

Parent Handbook

St. John's Cathedral
School & Early
Learning Center
330 N. Market Street
Jacksonville, FL 32202



2023-2024

☎: (904) 353-4050

www.jaxcathedralschool.org

Mission Statement



Educating God's children in their exploration of the world: Saint Johns Cathedral School and Early Learning Center's mission is to provide an exemplary educational program which will nurture children to become lifelong learners who are inquisitive and seek the truth. The School's foundation is the faith and tradition of the Episcopal Church.

Educational Philosophy

The Cathedral School's educational philosophy is based upon the foundation of the historic commitment of the Episcopal Church to excellence in the ministry of education. Recognizing each as a unique child of God, we seek to develop children spiritually, cognitively, morally, socially, emotionally and physically within an exemplary, balanced program, Appropriate to age and abilities.

Objectives

Our objective here at The Cathedral School is to provide an educational program and learning environment of the highest level of excellence, in the finest Episcopal School tradition, for children who would benefit from this program. We also strive to provide a secure setting for learning where children can be nurtured and taught in a Christ-centered environment, utilizing the wide variety of resources of the downtown area and the Saint John's Cathedral to enrich the student's experience.

We place a high priority on providing a strong educational foundation for your children so that each child may develop positively in self-confidence, character, responsibility, and social, emotional, and physical growth. Here at The Cathedral School, we provide a spiritual environment for your child so that they grow "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52) while participating in our relationship with Saint John's Cathedral community, both clergy and laity. Special activities that your child will participate in include chapel services, music ministry, and intergenerational activities with Cathedral Towers' residents.

The Cathedral School, a safe, urban school setting, provides opportunities for the family's involvement in educational experiences. We maintain consistency in our mission and programs' quality during the school year, as well as during our summer enrichment programs. As part of our school's desire to maintain excellence, our staff participates in continual professional development.

We also seek diversity within the student body, faculty, and staff, welcoming those of all races, cultural backgrounds, and religious faiths in hopes to grow together.

History of The Cathedral School

In 2003, Saint John's Cathedral (SJC) purchased an unoccupied building and its contents at 330 North Market Street. A planning committee was formed to study the feasibility of an early learning center in this location. After realizing the potential of this venture, the committee began planning the start up and in February 2004 hired their consultant, Gretchen Titshaw, as Headmistress. Planning Committee member Marlo Hunt was also hired as the administrator.

From March through July 2004, all efforts were directed at restoration and renovation as volunteers and a part-time assistant salvaged, cleaned, and organized donations and any remaining items. A complete renovation of the exterior and interior was completed to include updated plumbing and electrical systems; freshly painted surfaces; replaced toilets, sinks, and counters; refurbished cabinetry; and floors refinished. Office, lobby, cafeteria and common room furnishings were purchased, as well as carpets for the entire building. While the renovations were occurring, Marlo provided tours and enrolled students, researched and purchased curriculum and ordered classroom supplies. Licensing was secured, Applications were filed with national organizations for memberships, staff was hired and training was coordinated.

On September 8, 2004, the school held its initial Open House and school began the following day with 11 staff members and 18 students. By January 2005, 34 students were enrolled. Enrollment had increased to 52 by May 2005.

The school's second year began on September 6, 2005, with 71 students and 20 staff members. Even more remarkably, in October 2005, Dean Edward Harrison was successful in securing a grant for SJC which the vestry designated to assist in satisfying the mortgage on the school building.

In June 2007, the Board unanimously voted in favor of hiring Kristine Rodman as the Head of School. Marlo Hunt was re-designated as the Director. Both still serve in those capacities.

Over the last 19 years, TCS has continuously grown in enrollment with no marketing other than word of mouth from past and current families.

The Cathedral School has a Board of Trustees and is a tax-exempt, 501(C)(3) organization.

History of Saint John's Cathedral

In an effort to further familiarize The Cathedral School families with the history of Saint John's vital role in the downtown community, the following information is being provided.

