



# Early Childhood Program Parent Handbook

2023 - 2024

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

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to St. Peter's Catholic School's Early Childhood Program. Following are the policies and procedures as set forth by our school administration.

A Parent Handbook is intended to acquaint you with the policies and procedures of St. Peter's Catholic School. Please read this document carefully. The responsibility of enforcing these guidelines rests largely upon our carefully selected early childhood educators whose principal obligation is to assure the safety and well-being of all children entrusted to our care. The purpose of this document is not to cover every possible scenario that may arise, but to offer a comprehensive document to guide anticipated circumstances. The goal of this document is to facilitate families' understanding of the policies and procedures outlined. We welcome parents' comments, questions, and/or suggestions as we strive to offer exemplary learning opportunities. The administration reserves the right to adjust and adapt policies based on the needs of the school.

St. Peter's Catholic School has entered its 171<sup>st</sup> year of educating children of the Midlands of South Carolina. As the largest ministry of the Basilica of St. Peter, we look forward to serving your family as we continue to set the foundation for a life of faith, virtue, and excellence in the Catholic tradition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aubrey Wall". The script is elegant and cursive, with the first letters of "Aubrey" and "Wall" being capitalized and prominent.

Aubrey Wall  
Principal

# Brief History of St. Peter’s Catholic School

St. Peter’s Catholic Church was founded by Irish Immigrants who came to Columbia in pursuit of employment. In 1829, seeking a formal place of worship, they were instrumental in building St. Peter’s Catholic Church. In 1852, in an effort to educate their children in the Catholic faith that they so dearly loved, St. Peter’s Catholic School was founded. It is the longest, continuously running Catholic elementary school in the state of South Carolina. St. Peter’s Catholic School was and is today the largest ministry of the Basilica of St. Peter, providing an academically challenging education in a safe, nurturing and globally diverse environment that prepares its students for a life of faith, virtue and excellence.

## FOREWARD

It is the administration’s expectation that all students, parents/guardians, faculty, and staff will familiarize themselves with these policies. Additionally, all parents and students are required to sign the Handbook verification form stating that they have read the contents and are supportive of school policies. The education of a student is a partnership between the parents and the school. Just as the parent has the right to withdraw a child if desired, the school administration reserves the right to require the withdrawal of a student if the administration determines that the partnership is irrevocably broken.

HANDBOOK IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Faculty & Staff ..... 4

Admission Policies..... 5

FACTS Tuition Management ..... 8

Tuition & Fee Policy..... 11

General Program Information ..... 12

Extended Care Policies ..... 16

Illness Policy ..... 18

Discipline Policies ..... 21

Parents as Partners ..... 23

Acknowledgement ..... 25

# FACULTY & STAFF

## Early Childhood 2-, 3- and 4-Year-Old Programs

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# ADMISSIONS POLICIES

## Early Childhood 2-, 3- and 4-Year-Old Programs

### NEW APPLICANTS

Enrollment is online at RenWeb.com. Parents wishing to enroll students at St. Peter's should go to RenWeb.com, select Logins from the menu bar and ParentsWeb Login from the drop-down menu. When the RenWeb ParentsWeb Login screen opens, select Create New ParentsWeb Account and enter St. Peter's District Code: SPC-SC.

After review by the Administration, an Offer Letter of acceptance or a notification of non-acceptance will be sent via email.

SC State law dictates that students entering Early Childhood 2 program must be two (2) years of age on or before September 1. Early Childhood 3 program students must be three (3) years of age on or before September 1. Students entering the 4-Year-Old Kindergarten must be four (4) years of age on or before September 1. Students entering the Early Childhood 3 or 4 programs must be fully potty trained to attend.

The following priorities will be used to accept members to St. Peter's Catholic School:

1. Members of the Basilica of St. Peter's Parish
2. Members of other parishes
3. Non-Catholic students

Students applying for Admission must present a current SC DHEC Immunization Record and Birth Certificate. Students identifying as Catholic are required to submit their baptismal certificate. A student's baptismal certificate is necessary to be considered for the parishioner tuition rate.

All new students will be given a trial period of not less than one semester in which to prove himself/herself both socially and academically. If during this trial period there are any problems, a student may be asked to withdraw his/her attendance at St. Peter's Catholic School. The recommendation and decision of the school is final. St. Peter's Catholic School is limited in its human capital resources and will make *reasonable* accommodations for learning differences when possible. St. Peter's Catholic School cannot accommodate students who have *extraordinary* learning differences. If after admission, the educational and/or behavioral needs of a student exceed what would be considered *reasonable*, the student may need to be separated from St. Peter's Catholic School. This decision will be made for the student's educational and/or behavioral needs to be fully met in another educational setting. If the decision to separate the student from St. Peter's Catholic School is made by the school, the student's tuition due would be prorated.

Non-Catholic students whose parents accept the philosophy of St. Peter's Catholic School will be accepted on a space available basis. Non-Catholic students are expected to attend all religious observances and *be respectful of Catholic teaching, rituals, and tradition*.

