school. Extended care hours are 8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. The fee for this service is \$10.00 per hour and services are billed on the half hour. You will be billed monthly for this service with the exception of May, which is billed weekly. Extended care charges must be paid in full each month, failure to do so will result in dismissal from extended care. Parents are required to sign their child into and out of extended care daily. **Failure to sign your child in or out will result in your being charged the maximum time for the day.** Children must be picked up from extended care by 4:30 p.m. **After 4:30 p.m., there will be a late fee of a \$1.00 per minute, per child, charged to your account.** For staffing purposes, if you plan on using extended care you must notify the school in advance. There is a flat rate available for those children that are in need of fulltime extended care. For flat rate information please check with the office staff.

## **SIGN IN / SIGN OUT PROCEDURES**

Our licensing requires us to maintain daily attendance of each and every child. You must sign your child into class in the morning and out in the afternoon. All classes have an attendance sheet available in their rooms. These attendance records are required by law. **Only adults listed on the “Authorized to Release” form may sign for a child.** You may add to this form at any time during the year. **\*\* Current picture identification will be needed when an authorized adult, other than yourself, arrives for the first time to pick up your child\*\*.** **Children will not be released to anyone who is not on the “Authorized to Release” form.** Once a child has been signed out, they are no longer under the care or responsibility of the preschool.

## **HOLIDAYS & SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

A list of holidays and school closings are listed on our school calendar. In the event of severe weather or acts of nature, St. Justin Preschool will close school if we feel it unsafe to hold classes or road conditions make it unsafe to drive. **We follow Alief Independent School District closings.** However, we do reserve the right to cancel school anytime we feel it unsafe to hold class. We try to announce weather closings in the following ways: weather closing notice sent home, a direct phone call from school or we post the closing on the local news stations. With our unpredictable Houston weather we may not get the opportunity for prior notice. Common sense should be your guide in the event of un-safe road conditions, please keep your child at home. Your safety and the safety of your child is our primary concern; therefore it is always best to err on the side of caution. **St. Justin Martyr Preschool will not offer weather make-up days.** If the school is under a City of Houston shelter- in- place order, no one will be allowed to enter or leave the building until it is rescinded.

## **UNIFORMS**

Our uniforms consist of a red school T-shirt and navy/denim pants, skirts or shorts. **Children should wear tennis shoes for safety reasons.** Your child must have a spare set of clothing (including shoes & underwear) at school every day as accidents can happen. The school does not provide spare clothes. In the event your child needs spare clothes and they are not on hand, you will be called and asked to bring clothes to school.

## **VISITORS**

Parents are welcome at our school any time during the hours of operation to visit their child, observe/ participate in school and program activities. There is no need to inform the office for visits however; the best times for visiting are during morning class hours 9:00 am – 12:00 p.m. All visitors are required to check in at the front desk upon arrival. **Prior notice is necessary to schedule lunch visits and/or birthday parties in order for the teachers to prepare or schedule on their lesson plans.**

## **REFERRALS**

St. Justin Martyr Preschool will make referrals to the appropriate resource person or agency when needed. A referral is considered needed when a child is observed having difficulties in one or more of the following areas: speech, vision, hearing, health, learning, emotional or behavioral. The school will serve a child’s special needs within the limits of our resources. If a child’s special needs are not being met within our resources, a recommendation will be made to place the child in a more appropriate environment. **Additionally, St. Justin Martyr Preschool will work with other service providers such as ECI, local school districts and private therapists in order to meet your child’s needs. These outside providers are welcome to come to our program at any time to work with your child. However, we must have written parental consent for them to do so. Please speak to the office staff for a consent form if needed.**

## **SUNSCREEN / INSECT REPELLANT**

**May be applied at home before your child comes to school!**

## **ILLNESS**

**For the health and safety of all of our students and staff, sick children need to stay home. If your child has had a fever and/or has been sent home with a fever, they must be fever free, without medication, for 24 hours before returning to school.** If your child had diarrhea and/or has vomited in the evening prior to or morning of school, he or she should not attend school. Your child may not attend class if he or she:

- Has a fever of 100 or more degrees.
- Have diarrhea and/or vomiting.
- Has sore throat, constant coughing or discolored nasal mucus.
- Have symptoms of a communicable disease (including pinkeye and/or skin condition)
- Not well enough to participate in all school activities.