In 1834, Saint John's Episcopal Church Parish was organized as one of the first in Florida. Church meetings were held in members' homes and later in the county courthouse. The first church building began on Billy Goat Hill, the highest point of land in the city. Slowed by a lack of funds, this first church took nine years to complete, with funding provided by ladies who had teas, baked foods for sale and did sewing of all kinds. Their dream was finally realized after years of effort with the dedication of the church in 1851.

Tragically, only a scant twelve years later, occupying Federal Troops burned the church to the ground. The only remnant of this first church was the altar prayer book. Dr. Alfred Walton, a Federal medical officer, ran into the burning church and "took from the altar a large gilt-bound prayer book with the inscription on the cover 'Saint John's Episcopal Church, Jacksonville'." Three years later, Dr. Walton returned the prayer book to the parish. At the end of the Civil War, nothing remained of the church building but ashes. The small congregation persevered. Services were held in a wooden building lovingly known as "The Shack."



In 1870, the vestry Approved plans for a new church to seat 800 persons. This church was wisely built of brick and granite. The first services were held on Easter Sunday, 1877. Saint John's continued as a vibrant, worshipping community, enduring two yellow fever epidemics. Despite the epidemics, the church bells rang and the faithful responded.

In 1901, Saint John's Church, parish house and rectory were totally destroyed by fire of unbelievable proportions. The Great Fire of 1901 destroyed almost all of downtown Jacksonville. A story in the newspaper the next day contained this reference: "At four-thirty o'clock, Saint John's Episcopal Church neighborhood was the center of the conflagration. It lived but a few minutes."



After the Great Fire of 1901, the Saint John's community again rebuilt—first a small wooden chapel (pictured bottom left) and then the present day cathedral (pictured bottom right), built on the foundations of the old. Built of Indiana limestone in a style known as Gothic Revival, the church recalls the great medieval churches of Europe. Saint John's was designed for the spoken word, as Morning Prayer was typical for this time.



In 1951, Bishop Frank Juhan designated Saint John's as the first cathedral of the Diocese of Florida. In its fifty plus years as a cathedral, Saint John's has chosen to remain downtown, still perched atop Billy Goat Hill, and serving as a beacon of light. These rays of light include the Cathedral Foundation, whose high-rise residences and Meals-On-Wheels program continue to provide quality care for the city's elderly. Rather than moving to the banks of the St. John's River when land was donated, the Cathedral chose to start Episcopal High School, a premier center of learning in the Southeast. The Cathedral Arts Project brings art, dance, and music into the lives of impoverished children. Saint John's is actively creating new housing for deserving people, meals for the homeless and inspiring music. Saint John Cathedral is responding in myriad ways to the needs of the city, especially with the continuing operation of The Cathedral School as the premiere, private preschool in downtown.

Admissions

The Saint John's Cathedral School and Early Learning Center (The Cathedral School) admits students of any race, color, religion, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national ethnic origin in administration of its educational or admission policies. Children must be between the ages of twelve weeks to five years old to be enrolled at The Cathedral School. There is limited space available for younger siblings of enrolled children.

Tours of the school's facilities can be scheduled to acquaint potential families with The Cathedral School. Requests for enrollment may be made at any time. To begin the admission process, please follow the link on our website at jaxcathedralschool.org.

Enrollment Applications must be completed and returned to the school and the non-refundable registration fee per student (see Financial Policy on the next page for more information), will be auto-paid through the Brightwheel App on the designated payable date. Children are accepted on the basis of space available and the school's ability to meet the educational and developmental needs of each individual child. A signed Parent Contract outlining policy and procedural guidelines must accompany the completed Application forms.

At the time of admission, each family must request either Plan A (traditional school year) or Plan B (full year) on the Enrollment Contract as the plan for their child's enrollment. Parents will be held financially accountable for payment-in-full of the specified enrollment plan.

The Cathedral School has made every effort to anticipate most costs and has tried to avoid extraneous fees and surcharges. A supply fee of \$60 per student is due quarterly and is non-refundable. The quarterly supply fee will be auto-paid through the Brightwheel App. Costs of field trips will be reflected on the permission slip and instructions for payment will be provided.

