

Queen of Peace School

Preschool Family Handbook

2024-2025



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## Philosophy and Vision

The preschool environment at Queen of Peace is child-centered and promotes learning as an active process through exploration and play. Children are given information about a central theme and encouraged to explore and discover the topic through guided play. Science, oral language, math, pre-reading, writing skills, self-expression, fine arts, and motor skills will be incorporated in their learning center-based environment. We are committed to providing an environment that emphasizes growth in all areas of child development: physical, social, emotional, and cognitive. Our staff strives to engage, challenge, and promote creativity in each child.

## License

Queen of Peace School will not exceed the following required state ratios:

- 3-year-olds 1:12
- 4-year-olds 1:14
- 5-year-olds 1:14

## Admission Policy

### Priority Rank System for Preschool Admissions

1. Current preschool students
2. Parishioners with siblings in Queen of Peace School
3. Parishioners new to the school
4. Non-parishioners with siblings in Queen of Peace School
5. Non-parishioners new to the school

*\*Sometimes the demand for roster spots is higher than what we can accommodate. In these situations, the Admissions Committee will take an especially close look at evidence of active participation in the life of the church. Details such as whether the child has received the sacraments, the family regularly attends Mass, and other indicators of a sincere interest in a Catholic education will be decisive.*

### Priority Rank System for Kindergarten Admissions

- 1) Catholic siblings of current students enrolled in grades 1-8 at Queen of Peace School.
- 2) Catholic students currently enrolled in Queen of Peace PreK.
- 3) Catholic students enrolled in another PreK program and whose parents are active parishioners at Queen of Peace, St. Aloysius, St. Peter in Chains, St. Joseph, or St. Julie.
- 4) Catholic students enrolled in another PreK program and whose parents are active parishioners at another Catholic Parish.

5) Non-Catholic siblings of current students at Queen of Peace School.

6) Non-Catholic students enrolled in Queen of Peace PreK.

7) Non-Catholic students enrolled in another PreK program.

*\*Sometimes the demand for roster spots is higher than what we can accommodate. In these situations, the Admissions Committee will take an especially close look at evidence of active participation in the life of the church. Details such as whether the child has received the sacraments, the family regularly attends Mass, and other indicators of a sincere interest in a Catholic education will be decisive. A strong preschool attendance record will also be an advantage.*

## **Enrollment Policy**

Enrollment shall be granted without discrimination in regard to race, color, religion, political belief, national origin, or disability. Enrollment is subject to completion of all required paperwork. The birthday cut off is August 1. All students must have control of bodily functions. A copy of the legal custody agreement must be submitted and on file at school in the case of a divorce or dissolution.

Required paperwork includes:

- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Registration Application
- Proof of Immunization
- Medical statement signed by physician (must be updated every year)
- Handbook Acknowledgement Statement
- Media Release Form

## **Early Intervention Recommendations**

Sometimes, a child may exhibit atypical behavior(s) which may warrant us to evaluate and assess the child's actions in the classroom. When this occurs, a variety of factors will be considered in this process. Input from the child's parents will be valued, as we do recognize that you know your child best. Observation notes and recommendations from classroom teachers and other staff members will be solicited. An assessment(s) may be administered or recommended by preschool staff that evaluates the behaviors being displayed. Cognitive skills, social and emotional maturity, motor development (both fine and gross), and speech will be examined. Queen of Peace School may also request a written opinion from a child development specialist, such as a pediatrician or a child psychologist, as a part of this process. It may sometimes be suggested that a parent seek an evaluation from another source (i.e. a public school district or a pediatric therapy clinic) that may be able to provide additional or alternate therapy. It is our sincere desire to recognize our students' developmental strengths and weaknesses and foster areas of growth. Many studies point to how beneficial early intervention can be in assisting children who are displaying actions and tendencies that are atypical.

## **Arrival**

Morning bus riders will enter the main school building through the back entrance and go sit with their older sibling in the main gym.

Car riders will enter the preschool school building through the side door facing the preschool traffic circle. Earliest arrival is 7:15. Any arrivals after 7:50 will be marked tardy.

## **Absences**

If your child will be absent or tardy, you need to call the main school office. When your child returns, please send a note indicating why your child was absent.

## **Dismissal**

If your child is riding the bus home, we will walk your child to the oldest sibling's classroom so they can walk out safely together to the bus.

Morning Pre3 and PreK students will dismiss at 10:50 from the preschool traffic circle. If your child is a full-day student with no older sibling, they will be dismissed at 2:20 from the preschool traffic circle.

## **Release of Students**

Students will only be released to persons on the release form completed at the beginning of the school year.