If your child becomes ill with any of the above while at school, they will be separated from their classmates and you will be called and required to pick up your child within one hour.

## **MEDICATION**

**We do not administer medication at school!** In certain circumstances, special consideration can be made for children that use inhalers, epi pens, and/or seizure medication. Then, only medication prescribed by a licensed physician, in the original container, with a pharmacy label will be allowed. The pharmacy label must have the following information: the child's name, current date, physician's name and directions to administer the medication.

**Medication will only be administered as prescribed.** A medicine spoon (if needed) must accompany the medication. **Children with allergies and/or asthma needing daily medication and/or breathing treatment will need a signed note from the physician. Epi pens must be sent with the prescription attached and will remain at school. Any known allergy must be confirmed on our physician's statement including instructions for treatment in the event of an allergic reaction.** A medicine authorization log (located in the office) must be completely filled out and signed by the parent when the medication is brought to school. **Medication should never be sent with your child in their backpacks or lunch box. Never send cough drops with your child to school! Absolutely no over the counter medicine will be allowed.**

## **SAFETY**

St. Justin Martyr Preschool policies and procedures have been implemented to ensure a safe and nurturing environment for your child. The Director and the staff always have a "safety first" attitude when dealing with the day to day activities and routines in the program. The following measures or policies have been put in place for additional safety measures:

- All staff are CPR / First Aid
- All staff has passed background checks and fingerprinting.
- All staff receives safety and emergency procedure training annually.
- All exterior doors are locked during class hours.
- Only St. Justin staff and school visitors are permitted into the school/playground during class hours.
- We hold monthly fire drills and quarterly severe weather drills.

The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston has implemented the "Protecting God's Children" education program in an effort to help identify and prevent child abuse and/or neglect. All employees and of St. Justin Martyr Catholic Preschool and Catholic Church have been certified in this program. All volunteers and anyone who works with children are required to take this training and have a background check. This program is provided by the Archdiocese, free of charge, to anyone interested. **For information about this program as well as other programs pertaining to child abuse and or neglect, please ask the office staff.**

## **ACCIDENT / MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

All staff members at St. Justin Martyr Preschool are trained in First Aid and CPR. Our staff will administer first aid to minor cuts, scratches and scrapes and/or determine whether further medical treatment is needed. In the event further treatment is needed, the proper medical staff and the parent will be notified.

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

If we lose power, water and/or air conditioning (a must in Texas) and it becomes necessary to temporarily move the children, we will re-locate them into our parish hall next door. In the very rare event we lose any of the amenities for an extended period of time all families will be called to come and pick up their child/children. **For severe emergency and/or evacuation we will follow our Emergency Preparedness Plan. A copy of this plan is available at the front office.**

## **IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS**

Texas State law mandates that all children enrolled in school be current on their immunizations. An updated immunization schedule must be on file, each school year, before admission of your child/children. Updates should be submitted to the school anytime during the year your child receives boosters. **For immunization information visit - [www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize) St. Justin Martyr Preschool does not except immunization waivers.**

## **HEARING AND VISION REQUIREMENTS**

The Special Senses and Communications Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 36, requires a screening or professional examination for possible hearing and vision problems for all children four years of age and older. For information visit [www.dshs.state.tx.us/vhs](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/vhs)