### WAITING LIST

If you have been offered an opportunity for acceptance at St. Peter's Catholic School, you may choose to remain on the waiting list *without a guarantee of future enrollment* until the new school year.

In the event your child has been offered a spot and you do not wish to risk staying on the waiting list, you may begin paying monthly tuition to reserve your child's spot.

## **PROMOTION/RETENTION**

Students are promoted in August of each new academic school year.

SC State law dictates that students entering the Early Childhood 2 program must be two (2) years of age on or before September 1. Early Childhood 3 program students must be three (3) years of age on or before September 1. Students entering the 4-Year-Old Kindergarten must be four (4) years of age on or before September 1. Students entering the Early Childhood 3 or 4 programs must be fully potty trained to attend. Students in the Early Childhood 4 Program will be assessed at the end of the school year by the classroom teacher to determine readiness for five-year-old Kindergarten.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

A separate record will be kept for each registered student. These records will be kept in a confidential manner in a locked file cabinet.

## **DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

St. Peter's Catholic School welcomes children for whom English is not the primary home language. Teachers will create an environment that includes children's home language and culture by (1) labeling shelves with photos as well as descriptions; (2) asking parents/guardians to provide in writing commonly used words and pronunciations in the child's home language; (3) use of technology to allow children to listen to stories in home language; (4) reading stories about the child's home of origin; and (5) creating opportunities to model English; etc.

## **NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY**

St. Peter's Catholic School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or other school-administered programs.

## **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION AT SCHOOL**

St. Peter's Catholic School is required to follow the Diocese of Charleston Catholic School System protocol. A medication permit form is available in the School Office. Students are not allowed to have any type of medicine with them or in their backpack during the school day.

Prescription medication for conditions such as epilepsy, asthma, diabetes, ADD/ADHD or other medical conditions will be administered at school only under the following conditions:

- Medication is necessary for the student to remain in school. A medication permit form must be completed by the parent/guardian, signed by the physician, and returned to the school office, along with the medication in its original container. Medications must contain a current pharmacy label. Medications sent in containers other than the original will not be accepted.
- Parents are responsible for bringing all medication to the school office and for the removal of any unused medication at year's end. Medication left at school will be disposed of.
- Antibiotics will not be administered by school staff. If the antibiotic must be taken during the school day, a parent must make arrangements to come to the school to administer the medication.
- Nebulizer treatments for asthma may also require parental administration if they are needed during school hours.

## **NOTICE OF CHANGE OF POLICY**

Effective with the 2015-2016 Academic School Year, the Diocese of Charleston mandates that all Catholic Schools within the Diocese refuse to accept a Certificate of Religious Exemption for new students to satisfy the requirement of an immunization record for enrollment.

## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

Per Diocesan policy, the following documents must be submitted and kept on file for the duration of the student's attendance:

1. Parish Verification (for parishioners only)
2. Baptismal Certificate required for Catholic students
3. Birth Certificate Copy
4. DSS Form 2900 for students in Early Childhood 2-, 3- and 4-Year-Old Programs
5. SC Cumulative School Health Record if applicable
6. SC DHEC Certificate of Immunization
7. Documentation for students with special education, psychological and/or medical needs from doctors provided by parents/guardians
8. Any legal documents or custodial agreements ordered by the South Carolina legal system and/or Family Service Agencies

\*Failure to submit a SC DHEC Immunization Form with the box checked for school admission or a SC DHEC Immunization Form with the Medical Exemption Section completed within thirty (30) days of admission may result in suspension of the student until the form is received. Due to changes in DHEC Immunization Regulations, updated forms may also be requested of any student at any time and must be received within thirty (30) days of the request or less if notified of such.

# FACTS TUITION MANAGEMENT

## Early Childhood 2-, 3- and 4-Year-Old Programs

Tuition is collected monthly on either the 5<sup>th</sup> or the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month by automatic withdrawal from a specified account through The FACTS Tuition Management System. Debits may also be made from a savings or money market account. All tuition, student fees and incidentals are paid through the FACTS Tuition Management System. Return check fee is \$35.00 per check. FACTS charges a separate return fee as well. Failure to pay tuition may result in suspension of the student until the account is made current. Tuition may be paid in full directly to St. Peter's School with a check or cash.

FACTS charges a setup fee of \$20.00 for accounts paid in full by the deadline or \$50.00 for accounts set up for monthly drafts. The fees are charged by FACTS and are non-refundable. Additionally, FACTS charges a \$10.00 fee for returning families and a \$20.00 fee for new families to establish the family with a Parents Portal access. Students in the Early Childhood Program are not eligible for tuition assistance.

### **NON-REFUNDABLE STUDENT FEES**

A Student Registration Fee of \$275.00 is due upon re-enrollment or at the time of enrollment for new students. All student fees are non-refundable.

