

# St. Mary School

*A Tradition of Excellence... A Century of Success*

## Early Childhood Handbook

2023-2024





Welcome to St. Mary of the Annunciation School Early Childhood Program! Our goal is to serve the needs of all children according to the mission and philosophy of St. Mary's School. We strive to provide a warm, supportive and developmentally appropriate environment for your child. The purpose of this handbook is to acquaint you with the policies and programs of our preschool and kindergarten. We strive to make the transition between home and school a positive experience for you and your child. Daily communication and a sense of trust between parents and staff are a vital component to our program.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Mary of the Annunciation School is a Catholic community of learners living the way of Christ. We instill discipleship, integrity and academic excellence in a safe, caring environment. Our mission is to educate faith-filled leaders for tomorrow.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

St. Mary of the Annunciation School Early Childhood philosophy is based on the belief that children need time to experience their childhood through exploration and discovery. Saint Mary's Early Childhood Program strives to provide the young child with an environment that maximizes this exploration and discovery. Projects are planned, but attention is paid to individual needs. Children process knowledge by using their whole self to gather information, therefore the more involved the experience, the greater the potential for learning. Opportunities are provided for children to take responsibility, make decisions and learn through play.

St. Mary of the Annunciation School Early Childhood Program is strongly aware of the importance of a child's positive feeling of self-worth. Each child brings his/her own experiences to us each day; it is our role to nurture and develop his/her sense of self.



## CURRICULUM

The curriculum is based on the developmental theories and methodologies of early childhood education. The program is designed to help each child acquire the skills, knowledge and behaviors needed to develop cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically. Units are planned which integrate language/literacy, math, science, small/ large motor development, art and music/movement.

A wide variety of materials and activities are provided; children are encouraged to expand their use and discover new ways of doing things. Children will be given the opportunity to work in a variety of settings; independently, cooperatively, one-to-one, small and large groups.

Projects and themes are planned but flexibility is given in response to the individual needs and group dynamics. We emphasize creative expression and problem solving. Emphasis is also placed on developing positive and enjoyable relationships with other children.

Throughout the year we will be learning about the gifts God gives us, as well as the importance of being a follower of Jesus. The children are taught that being a friend of Jesus means to treat others with kindness, respect and love.

The program strives to build a partnership with parents as a way to further develop the child's cognitive and emotional skills.



## SAYING GOODBYE

Sometimes young children have difficulty with separation. It is our experience that it is best to always say good-bye with a kiss, hug or a wave! Be firm, but friendly about leaving. If your child whines or clings, prolonging the good-bye will only make it harder for you and your child. Be assured that we will be there to comfort your child once you leave. After you have established a good-bye routine, your child will get to know what to expect, and the good-byes will be less difficult. Moreover, your child's separation anxiety will diminish. Good feelings are contagious. Please know that separation adjustment is normal; we are here to help you and your child ease through it.

## REGISTRATION

**Age Requirements:** Pre-Kindergarten children must be three years old by September 1 and toilet- trained.

Kindergarten children must be five years old by September 1.

**Official Documents:** A child entering for the first time must have a copy of his/her birth certificate, all immunization records and baptismal records (if applicable).

## SESSIONS

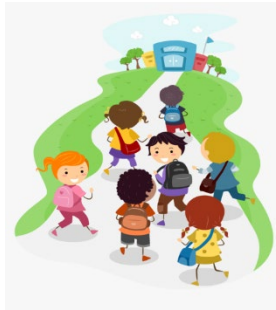
### Pre-Kindergarten

Half day: five days a week from 8:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Full day: five days a week from 8:00 AM to 2:20 PM

### Kindergarten

Full day: five days a week from 8:00 AM to 2:25 PM



## ARRIVAL

Arrival procedures are as follows:

- Kindergarten and Pre-KB children will enter through the door between the school and church.
- Pre-KA children will enter through the Grove Street door of the school.
- All students will be greeted by their teachers outside their classroom doors.

## DISMISSAL

- All students will be dismissed by their teachers at their designated doors at dismissal.
- Kindergarten students will be dismissed at 2:25PM.
- Half day Pre-Kindergarten will be dismissed at 11:00AM.
- Full day Pre-Kindergarten will be dismissed at 2:20PM
- Parents that do not pick up their child at the designated time must report to the office. Teachers will be notified of the parent's arrival and will bring the child to the office for dismissal.