Should a parent(s) change their schedule after submitting a signed and dated Parent Contract, a \$500 fee per student will be assessed as a penalty. If the student is being permanently withdrawn from the school, written notice must be provided to the Head of School two calendar weeks prior to the withdrawal date and a \$500 fee per student will be assessed as a penalty for breaching the Parent Contract.

Re-enrollment will take place annually in February of the current school year. To re-enroll, a parent must be paid in full with no outstanding balance. Supply fees are due at the beginning of every quarter, according to the current payment schedule included in the welcome package.

Financial Policy

Tuition for the year is based on fifty weeks (25 bi-weekly payments), as families do not incur charges for the weeks of December 18 and 25, 2023 (Christmas break). There is no tuition for the week of August 12, 2024 (pre-planning week).

Therefore, bi-weekly tuition does not get altered due to holidays, early dismissal days or emergency closings throughout the school year or summer months.

The non-refundable registration fee is **\$500** per student for current families and is due on the designated date assigned by the school and is auto-paid through the Brightwheel App. For any families new to TCS for the 2023/2024 school year (initial enrollment August 21, 2023 or after), the non-refundable registration fee is **\$500**.

There is also a charge of **\$500 per month** for all held spots for infants (3 months through the 1st birthday) due **in addition** to the non-refundable registration fee of \$500. The monthly fee to hold an infant spot is non-refundable and does not apply to future tuition. Any infant spot held **beyond the age of 12 weeks old** will be required to pay full infant tuition to continue holding the spot. All fees per student will be auto-paid through Brightwheel.

As a courtesy to our families, a discount of 5% is granted to the sibling tuition of the higher amount.

This tuition, payable on a bi-weekly basis, is due for a two-week period, by the Wednesday prior to each two-week enrollment period. All families are required to sign-up when invited to the Brightwheel App to pay tuition and fees. Several days prior to tuition and fees being auto-paid, a notice will be texted and/or emailed to the parents from the Brightwheel App.

Any failed auto-payments, will result in a 10% late fee.

For those students starting Pre-K 2 and Pre-K 3 for the 2023/2024 school year – the student is age 2 or 3 by September 1, 2023 - the tuition remains the same all year regardless of birthdays. Bi-weekly tuition for Pre-K 2 is **\$560** and bi-weekly tuition for Pre-K 3 is **\$545**.

For students who are participating in the State of Florida Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Program, the tuition is reduced from **\$545** bi-weekly to **\$445** bi-weekly for the weeks beginning August 21, 2023 through May 20, 2024. This timeframe is representative of the 540 hours (180 instructional days at 3 hours per day) that the VPK program pays us, therefore reducing the tuition. Families who receive the VPK tuition reduction are still eligible for the sibling discount as described above. Beginning May 28, 2024, the Pre-K 4 tuition resumes at **\$545** bi-weekly.

For infants, 3 months through the 1st birthday, bi-weekly tuition is **\$635**. On the tuition payment **following** the 1st birthday, the bi-weekly tuition will be **\$615**. For toddlers, 12 months through the 2nd birthday, bi-weekly tuition is **\$615** and on the tuition payment **following** the 2nd birthday, the bi-weekly tuition will be **\$560**. Again, the 5% sibling discount remains regardless of the tuition change. The primary reason for tuition reductions for infants and toddlers and not other age groups is the resulting ratio of adult to children changes.

Supply fees are due quarterly on September 6, 2023, December 13, 2023, March 6, 2024 and June 12, 2024 in the amount of **\$60** per student. Quarterly supply fees will be auto-paid through the Brightwheel App. Should a student enroll in the midst of the school year, a prorated supply fee will be assessed and paid through the Brightwheel App.

Payment receipts are available through the Brightwheel App. At the end of the calendar year, a statement of payments for tax reporting purposes, indicating the enrollment period of each child in attendance, will be available through the Brightwheel App.

An assessment of five dollars **(\$5) per minute**, per child, will be made for pick-up after **5:30 pm**.

A tuition and quarterly supply fee schedule is provided in the Welcome Package and on the school's website.