### **TUITION**

Families who attend the Basilica of St. Peter or a local parish church with documentation from the pastor qualify for a parishioner discount if they are "in good standing" with the Church. A Parishioner "in good standing" meets the following criteria: A parishioner must be registered at the Basilica of St. Peter or a local parish church with documentation; as a parishioner you must attend Sunday Mass weekly with your child; as a parishioner you must consistently contribute an identifiable monetary offering to the church; and as a parishioner you must share in the various ministries of the Church. A baptismal certificate must be provided for any student identified as 'Catholic' in order to receive a parishioner designation and be granted a discount. Failure to submit a baptismal certificate may result in loss of parishioner designation and discount. Transcripts and records will not be released until the balance is paid in full with cash, certified check or money order or confirmation of electronic payment through FACTS Family Portal.



## STEWARDSHIP

Catholic schools exist to provide faith formation and academic excellence. We are all called by our Church to be stewards for the generations to come. As such, our primary mission is to create life-long learners with a commitment to Christian service. As the stewards of our school, St. Peter's School families are expected to provide time, talent, and treasure. We are answering the call of our Church as a school by providing our students with Gospel truths in a safe and competitive academic environment. All Catholic families must be in good standing with their parish in order to receive the parishioner rate. Please consult the parish office to determine your eligibility. All families are required to support the mission of the school through regular attendance at church.

**A. Time and Talent:** All families are expected to participate in the building of community through volunteering. The school is only as successful as we jointly make it. Families are required to have at least one family member attend and support all of Parent and Teacher Organization meetings and events. Prior to the start of the school year, you will receive a PTO Volunteer Registration Form to complete and return to the school. All volunteers must participate in SafeHaven Training and submit to a background screening prior to volunteering.

**B. Treasure:** Participation in the fundraising efforts of the school is mandatory for each family. Monies raised by fundraisers enhance the academic, athletic, and fine arts program; and helps to maintain tuition costs.

**C. Parishioner Status Form for members of the Basilica of St. Peter or a local parish church:** We are registered, contributing and active members of the Basilica of St. Peter or a local Catholic church. We have been parishioners "in good standing" for a minimum of six months, our student/s have been baptized in the Catholic church and we have provided our student/s baptismal certificate/s to the school. We understand that the designated parish may be contacted regarding our status. We understand that if we do not qualify under the parish's requirements that we will be responsible for the non-parishioner rate.

# St. Peter's Catholic School

## Tuition & Fee Policy for 2023-2024

Actual Per Pupil Yearly Cost \$8,922.42

New Student EC2, EC3 and EC4

Application, Registration & Enrollment will take place through  
FACTS Family Online (ParentsWeb)

<https://factsmgt.com> District Code: spc-sc \$20.00 fee will be assessed per family by FACTS for ParentsWeb

**Non-refundable New Student Application Fee \$50.00**

**Total Non-refundable Student Fees are \$275.00 per student**

includes Diocesan Fee, Consumables, Technology Fee, Art Fee, Yearbook and Capital Improvement Fee

**\$275.00 of the Non-refundable Student Fee is payable upon Registration**

	Tuition
EC2 – EC3 -EC4	Total Per Year
Catholic – Parishioner Rate	\$ 7,938.00
Non-Parishioner Rate	\$10,269.60

Additional Students registering from the same family are eligible for a \$500.00 discount per registered child per tuition paid per year.

\*Parishioner Rate granted to Families in good standing with the Basilica of St. Peter or a local Catholic parish with documentation including registered student's baptismal certificate.

### Tuition Options:

- **Monthly Drafts through the FACTS Tuition Management Program.** Payments are automatically drafted on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of each month from an account or credit card designated by you. Payments on a credit card will be charged an additional processing fee by FACTS.
- **Incidental charges** such as late fees, lost books, etc. will also be billed through FACTS.

### Extended Care 3:15pm – 5:30pm:

Full Time per child	\$200.00 per month*
Part Time per child	\$ 20.00 Daily

Late pickup Fee \$10 for the first 15 minutes; \$1 per minute additional after the first 15 minutes.

FACTS charges a \$50 application fee.

### Extended Care Payment Options:

- Payment for the After School Program may be made directly to the School Office via cash or a check made payable to St. Peter's Catholic School
- Or through a FACTS draft. Parents enrolling their child full time will have their payment drafted through FACTS.

St. Peter's Catholic School reserves the right to adjust this schedule as necessary without notice.  
Please retain this schedule for your records.

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## REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION ALL STUDENTS

The following documentation must be on file in the School Office prior your child's enrollment.

Failure to submit updated documentation, payment of fees and/or tuition payments upon request may result in suspension until the missing documentation, fees and/or tuition is received and accepted.

- Non-refundable Student Application Fee of \$50.00
  - Non-refundable Student Registration Fee of \$275.00
  - Baptismal Certificate Copy required for Catholic students
  - Copy of Birth Certificate
  - Original Immunization Record (SC DHEC 2740)
  - St. Peter's School will contact student's home parish to verify registration, attendance and support of identified home parish. Family must be in good standing with home parish to receive parishioner rate.
- 

### WITHDRAWAL

Notice of withdrawal of a student is to be made in writing by the parent or guardian to the principal one (1) month (30 days) before the withdrawal date. A student withdrawing from an Early Childhood Program at St. Peter's is required to pay to for the entire month regardless of the date of withdrawal. For example, a student withdrawing on the 12<sup>th</sup> of a month is required to pay through the last day of that month.