## **Snack**

Students enrolled in the full-day programs need to pack an afternoon snack. Suggestions for a healthy snack include apples, bananas, carrots, dry cereal, cheese, crackers, yogurt, teddy grahams, celery sticks, and pretzels.

## **Lunch**

Students enrolled in the full-day program will be eating lunch around 11:00. We do not have a microwave or refrigeration for student lunches. Please pack utensils if one will be needed for lunch. Uneaten food will come home so you can regulate how much to send and know exactly what has been consumed. State law requires that your child's lunch be of a certain nutritional standard.

## **Birthdays**

We will be celebrating your child's birthday in class on his or her special day. Students with a summer birthday can use their 1/2 birthday as their special day or a day in May. Birthday treats are optional.

## **Toys at School**

Do not send toys with your child to school. Also, jewelry and watches can become a big distraction. Please be mindful of other students. Your child will be asked to put items in their book bag if they become a distraction.

## **Show and Tell (PreK only)**

Each week, students have the opportunity for show and tell. The students can bring a special item each Thursday to tell their peers about. The students share Wednesdays with their peers. Wednesday's show and tell item needs to begin with the letter of the week that we are studying. The show-and-tell items can be toys, pictures, or other special trinkets. The items will be placed back in book bags after the show-and-tell time.

## **Teacher Newsletters**

You will receive a weekly email newsletter if your child is in the PreK class. Parents in the Pre3 class will receive monthly newsletters. The newsletters will inform you of our focus and lesson topics along with school information and important updates. You will be emailed the newsletters at the email address you indicated on registration papers. If you would like another email added, please let us know.

Every Sunday, you will receive the Viking Voice newsletter through OptionC.

## **Attire**

The children's activities, both indoors and outdoors, are vigorous and messy. Therefore, please send your child to school in play clothes that are washable, comfortable, allow freedom of movement, and are easy for the children to handle. Please send your child in gym shoes or rubber-soled shoes for safety purposes. No flip flops or boots. Please label all of your child's outerwear (hats, mittens, boots, and coats). Your child must pack a full set (underwear, socks, shirt, shorts) and place them in a Ziplock plastic bag, labeled with your child's name. This change of clothes will be kept at school in a box and changed out when the weather gets cooler.

## **Accidents**

If your child has a urine accident, we will have your child change into the prepared clothes in their school bag. If your child has a bowel movement accident, we will have your child clean themselves the best they can. We will also have your child change their clothes. If your child is unable to clean themselves up efficiently, we will be calling you to come clean them up or take them home for the day as we are not allowed to wipe and clean your child. Any student that has 3 or more accidents in a 2-week (10 school days) time frame will be asked to stay at home to work on toilet training skills. We will work together to determine when the student is ready to return to school.

## **Daily Schedule**

Queen of Peace provides a balanced daily schedule for all preschool students. Daily activities include large group instruction, learning centers, gross motor play, and small-group activities. A more detailed schedule will be given out at the beginning of the school year.

## **Outdoor Policy**

Children will be going outside every day except when there is a heavy rain or in extreme weather conditions. It is expected that all children who are at school will participate in our outdoor time (please dress your child accordingly). Our staffing does not allow us to properly supervise a child who must stay inside.

## **Weather Closings**

When weather conditions necessitate a delay, early release, or school closing, you will receive an OptionC message from our principal.

## **Curriculum and Assessment**

Queen of Peace provides a curriculum that is aligned with Ohio's Early Learning and Development Standards. The curriculum focuses on the following domains: Social Emotional Development, Approaches to Learning, Cognitive Development and General Knowledge (including Mathematics, Science, Social Studies), Language and Literacy Development, Physical Well-Being and Motor Development. Additionally, students will participate in specials with those content teachers. Student development will be assessed both formally and informally throughout the school year.

## **Conferences**

A scheduled conference is held in the fall for all parents to attend. We will also conference in the spring as needed to assess the growth of your child and their readiness for the upcoming school year.

## Field Trips

Parents/guardians will be notified of these special days and of opportunities for involvement. Please note that for all field trips, each student must be accompanied by a responsible adult (18+). This can be a parent, grandparent, sitter, or other trusted individual.

## Rest Time

If your child is a full-day student, they will be taking a rest period. Your child will have their own mat to sleep on. You may pack a blanket and pillow for your child to rest with. These items must stay at school in a tote or plastic bag separate from their school bag. The last day of the week that your child attends, we will send home rest items so they can be washed. Your child does not have to sleep during rest time. They do, however, need to rest. Students will not be talking or playing with other students during this time.