Health and Safety

The Cathedral School strives to create a secure setting which fosters a fun, learning environment. We consider the health and safety of our staff and students to be paramount.

The only entry point during the school day is through the front door of the building. A staff member will be available at the front desk to assist anyone requiring entry. The playground is secured by a locked fence, visible from an office monitor, and teachers will always be in attendance with their classes while outside of the building. Phones are in each classroom, the cafeteria and the Common Room, with important and emergency numbers posted.

It is imperative that we maintain the proper documentation, as required by law, on each child. All children registered at Saint John's Cathedral School and Early Learning Center (The Cathedral School) must have their original, current shot record Form DH680 and yellow health Form DH3040 from their pediatrician or family practitioner in their student file at all times. Once health records are expired, a student may not attend The Cathedral School until unexpired records are submitted.

The Cathedral School does not accept Religious Exemption Immunization Form DH681.

By law, no child who is without current copies of these forms on file may remain enrolled beyond thirty (30) calendar days after **initial** enrollment date. Please remember that as students obtain their immunizations throughout the year, we must receive updated forms. While we try to send a reminder note home several weeks prior to expiration, it is the parents' responsibility to ensure updated health records are on file with TCS. Students who have expired health records will not be allowed to attend school until all updated forms are received.

Nutrition

Meals and Snacks

Nutritious meals, prepared and delivered fresh each day by a catering service, are provided on a daily basis to each child, with the exception of infants. Snacks and meals are kid-friendly and healthy. A morning snack and lunch are served each day, along with an afternoon snack. Special dietary requirements can be discussed with the Head of School at any time. **ONLY** if an allergy exists to milk will families be allowed to bring a milk substitute. A note from the student's pediatrician or family practitioner stating a known milk allergy must be on file with the school. All meals are served with milk, water or an occasional fruit juice. Morning and afternoon snacks and lunch times will be listed on each class's daily schedule.

Parents of infants are asked to bring their own food, formula, milk and other dietary needs as outlined in the Student Supply List located later in this handbook or per agreement with the teacher(s).

Please do not allow your child to bring food from home OR eat food as they enter the school.

This has the ability to cause a disruption as it may cause other children to want the food. Also, many of our children have specific allergies and we strive to take every precaution in safeguarding our children. If your child has any allergies, please discuss this with the administrator and your child's teacher. In some cases, you will be asked to provide supplementary food/drinks based on the needs of your specific child. A note from the student's pediatrician or family practitioner requiring an alternate diet must be on file with the school.

All meals, snacks and other foods are served and eaten in the school's cafeteria (not in classrooms) with the exception of beginning eaters under 12 months old. At the age of one, students will go to the cafeteria for meals and drink from sippy cups. **Bottles are not allowed for students after the first birthday.**

Due to its potentially toxic nature, peanut products are never served to children and are not permitted to be given to any child at anytime within the school facilities.

School Policies

Class Size

In compliance with State Department of Children and Families (DCF) ratio regulations, we have established the following class sizes. To better serve our children and their needs, adult supervision in all classes is supplemented with resource teachers and staff. The class sizes are as follows:

Infants	Maximum of four infants, ages 12 weeks to 12 months per adult
Toddlers	Maximum of six toddlers, ages 12 to 24 months, per adult
Pre-K 2	Maximum of eleven children ages 24 to 36 months per adult
Pre-K 3	Maximum of fifteen children ages three- to four-year olds per adult
Pre-K 4	Maximum of eighteen children, ages four- to five-year olds per two adults as deemed by VPK policy or per one adult per during non-VPK hours

Potty-Training

All students are required to be fully potty-trained by the time they begin Pre-K 3 (they are 3 years old by September 1 of that particular calendar year). Beginning in the Pre-K 2 classes, teachers work with the students on consistent potty times. If a child shows interest, the potty-training begins in the

older Toddler rooms. Parents are expected to work with the classroom teachers on consistency at home and with success, complete potty-training by the start of Pre-K 3 of a new school year. A student who is entering Pre-K 3 in the new school year who is not fully potty trained, will not be able to attend TCS.

