



## **MISSION STATEMENT**

*St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Elementary School is a caring Catholic learning community of active, engaged students, teachers and families. Students and graduates grow as young men and women of knowledge, faith, virtue, and joy who love learning. They are prepared and eager to meet the challenges ahead, while serving God and others.*

## **OVERVIEW OF THE PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

*I will advance as I learn new skills and prepare for kindergarten.*

Pre-Kindergarten is a critical time for children beginning the adventure of a lifetime of learning. Every day your child is learning and doing more, which is why our Pre-Kindergarten program is designed to challenge more. Our goal in Pre-Kindergarten is to teach the whole child by providing a nurturing, secure environment in which learning can take place. In the Pre-Kindergarten program, we seek to educate the mind, the heart, and the soul. We recognize that each child is made in the image and likeness of God; so our teachers focus on giving personal attention to each child by using developmentally appropriate methods, and implementing high academic standards. We promote independence in an organized atmosphere, as it is increasingly important for children to be their own thinkers. We also teach children to work well within a group through listening, sharing and cooperation. These early learning years are important; a time when good habits are developed and character formation begins.

Early character formation occurs through young students developing important virtues such as self-control, empathy, kindness, generosity, and respect for others. Our Pre-Kindergarten programs provide structure, academic foundation, study of the Catholic faith, and leadership opportunities. Children learn to lead by example, and experience opportunities to build self confidence. Strength lies in virtue as well as in academic performance. Our students are taught the value of faith, virtue and service to others, as a compliment to a strong academic curriculum.

## **OUR PROMISE**

***We Promise:***

- ... To honor your role as a parent and to partner with you in the care and development of your child.
- ... You will feel completely confident and reassured when you leave your child with us.
- ... You will know that we value your child as a unique individual to be nurtured, protected, and respected at all times.
- ... You will know that committed, dedicated educators are caring for your child.
- ... You will watch your child develop a love of learning and a rich imagination.
- ... You will see your child develop strong bonds with our teachers and other children.
- ... You will share in the joy of your child's experiences in our program through regular communication.
- ... You will be treated as an important member of our family
- ... You can expect us to listen carefully and respond to any questions or concerns in a timely manner.
- ... You will know that it is our privilege to serve your family.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

As Catholic early educators, we minister to the whole child - MIND, HEART, and SOUL. In a trusting Catholic environment we enable the child to grow spiritually, emotionally, and intellectually. Awakening the child's innate desire to learn, we foster creativity and excitement about learning by facilitating a stimulating atmosphere. Understanding their uniqueness in personality and differences in learning styles creates opportunities to discover, explore, question, and succeed, providing the proper atmosphere which enables the child freedom of choice. Above all, our setting nurtures the child's spiritual relationship with God and self, and develops a caring attitude for others.

## **GOALS OF OUR PROGRAM**

To FACILITATE opportunities in spiritual, physical, social, cognitive, and language development.

To CREATE an atmosphere where children appreciate a quiet time preparing them to begin a friendship with God.

To INITIATE in the early learner, the sacredness of life.

To NURTURE a warm, caring environment to develop self-esteem and a positive attitude toward all God's creation.

To CREATE an environment that fosters independence, problem solving, and exploration

To ENSURE each child's first school experience a happy one.

## **VALUES OF OUR PROGRAM**

We use everyday experiences to:

- help strengthen the child's sense of prayer through reverence for God's creation
- provide multi-sensory experiences for the child to discover the mysteries of nature
  - build a sense of trust with the young child by fostering a warm and sincere environment within the classroom
- develop play and work situations where children learn kindness and respect for personal and community property
- cultivate opportunities to develop the Gospel value of justice by caring for each other
- promote within the young child a sense of integrity
- foster occasions for the child to solve problems without direct adult intervention
- encourage classrooms of loving concern to enhance independence, self-confidence, self-esteem and co-operation

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES / CURRICULUM**

The Pre-school curriculum offers many subjects and activities. The subjects are Religion, Math, Science, Language, Art, Music, and Physical Development.