Only those authorized by a parent or guardian may pick up a child at this time. Your child's teacher must be notified if someone other than a parent is picking up your child. This person must be listed on the Dismissal Release Form, or a written note must be given to the teacher in order for your child to be dismissed. This person will also be asked to show a license.

**All parents are asked to fill out and return a Dismissal Release Form by the first day of school.**

## SNACK

Each day the children will have a morning snack. During the warmer weather, we will also have an afternoon water or juice break. We encourage children to bring nutritious snacks and drinks.

Some examples of nutritional snacks are;

milk, juice, water

fruit, vegetables

crackers and cheese

Please do not send any **candy, soda** or anything in a **glass container**. Snacks should be sent in a lunch box labeled with your child's name.



## LUNCH

Children in the full day program will eat lunch each day. The children have the option to purchase lunches in accordance with the school schedule. Lunch and milk orders are made monthly through [orgsonline.com](http://orgsonline.com). Please be advised that there is no refrigeration available for children's lunches.

## DRESS CODE/UNIFORM

St. Mary of the Annunciation School uniform is designed to provide students with a sense of pride about themselves. All students are expected to report to school each day wearing the required uniform. There will be out-of-uniform days, which will be announced during the course of the year. These days, clothing should be neat and appropriate for school. *Jewelry should not be worn in school, with the exception of religious medals or crosses*

### Pre-Kindergarten

- St. Mary's sweatpants (shorts for summer uniform)
- St. Mary's tee shirt
- St. Mary's sweatshirt
- Sneakers with crew socks (socks must cover the ankle)

### Kindergarten

Summer uniforms are worn during the months of September and October (until Columbus Day), May and June. Winter uniforms are worn during the months of December, January, February and March.

The following are a few other reminders:

- Extreme or trendy hairstyles are not permitted. Boys' hair must be cut at or above the shirt collar.
- Earrings for girls are limited to stud or small hoops only; boys are not permitted to wear earrings in school.
- Other jewelry is limited to religious medals or crosses and watches.
- Hats are not allowed in the school building.
- Uniforms must be purchased from Donnelly's Clothing.
- Black or navy shorts only may be worn under the jumper.

## **Uniform Guidelines**

### **Girls**

Plaid jumper or navy blue uniform pants  
Short/long sleeve white or yellow cotton blouse with Peter Pan collar  
Navy blue knee socks/tights  
Flat rubber-soled shoes (navy/black/brown/tan)  
Navy blue cardigan sweater (optional)

### **Boys**

Navy uniform pants  
Short or long-sleeve white or blue polo shirt  
Navy pullover sweater, vest or fleece with school logo (optional)  
Navy crew socks (must cover the ankle)  
Dress shoes (black/blue/brown/tan)

### **Summer Uniform**

St. Mary's Polo shirt (tucked in)  
Uniform navy blue shorts  
White or navy crew socks (must cover the ankle)  
Sneakers (fastened); mostly white, grey or black; no high tops

A navy blue skort is also available for the girls. The skort must be worn at knee-length. Girls may choose to wear knee socks and shoes or crew socks and sneakers.

### **Physical Education Uniform**

St. Mary's sweatpants (shorts for summer uniform)  
St. Mary's tee shirt  
St. Mary's sweatshirt  
Mostly black, grey or white sneakers with crew socks (socks must cover the ankle)

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Each child needs a complete change of clothes that will stay in school. All children's personal belongings (clothes, coats, lunch boxes, school bags, etc.) must be labeled. We ask that children not wear jewelry to school except pierced earrings (studs only). They are apt to remove, lose or break them.

## **TOILETING**

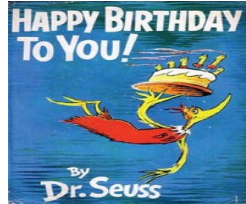
Children are expected to have mastered appropriate self-care skills to enter into our Early Childhood Program. If a child has a toileting accident, we will try to guide them through a change of clothes. If the accident necessitates it, a parent will be called to come and clean and change the child. The child will wait in the nurse's office for the parent to arrive.

## PERSONAL TOYS

St. Mary of the Annunciation School Early Childhood Program provides ample playthings, so we ask that children do not bring in toys from home. Each child will have several opportunities, throughout the year, to share their favorite things. If your child has a special “security need” please discuss it with the teacher.

## BIRTHDAYS

Children may wear their own clothes on their birthday, as well as bringing in a favorite book to share with the class.