## Child Guidance

We are committed to using constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques in the area of discipline. The goal is for all children to have fun, feel good about themselves, and learn to regulate their own behavior by practicing social skills in a group setting. The following techniques will be used to help guide your child's behavior:

- Set clear limits
- Redirect the child to an appropriate activity
- Showing children positive alternatives
- Modeling the desired behavior and reinforcing appropriate behavior
- Encourage children to control their own behavior, cooperating with others and solving problems by talking things out
- Intervene when needed, as quickly as possible to ensure the safety of all the children
- Developmentally appropriate separation shall be no longer than one minute for each year of age. When the child is ready to return to the activity, the child and teacher will review the reason for the separation and what behavior is expected. If there are any problems with a child's behavior in the program, the teacher will speak directly with the parent. Keeping open lines of communication, the teacher and parents will work together to prevent future problems.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as a protective bear hug, so the child may regain control.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or similar cubicle.
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family, or other verbal abuse.
- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.



- Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate or shame a child
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use.
- Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability. The child shall be within sight and hearing of the preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, well-ventilated space.

## **Supervision of Children**

Students will be supervised at all times by a teacher, instructional aide, or school administrator.

## **Medical Emergency Plan**

- Staff members are trained in first aid, communicable disease, and CPR.
- Children's medical and admission records are located in our file cabinet.
- Staff will observe a child upon entering school for signs of communicable diseases. Children who become ill during school hours will be isolated and the parent/guardian will be contacted at once.
- In the case of a minor incident/accident, staff will administer basic first aid and family will be contacted. If incident /accident is life threatening, EMS will be contacted and family will be notified.

## **Emergency Procedures**

In the event of a fire or tornado, staff will follow written instructions describing emergency evacuation routes and procedures to ensure that students reach designated areas safely. In order to prepare for the unlikely event of a fire or tornado, Queen of Peace will conduct monthly fire drills and periodic tornado drills. In the unlikely event that there would be an environmental threat or threat of violence, staff will secure students in the safest possible location and contact and follow directions by proper authorities. Parents will be notified as soon as the situation allows. Queen of Peace also conducts scheduled lockdown drills. For preschool students, these will be handled in an age-appropriate manner.

## **Licensing Information**

Queen of Peace School is licensed by the State of Ohio Department of Education.

## **Management of Illness**

We will provide students with a clean and healthy environment. Students will be observed as they arrive at school to assess their general health. We ask that you not bring your child sick to

school (they will be sent home). A child with any of the following symptoms will be isolated and discharged to a parent or emergency contact (as listed on the emergency notification form):

- Temperature of 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Diarrhea
- Severe Coughing
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Redness of the eye, eyelid, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching and/ or eye pain
- Untreated/infected skin patch and unusual spots or rashes
- Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- Stiff neck with an elevated temperature
- Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies or other parasitic conditions

\* All children must be symptom free for 24 hours before they may return to school.

## **Medication**

Medications will only be administered at school after the proper forms have been completed. All medications will be stored in a designated area inaccessible to students. Prescription medications must be in the original container and will be administered as instructed on the container.

## **Modified Diet or Food Supplements**

If your child requires a special diet, written instructions are required from the physician.

## **Important Communication Addendum**

We believe that a strong, open, and constructive partnership with parents is conducive to student success. Generally, the principal will deal with questions concerning school policy and procedures. The teachers will respond to questions involving student progress and academic performance.

If a parent has an issue or concern involving student academic performance or teacher instruction, the child should be the first point of contact, followed by the teacher if unresolved issues remain. If this discussion does not provide a satisfactory solution or plan for addressing the matter, the parent should then contact the school principal. If this does not lead to resolution and the issue is of sufficient importance to warrant it, the parent may contact the pastor and/or the Catholic Schools Office at the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

The school requires that all parent-staff communication be civil and respectful. The school will not engage with communication that does not meet this standard.

Parents and school staff will sometimes disagree on things. This is expected. Disagreement itself is not a bad thing. It can lead to conversations that result in solutions to problems and improvements to policy. Such constructive interactions are positive features of a healthy school culture.

In order for an interaction to be constructive, it must start with the presumption of positive intent and a polite request for more information. No phone call, email, or other message that starts with any angry, overconfident, premature, or ill-informed accusation is one that will end well for anyone involved.

This rule is not designed to silence critics. Its purpose is to ensure that critics approach interactions with staff members in a professional manner.

Also, anyone who undermines the school with a smear campaign, whether on social media, by word of mouth, or other means, will be dismissed from the school. This policy does not punish anyone for sharing criticism of the school. It DOES punish those who go out of their way to spread unfounded or exaggerated criticism, *especially* absent any civil or respectful attempt to present the criticism to school staff in the dignified spirit of seeking a solution to a problem.

\*modified August 2024