Parents are expected to bring pull-ups (as described in the Supply List) as requested by the teachers in complete support of all potty-training efforts.

Language

As a Christian environment, The Cathedral School enforces the use of language Appropriate for the age of our children. Therefore, the use of profanity is prohibited on school grounds by all adults, staff and parents alike. It is also a fireable offense for members of The Cathedral School faculty and staff.

School Calendar

The school year calendar provides important dates such as closings for holidays, early release days and special events. The school is closed for two weeks during the Christmas holidays. We close for a week in the summer for school improvements, inspections and professional development before beginning our new school year. During these times, the school may be occupied but no services will be provided for students and their families. For further details, please see the 2023-2024 School Year Calendar found on our website and in the Enrollment Package.



Emergency Plans

Periodic emergency procedure drills will be conducted at The Cathedral School to ensure all teachers and students are prepared to handle potential emergencies in a calm and appropriate manner. Fire drills will be performed in accordance with the requirements of the Jacksonville Fire Department and Department of Children and Families. The same procedures will be followed in the case of an evacuation.

School Cancellations

School cancellations for such issues as severe weather or loss of utilities will be communicated via television, radio, Facebook, the school's answering machine recording and the Brightwheel App. In the event that The Cathedral School must be closed earlier than 5:30 p.m., all parents or emergency contacts as designated on the student's enrollment form will be notified by Brightwheel and/or telephone.

The Cathedral School will automatically close the first day that Duval County Schools close or when the bridges are closed due to severe weather conditions. This will be communicated via television, radio, Facebook, the school's answering machine recording and the Brightwheel App. Additional closures due to severe weather or other warnings presented by public officials will be communicated by the same means.

If severe weather is known to be approaching the area, a note will be posted by the daily sign in sheets and on the front door stating whether the facility will be closed on particular days. Should such emergency closures affect us over the weekend, parents will be contacted via Facebook, the school's answering machine recording and the Brightwheel App. Subsequent closings will be evaluated and required on an as-needed basis depending on the conditions and circumstances specifically impacting The Cathedral School facility.

Attendance

Regular attendance is an important part of the educational experience. The school hours are 7:30am – 5:30pm. During school drop-off and pick-up hours, parents are encouraged to exchange only brief greetings with the teaching staff. Please honor that the teachers have the responsibility of supervising our students at all times and that conversations with teachers need to remain minimal.

It is requested that parents make attendance a priority for their child. Parents are responsible for notifying the office in advance of known tardies and absences or by 9:00 a.m., in the event of an illness. If the child's absence is caused by illness, we ask that you follow the procedures outlined in our Wellness Policy found in a following section of this handbook.

IT IS REQUIRED THAT BY 9:00 AM THE OFFICE (NOT THE CLASSROOM TEACHER) BE NOTIFIED BY PHONE OR THROUGH THE BRIGHTWHEEL APP IF A STUDENT WILL BE TARDY (COMING IN AFTER 9:00 AM) OR ABSENT. PLEASE DO NOT TEXT TEACHERS OR TELL THEM IN PASSING – THE FRONT OFFICE MUST BE NOTIFIED.

Tardiness should also be minimized as it disrupts the learning experience of every child. Pre-K 2 – 4 students are expected to be in place by 8:45 a.m. to allow readiness for circle time and resources. Scheduled Appointments resulting in late arrivals must be reported to the office by the close of the previous day **OR BY 9:00 AM** THE DAY OF THE APPOINTMENT.

Arrival

Once restrictions are suspended, parents must sign in their child prior to leaving the facility. We ask that you sign in your child(ren) (noting the time also) via the Sign In/Out Sheets located on the school's front counter. This helps maintain consistency throughout the school day, and provides a quick reference of children to be accounted for, in the case of an emergency. At all times, any unusual markings, behavior or health conditions should also be reported to the office staff and the child's teacher at arrival time.