## **MEALS AND SNACKS**

Each child is required to bring a lunch and snacks from home. We do not have the facilities for children's food to be refrigerated or heated here at school. Students are not allowed to share their lunch with other children. The school is not responsible for the nutritional value or for meeting the child's daily food needs however; we will observe and encourage good nutritional habits for each child. Please be sure your child's lunch provides part of the nutritional value of your child's daily food needs. Sodas and / or carbonated beverages are not permitted. **You must supply spoons and / or forks from home;** they are not always available here at school. **We highly discourage bringing fast food for children during lunch here at school.** Fast food is not nutritional and the prizes that come with the meal are not permitted in class. Well-balanced meals provide the food children need to grow, think, fight infection and fuel their bodies. **\*\*Due to increased allergies to peanuts, snacks containing peanut products are not permitted and will be sent home.\*\*** *\*\* For hygiene reasons we do not allow bottles in our toddler classrooms.* You may send sippee cups labeled with your child's name. **A comfortable, quiet area for moms who are breastfeeding is provided when needed. Breastmilk may be sent to school for your child's consumption. Be sure to send it in an insulated thermos to maintain freshness.**

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Simple birthday celebrations such as cupcakes, cookies or a cake are permitted at school however; you **must** notify your child's teacher in advance regarding your plans and provide paper plates and napkins! All materials used in the school must meet licensing requirements. **For the health and safety of your child we do not permit the following: treat bags and balloons.** Latex balloons are the #1 choking hazards among children! Birthday invitations and gifts may not be passed out here at school unless they are given to the entire class.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Our licensing requires that all personal belongings, pillows, blanket, jackets etc., must be permanently and clearly marked with the child's name. It is especially important that all lunch boxes be clearly labeled on the outside. **Items sent continually without a name will be labeled by the school staff with permanent marker.** Children may not bring toys, games, electronic devices (cell phones, tablets) or money to school. **St. Justin Martyr Catholic Preschool will not be held responsible for lost, stolen, or broken items.**

## **COMMUNICATION / PARENTAL NOTIFICATION**

Our staff keeps you informed of classroom activities via newsletters, calendars and / or reminder notes. Please be sure to check your child's folders daily for any news. Student folders are located in the doorway of each classroom. Individual student progress reports will be sent home twice per year (winter & late spring). We also post reminders and important notes on our bulletin boards in the front entrance. Please look at them daily! If needed, conferences may only be scheduled before or after class hours. Teachers are not available for phone conferences during instructional time. If you need to speak to your child's teacher please call the office and leave a message for them, they will return the call at their earliest convenience. Parents are notified immediately when a child:

1. Has signs or symptoms of illness that requires exclusion from the class.
2. Is injured and requires medical attention by a health-care professional.
3. Has been involved in any situation that puts a child at risk.
4. Has been involved in any situation that renders the school unsafe.
5. There are any changes to our policies. This would be in writing!

Parents are also notified of less serious injuries or incidents when their child is picked up from school either verbally or in writing. We also post lots of pictures and activities on our school Facebook page!

## **CHANGE OF INFORMATION**

Parents must keep the school informed of any changes to their information such as phone numbers, addresses, contact persons or those allowed to pick up a child. Please send any changes in writing to the office. **Current information is vital in case your child becomes ill or in case of an emergency. Please send in updated immunizations records as your child gets new shots!!**

## **DISCIPLINE**

Our program uses developmentally appropriate curriculum which focuses on your child's emotional and social development as well as their cognitive development. Therefore, a large part of a young child's education is learning acceptable behavior. Acceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to: following directions, responding to all adults with respect, getting along with others, self control, respecting others property, etc. We have a positive discipline policy to insure the safety and well being of all children during this learning process. We have established reasonable rules with reasonable consequences. When children understand their limitations they learn to make behavior modifications and become responsible for their actions. Our teachers and staff act as role models and direct behavior along appropriate and positive channels. Our students are made to feel important and good about themselves. Children are encouraged to verbalize their feelings to learn to handle strong emotions or urges. The children are given opportunities to make appropriate choices however; occasional misbehavior may occur. Removal from a situation, loss of privileges, time out, re-direction to another activity and/or intentional ignoring bad behavior of a child are methods used for misbehavior.