## PHOTOGRAPHY/PUBLICITY

We often take pictures of the children as they work or participate in special events. These pictures may be displayed around the school, placed on the website, or printed in brochures, newsletters, or the local newspaper. If you do not wish your child to be in these pictures, please NOTE YOUR WISHES on the Parent Signature page.

## CORI FORMS

Any parent wishing to volunteer for any school activities must fill out a CORI form at the beginning of the year and complete VIRTUS Protecting God’s Children (child safety training). There will be no exceptions to this rule.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Parents are invited to volunteer in the classroom as their schedule allows. Volunteer opportunities include Lunch Duty, Reading to the children, and “Parent Talent,” which invites you to plan and share an activity with the children. If you are interested, please fill out the volunteer form and return it to your child’s teacher. **All volunteers must complete Protecting God’s Children and complete a CORI.**

## NO SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS

If it should be necessary to close school because of weather conditions, a message will be sent to the home phone, cell phone, and email account listed on a student's file via the Connect-Ed telephone system. We usually follow the Melrose Public Schools when cancelling school.



*We look forward to a happy, fun-filled year!*



Be sure to check out the school website

[www.stmaryschoolmelrose.org](http://www.stmaryschoolmelrose.org)

You will find all school information and links to each teacher's individual website



# St. Mary of the Annunciation School Early Childhood Staff

<b>Pastor</b>	<b>Fr. Shawn Allen</b>	
<b>Principal</b>	<b>Mr. Christopher Beza</b>	
<b>Admin. Assistant</b>	<b>Mrs. Deborah Mobilia</b>	
<b>School Nurse</b>	<b>Mrs. Terry Pedicini</b>	
<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Ms. Maria Sully</b>	<b>Pre-KA</b>
	<b>Ms. Kristin Monahan</b>	<b>Pre-KB</b>
	<b>Mrs. Rachel Barys</b>	<b>K</b>
<b>Teacher Assistant</b>	<b>Mrs. Chrystal Boyle</b>	<b>Pre-KA</b>
	<b>Mrs. Cheri Marino</b>	<b>Pre-KB</b>



[ms.sully@stmaryschoolmelrose.org](mailto:ms.sully@stmaryschoolmelrose.org)

[ms.monahan@stmaryschoolmelrose.org](mailto:ms.monahan@stmaryschoolmelrose.org)

[mrs.barys@stmaryschoolmelrose.org](mailto:mrs.barys@stmaryschoolmelrose.org)

[www.stmaryschoolmelrose.org](http://www.stmaryschoolmelrose.org)

# Important Forms and Releases

## 1. Dismissal Release Form

This form allows us to dismiss your child to a friend or relative in your absence. Children will not be released to adults you have not authorized.

## 2. Parent Signature Form

This form indicates that you have read the handbook and are aware of school policies and gives your child permission to go on any "Walking Field Trips" and agrees to posting pictures of your child on school websites and/or marketing information.



**St. Mary of the Annunciation School**  
4 Myrtle Street  
Melrose, MA. 02176

## ***WALKING FIELD TRIP PERMISSION***

Permission is given for my child to participate in all walking field trips for the school year 2023 – 2024. This includes but is not limited to trips to the Police Station, Fire Station, City Hall, Memorial Hall, the Knights of Columbus Hall. This permission slip also includes permission to walk to the Melrose Family YMCA for the winter gym class.

I understand that I will be notified of all such trips via the monthly newsletter. I also understand that there is a separate permission slip involving all bus trips.

I request that St. Mary's School allow my son/daughter as stated above to participate in all walking field trips.

I individually, and as a parent/guardian of my child, for ourselves and for our heirs, executors and administrators, hereby release and forever discharge the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston, a Corporation Sole, or as applicable the Board of Trustees/Directors of St. Mary's School its Principal, teachers, instructors, volunteers, priest/chaplain, employees and agents and each such persons and such entity's agents, representatives, successors or assigns from any and all claims and causes of action, including but not limited to claims for personal injury which I, individually and as parent or guardian of my child, may have arising out of or in any way related to the administration of the medications referenced herein.

I also state that I am not aware of any health reasons which would prohibit or limit my child's participation in this field trip, activity or event.

# Parent Signature Page

## 2023-2024

I have read the 2023-2024 Early Childhood Handbook and agree to follow the school policies and procedures as stated.

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Parent Signature

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Date

I have read the Walking Field Trip Permission Slip and agree to its contents.

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Parent Signature

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Date

I have read the picture release form and am willing to release my child's photograph or work into the public domain and realize that no monetary compensation will be given for the picture and/or material.

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Parent Signature

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Date