Departure

Children may be picked up anytime during the day by an authorized person (as designated on the student enrollment form under "Emergency Contact/Pick-Up" section). Parents anticipating a shortened day or early pick-up must notify the office of the shortened day, at the time of arrival to school or through the Brightwheel App. It is requested that the same procedure be followed when a student will be leaving the school facility temporarily and returning during the same school day. In order to reduce disruption to your student's day, if at all possible, we ask that early pick-ups be either before or after their scheduled nap times.

Once restrictions are suspended, parents are required to come into the school to sign out their child before any student may be released. A parent may call the school as they near the facility so the child can be ready for pick-up when the parent arrives. As a courtesy only, the school staff will make every effort to ready the child for the parent's arrival.

If there is a particular issue (e.g., medicine to be taken home, accident/incident report to be signed, personal letter, etc.) that needs to be addressed with the parent at the time of drop-off or pick-up, the signature line by your child's name will be highlighted.

If someone other than individuals originally identified as authorized for pick-up on the enrollment form will be picking up your child(ren), a Student Profile Update Form must be obtained from the front desk and completed, signed and dated **IN PERSON** prior to the change. *No requests can be accepted by*

phone, email, text or Brightwheel App. School staff also reserves the right to request a photo identification of the person picking up the student to maintain in the student's file for future reference.

Accident/Incident Reports

If your child should be involved in any accident or incident while under the supervision of The Cathedral School's staff on the school's grounds, a report (pictured to the right) will be filled out detailing the circumstances and what actions were taken following the situation. The report also notes when the accident happened, witness(es) to the accident, and if the parent was contacted. You will receive this report at the time when you sign your child out for the school day, which will be noted by a highlighted area at your child's name on the sign-in/-out sheet. Furthermore, we maintain these forms in the student's file for a minimum of one year.

ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT

Facility / Home: The Cathedral School & Early Learning Center

Child's Name: _____ Age: _____

Date & Time of Accident/Incident: _____

Place of Accident/Incident: _____

Describe Accident/Incident: _____

Witness(es) to Accident/Incident: _____

What Action Was Taken? (Describe Medical Treatment/First Aid): _____

Was Parent/Guardian Contacted? Yes No

If yes, what time: _____ How? Phone Message Other _____

Review of Staff/Supervisor by Room: _____ Date/Time: _____

Supervisor Present in Classroom: _____ Date/Time: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date/Time: _____

(Form to be filed in file for a minimum of 1 year)

A first aid kit is available in the school office to handle minor cuts and bruises. In the case of an emergency, parents will be notified immediately. **It is the parents' responsibility to ensure all emergency contact information is up-to-date with the school office.**

Smoking and Alcoholic Beverages

Smoking, the use of tobacco or alcoholic products on school premises is prohibited.

Parental Discipline

Parents, caregivers and guardians are prohibited from any physical form of discipline of their child on school premises.

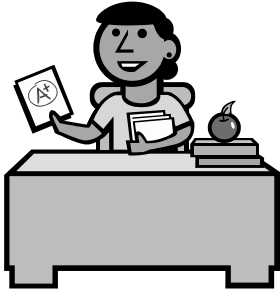
Mobile Phone Use

During drop-off and pick-up, **mobile phone use is prohibited in the building.** Parents are asked to finish phone calls before entering the building.

Clothing

Although we do not have school uniforms for students, we ask that you please dress your child in comfortable, washable clothing according to the season. The children will be active during the day and may get dirty. **Sturdy, closed-in shoes are required.** Flip flops, sandals (or any shoes without a back strap), rainboots and "crocs" / "crocs" style shoes are prohibited. All children need a complete change of clothing, including shoes and socks, (labeled) in case of an accident. Please remember to change the outfit with the change of seasons. Each class will go outside every day if weather permits. All additional garments should also be labeled. A student supply list is on our website.

Conferences



School initiated parent/teacher conferences may be scheduled periodically and at any time throughout the year. Twice a year (fall and spring), each child will be evaluated by their teacher and specific short-term goals will be established. The school will notify you of the completion of these assessments. Parents may, at that time, schedule a conference with their child's teacher and/or the Head of School by contacting front office staff. These meetings will provide important information regarding your child's overall experience and development at school and can also be used to discuss any concerns or questions regarding your child. Copies of all goals and reports will be contained by The Cathedral School.