- Any child that hits, bites, kicks, or demonstrates "out of control" behavior will automatically be sent to the director's office.
- If a child is sent to the director's office repeatedly, a conference will be required with the parents, the teacher and the director.
- If after all these measures have been taken and the child's behavior continues to be disruptive, the director will determine whether the child can continue to attend St. Justin Martyr Catholic Preschool.

## **SUSPENSION / EXPULSION**

**We do not suspend children. We adhere to our discipline policies above and try to work with behavior issues. However; for the safety of the children and staff, any occurrences of physical, violent and/or out of control behavior by a child, may result in immediate withdrawal of the child from SJM Preschool. Additionally, non-adherence to school policies and / or non-payment of fees may also result in dismissal.**

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Every parent must receive and read a copy of this policy handbook. By state law, a signed acknowledgement form must be kept in the child's file (see pg.9). Parents are encouraged to schedule a meeting with the school's director to ask questions or express concerns about any of these policies and procedures. All policies and procedures are reviewed annually and meet the requirements set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services as well as the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. Any necessary changes, additions or deletions to this handbook will be submitted in writing to every parent with the required signature return page. These policies and procedures are set for the safety and well-being of your child/children. Additionally many of them are required by our licensing and Texas State law. Not adhering to these policies are grounds for withdrawal from the program.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

St. Justin Martyr Catholic Preschool                      281 556-1260  
Preschool Extended Care Room                            281 902-5718  
St. Justin Martyr Catholic Church                        281 556-5116  
Our website is:    [www.sjmtx.org](http://www.sjmtx.org)

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)  
Their website is:    [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)

We are licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. We are in partnership with their licensing agency to provide a safe, healthy and protected environment for your child. The "Minimum Standards Rules" for licensed child care facilities is available for your review at the front desk of the school. Our licensing representative inspects our school regularly to assure we are in compliance with these Minimum Standards set by the State of Texas. A copy of the most recent licensing inspection report is posted at the front desk for and available for you to review at any time.

**To contact our local licensing office call:**    **713 940-3009**  
**Their website is:**    [www.tdprs.state.tx.us](http://www.tdprs.state.tx.us)

**Texas Department of State Health Services:**    [www.dshs.state.tx.us](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us)

The Texas Family Code requires that any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect must report to the case to Child Protective Services and the local law enforcement agency. **Our staff receives annual training in child abuse awareness and we are required by law to report any suspected child abuse/neglect that comes to their attention.** The Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston offers an abuse awareness program called Protecting God's Children. It is offered all across Houston, free of charge to anyone interested. **For information on the program and other information regarding child abuse and or neglect please ask our office staff.**

**To contact the child abuse hotline call:**    **1-800-252-5400.**

**Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized crime are subject to a harsher penalty.**

# St. Justin Martyr Catholic Preschool

## Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form

***This form and all paperwork must be signed and returned to the school office before your child may attend class...***

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the St. Justin Martyr Catholic Preschool Parent Handbook. I have read this policy handbook and understand this information. I hereby, agree to abide by these policies and procedures. I understand that not abiding by these policies and procedures could result in my child being withdrawn for the program.

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Parent's Name (printed)

Parent's Signature

---

Parent's Name (printed)

Parent's Signature

---

Child's Name

Date

I hereby give permission for pictures of my child to be used in school promotions, school bulletin boards, school scrapbooks, and school video recordings. (group classroom photos or candid student photos may be posted on the school's web page and / or Facebook page.)

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Parent's Signature

---

Child's Name

Date of Birth

---

Date

To be a member of our Facebook group please complete the following:

Name & Facebook email address \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Facebook email address \_\_\_\_\_

You must already have a Facebook page to join us. Once we receive your address we will invite you to our group and you should accept. This is closed to school families only!

<b>For office use only:</b>
Registered: _____
Date admitted: _____
Days attending: _____
School Year: _____