*All financial obligations must be fulfilled before school records will be released.*

**All families are required to establish a FACTS Account FACTS charge is \$50.00  
Tuition and Fees subject to change**

# EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Early Childhood 2-, 3- and 4-Year-Old Programs

Our Early Childhood Program is five days a week: Monday through Friday 7:30am until 3:30pm. Tuition covers the aforementioned days and program hours.

Extended care is available, Monday through Friday, 3:30pm until 5:30pm for an additional charge.

Children are grouped by age to facilitate interaction among peers with similar developmental levels. Well-rounded activities are designed to stimulate physical, social, emotional, and cognitive growth. Preschool children are informally evaluated throughout the year, and formally evaluated at least twice yearly. Each child's unique development and accomplishments are recognized and celebrated. Programs focus on hands-on active learning, with an interactive component between home and school. Preschool and younger school-age learning centers include reading, writing, math, science, manipulatives, and dramatic play. Self-help, problem solving, and critical thinking skills are emphasized for all developmental levels.

"The Creative Curriculum® approach to preschool teaching and learning balances both faculty-directed and child-initiated learning, with an emphasis on responding to children's learning styles and building on their strengths and interests." St. Peter's Catholic School faculty guide children while embracing their social and emotional development.

#### **ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

Consistent attendance is important for your child to become accustomed to a childcare setting. As children enrolled in St. Peter's Catholic School Early Childhood Program, they will be expected to arrive no later than 8:45am. Students will not be permitted into the school building prior to 7:30 am.

Children enrolled in the EC2 classroom must be walked into the building and signed in and/or out by an authorized adult. Parents will walk their EC2 child directly to their classroom.

Children enrolled in the EC3 and EC4 classrooms are permitted to arrive via Morning and Afternoon Carline (7:30-7:55 am; 3:15 – 3:30 pm). If EC3 and EC4 parents opt to walk their children into the building, they may do so but are not permitted past the lobby.

When picking up or dropping off a child in the classroom, siblings are not allowed past the front office/lobby.

**Sign-in and sign-out records are required, regulated, and audited by the State of South Carolina.** These records can be subpoenaed for custodial disputes and an important part of St. Peter's Catholic School's legal integrity. Each child must be signed in and out every day by an authorized adult at the child's assigned drop-off location or assigned departure location. Recording of the time of drop-off and pick-up is required by the State of SC. We require a staff member to acknowledge your child's arrival and departure. Any special instructions for pick-up should be noted at the time of arrival.

If your child will be later than this due to a doctor's appointment, please bring a doctor's excuse. Children arriving later than 9:00am without a doctor's excuse will not be admitted.

Once a child has been checked out of school, they may return the next school day.

Parents are required to include emergency contacts and an approved pick-up list at the time of registration. Any changes made to this list throughout the year must be done in writing and signed. A child will never be released to an individual without written authorization from a parent.

Anyone on your approved pick-up list will be asked to present their driver's license for verification. Until a staff member can verify the identity of the individual trying to pick up, the child will not be released. Please prepare those picking up for the first time. Ask them to bring their ID inside with them.

### **STAFFING RATIOS**

Students shall always be supervised by St. Peter's Faculty and/or Staff following SC DSS Staffing Ratios.

A written account for students in the Early Childhood 2-, 3- and 4-Year-Old Programs will be maintained by the Lead Teacher or her designee. This account will track a student's movements on the premises during program hours. All students will be tracked as they enter and/or exit the school and as they move about the building using face to name recognition.

### **CURRICULUM**

St. Peter's Catholic School follows Creative Curriculum®. The philosophy of Creative Curriculum® is that young children learn best by doing. Creative Curriculum® is built on renowned theories of development in young children, that all children learn through active exploration of their environment, and that the environment, which is classified into different interest areas or learning "centers," plays a critical role in learning. The goal of the teacher through the use of Creative Curriculum® is to facilitate children's growth into independent, self-confident, inquisitive, and enthusiastic learners by facilitating active exploration of their environments.

### **CONFERENCES**

Conferences may be scheduled throughout the school year as needed. Parents should make arrangements with the classroom teacher for a conference. Teachers may also request a conference with a parent should the need arise.

### **SPECIAL NEEDS**

Parents must submit documentation from certified medical professionals to the principal for any conditions that require special services and/or consideration. The school administration and guidance staff will develop a Student Assistance Plan (SAP) that will offer reasonable yet specific classroom accommodations for students and will work closely with the classroom teacher to monitor and assist teachers in making sure these provisions are being successfully implemented in the classroom. For special services that are not offered at St. Peter's, parents are asked to contact the SC State Department of Education and/or the local public-school district for guidelines regarding pull-out services available through the local school district.