**Religion:** The Pre-school religion program is designed for the young child to experience a personal relationship with God. This is taught to the child through music, prayers, stories, and dramatic play.

**Math:** As children play, they encounter mathematics as an integral part of their world. The child learns math through music and movement, story, and art. Concepts taught are shapes and sizes, sorting, classifying, time, measurements, and number recognition.

**Science:** Science is all around us. Children learn science through their experiences with nature, seasons, magnetism, animals, senses, parts of the body, and types of environments.

**Language:** Young children learn language skills more readily and with a more positive attitude when they can see, hear, and feel what they are told. Appropriate developmental language activities are presented in audio and visual perception and comprehension. The teacher respects what the child has to say, listens to the child, and allows the child to question and experiment. Providing these types of personal experiences gives the child a head start to reading, writing, and reasoning as a logical step to their development.

**Art:** Art and craft work requires specific items, a stimulating environment in which to create, and guidelines for safety and classroom management. Some activities we teach are painting with brushes, Q-tips, shaving cream, and fruits and vegetables. Modeling with clay and play dough are also used. We design with glitter, glue, crayons, markers, sequins, and foam to just mention a few of the items.

**Music:** Music is very important in the learning process. It stimulates the individual. Music is learned through movement, singing, and dancing. Instruments, props, ribbons sticks, or bean bags are used to enhance a lesson.

**Physical Development:** Movement education is important in developing children's physical potential, self-esteem, their ability to follow directions, and their thinking skills. This includes both large and small motor development.

Large motor activities involve the whole body, and help children have the ability to carry out daily tasks efficiently. Some larger motor activities are jumping, running, walking, and balancing. These tasks are done throughout the year in a fun way. Small motor activities are important to help children develop individual finger strength, finger coordination and to begin their symmetrical training in the use of both hands. Eye-hand coordination is developed through the use of fine motor activities. Some activities to strengthen small motor development are string beads, tracing, stencils, cutting, writing, and finger plays. Simple tasks such as closing a zip-lock bag and opening a straw are also examples of small motor development.

Pre-school students from St Mary Magdalen Elementary School entering our Kindergarten program need to know how to write their name and recognize most of their letters and numbers. Students will be well prepared if they have these skills.

**PRE-K HOURS:**

**Half-day Session 8:20am- 11:30 am**

**Full-Day Session 8:20am - 2:20 pm**

**\*ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL/PARKING IS CLASSROOM SPECIFIC**

Doors open at 8:00, your child will be marked tardy after 8:20. Parents must walk their child to the arrival door. Please drop off with a quick reassuring goodbye. This will help ensure the best transition for all students. The classroom staff will assist your child in the classroom with unpacking and any personal needs. Our goal is to foster each child's independence and self-help skills.

Arrival and pick-up for **Pre-K 3** will be at the **back of the building** at all times **except half day students** which are always picked in the courtyard. Parents/Guardians should utilize the parking lot in the back of the building and use the rear entrance when dropping off and picking up their children. Older siblings will arrive and be dismissed with their Pre-K siblings. Doors will open at 8am. Dismissal for Part-time students is 11:30 am, full time students 2:20pm.

Arrival and pick-up for **Pre K-4** will be at the **courtyard door**. Parents/Guardians should utilize the parking lot in front of the courtyard- the left side front of the building-when dropping off and picking up. Parents wait in the courtyard area for teachers and students. Older siblings will arrive and be dismissed with their Pre-K sibling. Doors will open at 8am. Dismissal for Part-time students is 11:30 am, full time students 2:20pm.

## **DELAYS/LATE OPENINGS & EARLY DISMISSALS (DUE TO BAD WEATHER)**

We follow the Watertown School system. When there is a 90 minute delay, there is no half-day Pre-K. Early dismissal is 12:20 for full-day. No After-School care. Please listen to the radio and look for a message from the school phone tree if there is bad weather.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is an important part of our philosophy. Calendars, monthly newsletters, and other information will be sent home with the children in their folders. You should check the school website regularly. The website is [www.smsjschools.org](http://www.smsjschools.org). Teachers will email information as well, and if you need to speak with the teacher about an issue, please either email or send in a note with your child. Any Emergency Communication or changes to your child's schedule should be communicated to the main office.