### **LUNCH & SNACKS**

Parents are to provide all lunch and snacks. All lunch boxes, containers, cups, or snacks must be labeled with your child's name.

The school is unable to heat or prepare lunches. Please send a soft lunch box labeled with your child's name. This should be brought home every day and kept clean. Any lunch brought to the center should be nutritious and should already be at the temperature at which it will be served. If food should be served warm, parents may bring food in a solid stainless-steel thermos. If food should be kept cold, ice packs should be in the lunch box.

Bag lunches should consist of finger foods. Any fruit should be cut into the appropriate sizes, no larger than a pea. The following items should not be included in your child's lunch: whole hot dogs, hot dogs sliced in rounds, raw carrot rounds, hard candy, whole grapes, nuts, seeds, raw peas, hard pretzels, chips, peanuts, popcorn,

marshmallows, spoonfuls of peanut butter, chunks of meat larger than what can be swallowed whole, or any other food that may be implicated in choking incidents.

Students remaining for the Extended Day Program should also bring a snack to eat after school.

### **NUT FREE POLICY**

We are a peanut and tree nut free facility. Any food brought into the center should be chosen with care. This includes all non-dairy milks. Please read all labels and avoid any products with the following warnings:

- May contain peanuts or tree nuts.
- Manufactured in a facility that also processes peanuts or tree nuts.
- Manufactured on equipment that also processes peanuts or tree nuts.
- Manufactured on shared equipment.

### **DRESS CODE**

Students in all grades wear uniforms at St. Peter's. Uniforms may be purchased online or by phone from:

#### **Lands' End School Uniforms**

(800) 469-2222

[www.LandsEnd.com](http://www.LandsEnd.com)

To order uniforms online, go to St. Peter's School website [www.StPetersCatholicSchool.org](http://www.StPetersCatholicSchool.org) and click on School Resources then Uniforms and then the Lands' End link. St. Peter's School Land's End Preferred School Number is **900047911**.

All students should bring a change of clothing and shoes to be kept in the classroom in case of accidents. All clothing items should be labeled with your child's name and should be in keeping with the dress code.

Students in the Early Childhood 2 classroom should also be supplied with diapers/pull ups with the child's name on each item.

### **ITEMS FROM HOME**

St. Peter's provides ample toys and materials for children to share. Bringing toys from home creates difficulty when they are lost or broken, and certain toys pose student envy or choking risks. Please allow your child to bring toys to school only for an announced Show and Share events. Toys and other items of value should remain at home.

### **DIAPER CREAM POLICY**

Over the counter diaper rash cream can be kept in the Early Childhood 2-Year-Old Classroom. It must be unopened and have the child's full name printed on the tube. Names cannot be written over any printed writing on the box or tube. In order for teachers to use it, permission should be given when filling out registration.

Diaper rashes should get progressively better throughout the day with the use of cream. If a cream is not working, another brand should be brought the following day. Diaper rashes should improve within a day or they will need to be seen by a doctor.

We are a diaper-bag free facility. This has been recommended by health professionals to help prevent the spread of germs that could be brought into the center from home. Please bring changes of clothes and/or bottles in separate Ziploc bags labeled with your child's named. Changes of clothes will be kept in the child's classroom. When a child needs more diapers, clothes, wipes, etc., you will be notified.

## **POTTY TRAINING**

Many two-year old children begin to show an interest in using the “potty” instead of staying in diapers. This can be a difficult transitional time, but consistency, communication, and positive reinforcement will make the transition smoother. If you are implementing a schedule at home, please let your child’s teacher know so that they can keep the same schedule at home. This also applies to whether your child is in diapers, pull ups, training pants, or underwear.

Please let your child’s teacher know what you’re doing at home, and we will make every effort to continue that while your child is at school. Accidents can happen during this time, so please plan to bring a few extra complete sets of clothing, including shoes.

Children promoted or enrolled in Early Childhood 3- and 4- Year-Old Programs must be fully potty trained to participate in any program offering. 3- and 4-year-old children should be able to be bathroom independent without having accidents. Our policy is in compliance with SC DSS and SC DHEC policies which govern our facility.

## **NAP/REST**

Children in all early childhood classes will have a set nap time each day. During this time, children are expected to rest on their nap mat until nap time is over. Teachers will play quiet music or use a sound machine during this time.

## **CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS FOR BIRTHDAYS AND HOLIDAYS**

Birthdays and holidays are fun to share with friends. Parents may bring treats for children to share with classmates on birthdays according to the following guidelines:

- From DSS Regulations: “Round, firm foods shall not be offered to children younger than four years old. Examples of such foods include: hot dogs, grapes, hard candy, nuts, peanuts, and popcorn.”
- The celebration must be scheduled in advance with a classroom teacher.
- All food items must be commercially purchased (no homemade items) with the ingredient list intact for inspection.

Permissible food items are:

- One sweet treat (cupcake or donut or cookie, etc. Marshmallows prohibited.)
- Fruit cut appropriately for age as described above
- Individually packaged cheese sticks
- 100% juice

While we are happy for children to share treats with friends during birthdays, St. Peter’s Catholic School will not host birthday parties, and presents are not permitted.

If a family wishes to invite school friends to an off-site party, invitations may be distributed:

- via each child’s cubby if every child in the class is invited.
- via USPS or email to parents willing to have their contact information shared.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

St. Peter’s families will be notified using the school’s Emergency Contact System – Parent Alert, WIS-TV 10 or other appropriate means for school closings, delayed openings, or early dismissals due to inclement weather. WIS-TV 10 lists school closings or delayed openings beginning at 5:30 am.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Students in the Early Childhood Program do not leave the facility and are not transported.

**EVACUATION PLAN**

In the event of a natural disaster or unscheduled closing of a childcare center, the capacity may be exceeded temporarily to accommodate the displaced children. The director or the director's designee shall notify the Department of the situation and maintain appropriate staff: child ratios at all times.

In the event the facility needs to be evacuated, the children will be evacuated by staff to St. Peter's Basilica, Richland County Main Library, or the Richland County Police Department. Staff will train annually for evacuation procedures.



# Extended Care Policies

## Early Childhood 2-, 3- and 4-Year-Old Program

Extended care is available from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm on regular school days. Extended care is not available on holidays or 11:30am Dismissal Days unless otherwise stated. In the event of inclement weather, extended care will not be offered if the school is closed.

Students in extended care will be provided an afternoon snack. Parents may elect to send a snack with their child if they so choose. It is asked that snacks sent from home be healthy in nature and not include peanuts, candy and/or drinks of any kind. Please be mindful that we do not have the facilities to heat or refrigerate food from home. Sharing of snacks by students is prohibited.

Parents will be given the opportunity to enroll their student(s) in the Program at the beginning of the school year by completing an enrollment card located in their Back-to-School Packet. Any change in enrollment status must be made to the school office in writing. Billing changes will become effective on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the following month.

All parents are required to complete the Emergency Information/Health Form distributed in the Back-to-School Packet. Should an emergency occur during extended care, the information provided on the Emergency Information/Health Form will be used to contact you or an emergency contact elected by you; and to alert emergency personnel to any health issues or allergies your child may have. This Form is **extremely** important, while it is our sincere wish that no emergency occur it is our desire to be prepared. Should any contact or emergency information change, it is the responsibility of the parent to provide those changes in writing to the Operator or Director as soon as possible.

Each student remaining in the extended care program after 5:30 pm, will be assessed a late fee of ***\$10.00 per child for the first 15 minutes or any part thereof and a \$1.00 per minute beginning at the 16<sup>th</sup> minute*** thereafter for any child picked up after 5:30 pm. This late fee will also be charged on early dismissal days if students are picked up later than 15 minutes after dismissal time.

If you know you will be late picking up your child, please call the school. If you do not receive an answer, please leave a message. The phones are monitored daily until the last student is picked up. If you have not picked your child up by 5:30 pm, the extended care staff will attempt to reach the parent or guardian of any student who has not been picked up. If the staff is unable to reach the parent or guardian, an attempt to reach the emergency contact will be made using the information provided on the Emergency Information/Health Form completed at the beginning of the school year. Should the staff be unable to reach a parent/guardian and/or emergency contact to arrange for pickup, the principal will be notified.

Should it be necessary for a student to be picked up by someone other than a parent, guardian or anyone under the age of 21, the parent must notify the principal and/or the operator in writing. The note should include the name of the designated pick-up person, their contact number, the date(s) of pickup and a parent contact number if the student is not retrieved. No student will be released from the After School Program to any person **without prior contact with a parent or guardian granting permission.**

All students who are present in the extended care program must be signed out with the time out recorded each day by the person picking them up. Failure to sign a student out will result in a charge for the entire day.

The full-time extended care fee is \$200.00 per month, per child, and is payable on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month thereafter; the fee for part time as needed is \$20.00 per hour or for any part thereof. And \$30.00 per day on 2

pm Early Dismissal Days. Part time fees will be billed at the close of each month and are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the following month. All fees are calculated per child.

A \$35.00 fee will be assessed for all returned checks in addition to any charge back fee assessed by St. Peter's financial institution. A late fee of \$35.00 will be assessed for all accounts exceeding 30 days in arrears. FACTS will also charge a late fee.

Any questions concerning your extended care bill should be brought to the attention of the principal and/or operator within 30 days of receipt. **Billing discrepancies not addressed within 30 days of receipt will stand as correct.**

Should an account become delinquent, the principal and/or Operator may deny participation in the program and all after school extracurricular activities until the balance is paid in full. Outstanding bills may result in the expulsion of the child from the extended care program.

# ILLNESS POLICY

## Early Childhood 2-, 3- and 4-Year-Old Programs

We know that little ones can get sick very easily. We ask that you follow our illness policy to prevent the spread of germs as much as possible. Our policy follows the health and safety regulations that are issued by the State of South Carolina, Department of Education, and the Division of Licensing. Please do not send your child to school if they are ill. If your child is sent home, someone from the approved pick-up list should arrive within the hour.