## **OUTDOOR PLAY**

We like to go outside daily and we continue to do so for as long as possible. Keep in mind when dressing your child that we go out in all kinds of weather- so dress appropriately according to the weather. Umbrellas are not a safe choice for school. Rubber soled shoes or sneakers are best- no sandals, crocks, or light up shoes.

## **SNACKS/LUNCH**

All children will be having a morning snack. Please pack a healthy snack such as pretzels, graham crackers, goldfish, animal crackers, cheez-its, or fruit. Refillable water bottles should be sent in. No candy is allowed. If your child is staying for lunch, there are two options: A hot lunch program is available for purchase in advance. Parents also can provide lunch from home. Milk is also available for purchase, and Cookies are available for purchase for Wednesday. Please check with the school nurse or classroom teacher regarding allergies and food restrictions in the classroom.

## **REST TIMES**

All Full time Pre-K students will have a rest/quiet time. They will need a sleep sack or blanket & mat. The blanket/sleep mat with the attached pillow is ideal. These will be sent home every Friday to be washed. These are cleaned regularly. Children are expected to stay on their mats and be respectful of others who may be sleeping.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

Birthdays are special! Your child's birthday will be celebrated within the classroom. You are welcome to send in individual goody bags which will be sent home. Due to an increased amount of allergies in our school communities, no food is allowed to be sent in. If you are sending in birthday invitations for a party, we cannot send them home unless the whole class is invited.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

Pre-K progress reports will be sent home in January and in June. Conferences will be after the school first trimester. Please refrain from discussing your child with the teachers in his/her presence. We will gladly make time to speak with you alone if you would like to make an appointment anytime before the scheduled conferences.

## **DISCIPLINE**

We believe that children want guidance in how to behave. We always try to model appropriate behavior and to let the children know what is expected of them. Positive reinforcement of appropriate behavior really empowers children to make good choices. Children's behavior is assessed and monitored by the classroom teacher. Any and all behaviors will be communicated to the parents and strategies will be discussed in an individual manner. If necessary- a behavioral plan will be initiated with principal and parental support.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

If your child is going home with anyone other than you, for your child's safety, a note MUST be given to the teacher that day. Please let your child know that someone different will be picking them up since this will help ease any fears when you are not there at dismissal time. I.D. will be asked of anyone picking up the child other than the parent.

## **BATHROOM**

*Students need to be potty trained by the start of the school year.* No pull-ups are allowed and children need to be able to wipe themselves. Please help them be independent in the bathroom. We know that accidents do happen and in case one does, we will bring them to the nurse's bathroom so they can change themselves with our assistance.

## **BACKPACKS/FOLDERS**

Pre-K students need to have a large backpack and a pocket folder. Make sure the backpack is large enough to hold the 9 1/2 X 12 inch folder for all important school communications and their lunchbox. ***It is very important for parents to check their child's folder at the end of each day they have attended class.*** Help your child practice putting on the backpack (and taking it off). Your child should also know how to zip it up. Our goal is to make your child as independent as possible. Please label all folders and backpacks. Please help us accomplish this goal!

## **LABELS**

Please label everything you send in with your child. Coats, Backpacks, Waterbottles, Lunchboxes.. If it comes into the classroom... Please label it.

## **UNIFORM GUIDELINES**

One of the most important core values of The Unified School of St. Mary Magdalen and St. John The Evangelist is our sense of community. This is immediately evident through our use of a uniform dress code that reflects the school's identity and joins all of our students together. In order to enable the Pre-k 3 and 4 students to be identified as an important part of our school community, it has been decided that a pre-k dress code will be established.