After being sent home, children may return to school under the following conditions:

1. They have been symptom or illness free for a minimum of 24 hours after the close of business on the day they are sent home without the use of medication. (For example: Your child is sent home at 10:00am on Monday. If they have no more symptoms or episodes of illness. They may return to school at the opening of business on Wednesday.)
2. The child must be acting normally, eating and drinking normally, normal bathroom habits, etc.
3. Without the help of medicine, a child cannot have any additional symptoms. No diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, fever, etc.

Parents will be called to pick up their children from school for the following:

- After the first episode of vomiting.
- Fever 100° or above, or any fever accompanied by a rash or change in child's behavior.
- After the second episode of diarrhea, or if any episode cannot be contained in the diaper or the child cannot make it to the bathroom.
- Rash of unknown origin. Children may not attend if they have a rash of unknown origin. Children returning to school must have a doctor's note stating what the rash is and that it is not contagious or the date they are no longer contagious. **Doctor's notes cannot be on a prescription pad and can only be from your child's pediatrician or dermatologist.**
  - a. If your child has Molluscum Contagiosum, the area must remain covered under clothes or with a band aid.
  - b. If your child has hand, foot, mouth, they may not return to school with any uncovered blisters or rash. They should be acting normally and cannot have any new symptoms for one whole day.
- Any discharge from the eye that may or may not be accompanied by redness or swelling. Eye injuries and foreign bodies in the eye can cause similar symptoms to pink eye (conjunctivitis). A note from the doctor **MUST** accompany the child's return to school, stating diagnosis, and if applicable, the date the child is no longer contagious. **Doctor's notes cannot be on a prescription pad.**
  - a. IF pink eye is confirmed, and/or medication is prescribed, your child may not return until they have been on eye drops for a full day. (For example: If your child starts eye drops Monday morning, he/she can return to school Tuesday morning.)
- Any symptom of contagious or infectious disease.

When a child has been diagnosed with Strep Throat, he/she must meet the following requirements to return to school:

1. The child must be on an antibiotic for a minimum of 24 hours. (Some antibiotics require the child to be on them for 48 hours before they are no longer contagious.)
2. The child must be acting normally, eating and drinking regularly, normal bathroom habits, etc.

3. Without the help of medicine, a child cannot have any other symptoms. No diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, fever, etc.
4. When they return, they must have a doctor's note stating that they are being treated for Strep and may return by a specific date. Please keep in mind that date should still be 24 hours after the start of antibiotics.

### **DOCTOR'S NOTES**

If you are asked to provide a doctor's note upon your child's return to school, it cannot be on a prescription pad and should only be from the child's pediatrician or other specialist.

The note should include a diagnosis, and that the child is "not contagious and is able to return to school on \_\_\_\_\_."

If your child stays home from school for a contagious disease and/or has seen a doctor for illness, a doctor's note should be provided upon return.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL PLAN**

Medical Conditions under which emergency care and treatment is warranted but not limited to the following: child is unconscious, child is disoriented, extremely high body temperature, excessive bleeding, broken bone, etc.

In the event of a serious accident or illness requiring emergency medical attention, 911 will be called before the parents are contacted. The principal, or principal's designee, will accompany the child to the hospital if transport is warranted. Before such a decision takes place, the school will use every reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian or other adults listed on the student's emergency form. The school, the Basilica of St. Peter, and the Diocese will not be held liable for the financial cost of this action.

# DISCIPLINE POLICIES

## Early Childhood 2-, 3- and 4-Year-Old Programs

Discipline is the art of teaching appropriate behavior through problem-solving with the child, redirection, and role-modeling. Positive reinforcement helps children develop self-discipline. We strive to treat children with dignity and set clear, consistent, and fair limits for behavior.

### BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Children are expected to (1) Listen to and follow directions, (2) Get help by asking, (3) Rest without disrupting others' rest, (4) Walk inside, (5) Take care of property, and (6) Interact without hurting others through words or actions. We view mistaken behaviors as learning opportunities. We do not allow any guidance strategy that hurts, shames, or belittles a child. We do not permit any guidance strategy that threatens, intimidates, or forces a child. We do not allow the use of food as a reward or punishment. We do not allow the use or withholding of physical activity as a punishment. **Corporal punishment is not permitted.**

Good choices teach children self-discipline and occasionally, natural consequences are more appropriate. Natural consequences would be the loss or delay of interaction or object. (Example: If a child is throwing a temper tantrum, they may not be allowed to return to an activity until they have calmed down. A child may not start a new activity until the first activity is picked up.)

If a child's behavior becomes disruptive in a classroom and correction from a teacher is not working, a parent may be asked to work with a teacher on an action plan. Teachers will work with parents constantly and communication is key.

If an action plan has been established and there is no improvement, a child may be asked to leave St. Peter's Catholic School. This will only occur after every effort has been made to correct the behavior.