First day of School thru October 31:

- Plain white, light blue, navy or dark green short-sleeved shirt (no designs, decorations, or images)
- Pull on plain dark green, navy or gray gym shorts (elastic waist)
- Polo dresses in light blue, navy or dark green with leggings
- White Socks
- Sneakers with Velcro closures

November 1 thru April 30\*

- Plain white, light blue, navy or dark green long sleeved shirt (no designs, decorations, or images)
- Pull on navy, dark green or gray gym sweat pants (elastic waist)
- Light Blue, Navy, Dark green or gray sweatshirt
- White socks
- Sneakers with Velcro closures

Students are always welcome to wear the winter uniform on colder days.

The Unified School logo is not required. Parents may wish to order their uniforms from Lands' End. . Since these clothing items are plain, parents may purchase these items at other stores as well. Please remember that decoration/designs/images are not part of the uniform dress-code.

All children should have a complete change of clothing(including underwear and socks) to be kept at school. Please send in a labeled ziplock bag.

## **PRE-K 4 DAILY SCHEDULE**

- 8:00 - Arrival (Sign in & Table Top Activities)
- 8:30 - Prayer, Religion, Attendance, Pledge of Allegiance
- 8:40 - Circle Time Activities- calendar, weather, morning meeting
- 9:00 - Bathroom (wash hands)
- 9:10- Snack
- 9:25- Large Group Learning/Language Development
- 9:45 - Center Time (children rotated for small group art and academics.)
- 10:25 - Clean up- Centers
- 10:30- Storytime
- 10:35- Bathroom
- 10:50- Large Motor/Outside
- 11:20 - Music and Movement (Dismissal for Half Day Students 11:30)
- 11:40- Wash Hands & Lunch
- 12:20 - Clean-up/Bathroom
- 12:30 - Rest Time
- 1:30 - Wake-up, Bathroom, Table Activities
- 2:00 Story/Large Group Activity
- 2:10 - Prepare for Dismissal/Goodbye Prayer
- 2:20 - Dismissal for All-Day Pre-K.

## **PRE K 3 DAILY SCHEDULE**

8:00-	ARRIVAL
8:20-	CLEAN UP
8:25-	PRAYER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, ATTENDANCE
8:35-	BATHROOM
8:55-	CIRCLE TIME
9:15-	SNACK
9:30-	RELIGION/STORY
9:45	BATHROOM/OUTSIDE OR LARGE MOTOR
10:15	ART
10:35	CENTER TIME-SMALL GROUP INSTRUCTION
11:15	CLEAN UP/PRAYER
11:30	HALF DAY DISMISSAL
11:30	LUNCH/BATHROOM
12:15	REST TIME/NAP
1:45	WAKE-UP/BATHROOM/TABLE ACTIVITIES
2:00	BOOKS/SONGS/GAMES/PRAYER
2:20	DISMISSAL FOR FULL DAY PRE-K

## **STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHS/PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Throughout the year, The Unified School of St. Mary Magdalen and St. John the Evangelist programs, achievements and special events are given attention through any number of publications/literature such as the Development Newsletter, local area newspapers and the school website. Information disseminated through this publicity gives us the opportunity to highlight our Unified School Community and the community at large the positive attributes The Unified School education can provide for our students. The distribution of these pieces varies according to the type of publication and the target audiences. The literature can be mailed to our current parents, alumni parents and alumni. Information can be seen by the general public on our website or in the local newspapers.

Throughout the school year, photos of the students are taken to be included as part of the above public relations material. Your child's photo may appear in any of the above areas during his/her attendance at St. Mary Magdalen Elementary School.

**If you would prefer that your child's photo not be included in any printed or computer material, please note this on the sign-off sheet included with this handbook.**

## **KINDERGARTEN ACCEPTANCE POLICY**

We cannot guarantee placement in our Kindergarten classes. The policy adopted by the school board for the order of acceptance into Kindergarten is as follows:

1. Siblings of students presently enrolled in grades K through 8
2. Qualified parishioners and/or Pre-K students
3. Catholic non- parishioners
4. Non-Catholics

Students presently in our Pre-K 3 program are assured acceptance in the Pre-K 4 program.