### DISMISSAL

Dismissal should be regarded as a last resort. It is important that we provide a positive, safe environment for children to grow and thrive. Policies outlined in this handbook should be followed so that our children, staff, and families feel secure and our program can run smoothly

Dismissal from the program may occur, but is not limited to the following reasons:

- If program staff does not feel that it is meeting the child's needs.
- A child that continually exhibits behavior that endangers him/herself or others.
- A child who continually exhibits behavior that is disruptive to the learning environment or safety of the classroom.
- Parents who are continually late arriving or picking up their child.
- Non-payment of tuition and/or lack of adherence to our tuition payment policies.
- Not adhering to the policies and procedures stated in this handbook.

## **BITING POLICY**

Biting is not an uncommon occurrence in a childcare setting, and we understand that it may be upsetting for many parents. Biting can occur for many different reasons unrelated to a behavior problem.

We find that focusing more attention on the child that was bitten is more of a deterrent than a lengthy explanation to the biter. The children will not receive positive reinforcement for biting behavior, rather a lack of attention. Once a bite incident occurs, our teachers will correct the biter, using time out when appropriate, and turn the focus to the child that was bitten. That child will receive first aid, TLC, and plenty of attention.

Biting incidences are always recorded. Both children involved will receive a Bite Notice. Parents will need to sign an original and a copy will be sent home. If the bite is above the shoulders or skin is broken, parents will be notified.

If a child continues to bite, a teacher may ask a parent to develop a plan of action to prevent and correct this behavior within a certain timeline. Our teachers are required to take Continuing Education classes throughout the year to improve their understanding of these types of behaviors and learn any new techniques that they may not already know. The most effective method of correction will require consistency and cooperation between teachers and parents.

If an action plan has been established and there is no improvement, a child may be asked to leave St. Peter's Catholic School. This will only occur after every effort has been made to correct the behavior.

# PARENTS AS PARTNERS

## Early Childhood 2-, 3- and 4-Year-Old Programs

### ABSENCES

St. Peter's Catholic School's faculty and staff consider those we serve as family. Please notify the Front Office in advance or as early as possible regarding your child's absence.

### PARENTAL CUSTODY

The school must have legal papers of visitation/custody schedules. Each parent has a right to receive school mail, speak to teachers, go to conferences, receive progress reports, observe classrooms by appointment, and leave with their child on their appropriate day and time, unless there is a legal document stating OTHERWISE (restraining order, CPS, etc.).

If there is only one parent or guardian with legal custody, only that person may enroll the child, withdraw the child, add or remove pick up persons, or sign permission slips and paperwork.

It is the staff policy not to side with either parent in the event of a divorce. Staff also may not write letters in your defense for any legal hearing or legal action.

**If the occasion happens when both parents are on campus during a time when the two parents are estranged, we expect both parents to treat each other with respect. No conflicts may occur while on our property.**

### BUCKLEY AMENDMENT

St. Peter's Catholic School adheres to the Buckley Amendment (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) regarding privacy of student records and the rights of non-custodial parents. It is the responsibility of the parents to share any official custodial information decided through the courts. Official custodial agreements will be kept in a confidential file in the office of the principal. In the absence of any court document, the school will view each parent as having full legal custody of his/her child. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, non-custodial parents have the right to receive records about their child's academic progress or lack thereof. The school reserves the right to charge a shipping and processing fee for extra records sent to more than one home address.

Be advised that if a teacher, staff member, or principal is subpoenaed to testify in a child custody case, the parent will need to pay the cost of a substitute teacher and any other costs associated with the testimony (mileage, parking, food, etc.).

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Engagement in online social media platforms such as, but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. may result in disciplinary actions if the content of the student or parent's blog includes defamatory comments regarding the school, faculty, or other students, other parents, or the parish.

No parent should open a Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram account under the name of the school or a particular grade or organization. A parent who chooses to create such an account may subject his/her child(ren) to separation from the school.

### TERMINATION OF SERVICE

Childcare services may be terminated by St. Peter's Catholic School without notice or obligation if, in the sole judgment of the School, the parent or guardian:

- Does not keep the child's records up to date (i.e. Immunization, etc.);

- Fails to pay fees, charges, or any other amount owed the School in a proper and timely manner;
- Fails to abide by rules, regulations, or policies established by the School as outlined in its Parent Handbook;
- Treats personnel of the School or the Basilica of St. Peter in an unreasonable or abusive manner;
- Engages in conduct that is improper or likely to endanger the welfare, safety, harmony, and/or reputation of St. Peter's Catholic School or the Basilica of St. Peter.

**CHID ABUSE/ NEGLECT**

St. Peter's Catholic School is mandated by the State of South Carolina to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to local authorities. Staff are "Mandated Reporters."



## Acknowledgement

**2023 - 2024**

I acknowledge that I have read the St. Peter's Catholic School Early Childhood Program Parent Handbook and that I am fully aware of the policies included. I understand that any policy is subject to change.

This acknowledgement will be placed in our files. Please sign and return it to the office.

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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