## **TUITION**

The tuition is set yearly by the school's finance committee and approved by the School Board. There are 10 scheduled payments which start in August and end in May. Please contact the school Business Manager with any questions. A \$25.00 late fee will be added to late payments.

### *TO COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION PROCESS YOU WILL NEED*

1. A birth certificate (long form)
2. A baptismal certificate
3. Registration Fee

## **FUNDRAISING**

All Pre K families are required to participate in fundraising and Home & School dues.



## **HEALTH**

Nursing services are available during school hours for illness/injuries that occur on school grounds. The school nurse functions under the auspices of the Watertown School District and follows the standing orders of the town's medical advisor. Students who feel ill or are injured in school should report to the nurse after obtaining permission from their teacher.

**Emergency contact information should be kept updated. Notify the school promptly of any changes in phone/address.**

**Report the reason for absences via call to the nurse's office.**

### **Accidents/Illness**

If there is any question of your child not feeling well in the morning, please keep him/her at home. If a child has an elevated temperature, he or she should remain home until the temperature has returned to normal and is maintained at normal for 24 hours without the use of fever reducers such as Advil, Tylenol, or Ibuprofen. Children who are sent home by the nurse for illness and/or elevated temperature should remain at home an additional 24 hours to complete their recovery. Parents must sign their child out from the main office prior to picking up their child in the Health Office.

The school nurse will administer first aid if a child becomes ill or injured. No medications will be given without a physician's order. The parent will be contacted by the school nurse or office when necessary. If your child tells you that he or she received an injury at school and that it was not reported to the nurse, please inform the nurse as soon as possible.

### **The following guidelines must be adhered to before returning to school:**

1. Fever 100 degrees or over – Student must be fever free for 24 hours without the use of Tylenol or Motrin before returning to school, and 48 hours during flu season.
2. Vomiting and/or Diarrhea – no further incidence for 24 hours.
3. Strep Throat – 48 hours after the first dose of an antibiotic, fever free for 24 hours and feeling well enough to participate in school.
4. Conjunctivitis – Antibiotic treatment for 24 hours.

### **Allergies**

It is important to notify the school nurse and staff if your child has an allergy such as bee stings, insect bites, foods, medication, or environmental substances. If emergency medication (ordered by a physician) is necessary, the nurse will store it.

We ask that all parents be sensitive to common childhood allergies. Some classrooms are designated "nut free zones." It is imperative that all students in any of these classrooms not bring products with nuts into school for classroom snack. Be advised that under no circumstances is a student allowed to eat on a school bus unless a medical condition substantiated with a physician's order warrants such activity.

**Note:** Due to latex allergies in school buildings, latex balloons, gloves, and other products are prohibited.

### **Classroom Celebrations:**

During the school year the classroom may hold celebrations during holiday time. They may include an appropriate craft project, game, or snack. Snacks or treats for the class must be approved in advance by the teacher and the school nurse.

### **Communicable Diseases**

If you suspect that your child has a communicable disease, please do not bring him/her to school to see the school nurse. Please schedule an appointment with your physician.

All communicable diseases should be reported to the nurse. These include:

### **Sore Throat/Strep Throat**

The school nurse will examine a sore throat. If a sore throat persists for two days, or if there is fever with it, the child should be seen by the family physician. If a throat culture shows streptococci, the child should remain at home on medication for 48 hours and be non-symptomatic before returning to school.

### **Head Lice**

Children with head lice are to be excluded for 24 hours following treatment. In cases of severe infestation, we may require a longer absence. No child may return to school without first being inspected by the nurse. Parents must be present for this inspection.

### **Conjunctivitis/Pink Eye**

The symptoms are a reddened eye which is usually painful and accompanied by moderate lid-swelling, mucous or discharge from the eye, and tearing. School policy states that any child with conjunctivitis/pink eye is excluded from school until antibiotics have been administered for a minimum of 24 hours.

### **Rashes**

A child who has a rash such as impetigo, scabies, or shingles, will be excluded from school until the condition is diagnosed by a private physician and treated, if necessary. Proof of treatment must accompany the student upon return to school.

### **Chicken Pox/Varicella**

Chicken Pox requires a 5-6 day exclusion after the appearance of the first crop of lesions or until all scabs are dry. The child is to report to the school nurse upon return to school. A parent must accompany the child to school for re-admittance.

Any suspicious appearing skin condition should be reported to the nurse. Children with impetigo and scabies are to be excluded from school until they have a doctor's permission to return.

**Please see next page for Quarantine Periods**

### Quarantine Periods (Minimum Control)

Chicken Pox	One week after appearance of first blister and when rash has begun to scab over. *Reminder to parents to avoid ASA products. Notify parents who are immuno-suppressed of an exposure so that appropriate action may be taken.
Conjunctivitis	24 hours of medication before return to school. No swimming.
Coxsackie	All suspected cases to M.D. for diagnosis. Must have a note from the physician upon return to school.
Diarrhea/Vomiting	Minimum of 24 hours after symptoms are resolved without use of medicine.
Fever	24 hours after return of normal temperature as recorded without use of medicine.
Flu	48 hours after return of normal temperature as recorded without use of medicine.
German Measles	One week after rash appears.
Hepatitis	With written permission of M.D.
Impetigo	48 hours of treatment before return to school. May be left uncovered. No swimming.
Lice	Pediculicide per recommendation of school medical advisor. 24 hours at home to remove nits. Parent must accompany child to school with empty pediculicide container and remain while the child is examined by the school nurse.

### Immunization

Connecticut law mandates that all students be protected by adequate immunization against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, rubella, hemophilus influenzae type B, and any other vaccine required by the schedule for active immunization adopted pursuant to state law (e.g., varicella).

Students who have not been adequately immunized will not be admitted to school except in cases where the parent/guardian has provided a certificate from a physician stating that such immunization is medically contraindicated or the parent/guardian presents a statement that such immunization would be contrary to the religious beliefs of the child.

**Parent Signature Page**

(To be returned 1 week after receipt)

I/We have read the 2023-2024 Pre-K Handbook and agree to follow the school policies and procedures as stated.

Family Name (Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Website and Other Publications Photo Permission Guidelines

Dear Parent or Guardian,

The Unified School of St. Mary Magdalen and St. John the Evangelist hosts a Website at: [www.smmsoakville.org](http://www.smmsoakville.org). Occasionally we wish to post a picture of a particular school activity such as a science project, a play, artwork, sporting event, or other activity. This may involve posting a picture showing a student, a group of students, or a sample of a student's work. We may also use these photos in brochures, posters, and various other means of publication.

If students' pictures or works are used:

- Only first names shall be used if referencing student pictures or scanned classroom work.
- Personal information will not be published.
- Documents will not include information that indicates the physical location of any student at a given time other than attendance at a particular school or participation in an activity.

Before posting pictures of students or samples of student work, we require that the parent(s)/guardian(s) sign the permission form below. We will keep this signed form on file for this school year.

### Photo Permission Form

I **grant** The Unified School of St. Mary Magdalen and St John the Evangelist permission to use photo images of my son/daughter or a sample of his/her work such as a poem, story, artwork, etc. on their website, or in other print or electronic media.

Please check the blanks below to indicate which permission(s) you grant and then sign and date as indicated.

\_\_\_\_\_ SMMSSJS has permission to post samples of my son/daughter's schoolwork in its media.

\_\_\_\_\_ SMMSSJS has permission to post a picture of my son/daughter in its media.

I **do not grant** SMMSSJS permission to use photo images of my son/daughter or a sample of his/her work such as a poem, story, artwork, etc. on their website, or in other print or electronic media.

Print Name of Student Print \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent(s)/or Guardian(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** This agreement will be in effect as of the date signed and may be revoked at any time by contacting your son's or daughter's school principal.