You may also expect that the Head of School will intermittently initiate informal conversation with you about your child's progress.

If a parent conference is requested based on developmental or behavioral concerns, and the parent does not abide by the request, the Head of School reserves the right to immediately terminate the student or prohibit the student from returning in the new school year.

Classrooms

Rest Periods

All children will be required to rest for an age-Appropriate length of time. Cots and cot sheets or sleeping mats are provided by the School for ages 1 - 5 and will be used for rest periods. The cot sheets are laundered weekly. Students are allowed to bring a small, travel-size pillow and blanket for rest periods, which will be sent home each Friday for laundering and should be returned on Mondays. All napping items must be labeled with the child's first and last name.

The following schedule, which The Cathedral School has deemed to be age-Appropriate, is followed Approximately for resting periods:

Toddlers	at least 2 hours
Pre-K 2	at least 1½ hours
Pre-K 3	1 ½ hours
VPK 4	1 hour

Learning Centers

Learning centers provide opportunities for growth in each classroom through experiencing interaction with the tools available and their peers' input. The **dramatic play** center provides students' an opportunity to develop and practice communication skills, life skills, conflict resolution, vocabulary development, problem solving, human equity and diversity, understanding experiences through role-play and classification. **Writing centers** provide children time to practice sequencing, letter recognition, vocabulary, fine-motor skills, creativity and idea recording. **Blocks area** allows children to discriminate shapes and sizes, spatial relationships, number skills, balance, cause and effect, classification, creativity, cooperation, measurement and physical coordination. The **sand/water tables** provide exploration and discovery of cause and effect, measurement, problem solving, and properties of matter. **Science areas** allow for observation, exploration, investigation, prediction, and experimentation of each child through interaction. **Art centers** allow for fine-motor skills to be further developed, creativity to be expressed, recognition of colors, shapes, and sizes, the development of

self-esteem, and the exploration of visual materials and perception. Our **manipulative centers** provide opportunities for our children to develop and practice hand-eye coordination, classification, visual perception, problem solving, social skills, counting, and patterning. The **music center** teaches children rhythm, coordination, and listening skills; while the **book center** promotes development of vocabulary, communication skills, memory, and reading opportunities.

Classroom Procedures

The teachers and staff may request additional items for their students, but will do so conservatively. Also, classroom rules and expectations will be posted in the respective room and at Appropriate levels for the children. These expectations will be consistent throughout the school and reviewed regularly. Any new policies or procedures will be posted outside the rooms, including updates of pertinent information. The front office has a designated parent information board to relay such information to the student family body at large.

Teachers of the older students will have classroom behavior and rules posted.

Toys are not permitted (other than nap-time “comforters”) unless requested by a teacher in writing (e.g., supplementing thematic curriculum).

Students are expected to be in place by 8:45 a.m. to allow readiness for circle time and resources. Teachers may post a sign on their classroom door once circle time / instructional time begins. In this event, the child should be brought to the front office and will be escorted to the classroom by a staff member once instructional time is over.

Monthly newsletters will be sent home for ages toddlers through Pre-K 4. Newsletters should be read to keep Apprised of the themes, special events and important information from the teacher. Parent boards are located outside every classroom with school policies, current menus and other pertinent information.

Meal Procedures

Close to or at the age of one year, teachers will begin to transition children to sippy cups and table food. This will be discussed with the parents as the students are transitioned. At the age of one, all students will eat snacks and meals from the cafeteria. After age one (starting at first birthday), bottles, formula and baby food are no longer used and food from the home is not allowed.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Program

ATTENTION PK 3 PARENTS FOR THE 2024/2025 SCHOOL YEAR

A 540-hour instructional program, Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) is designed to help children develop the skills they need to become good readers and successful students. It includes high literacy standards, Appropriate curricula, and substantial instruction periods. TCS is an inaugural and supporting member of the Florida initiated Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program for four year olds. **If your child will be 4 years of age on or before September 1, 2024** and resides in Florida, he or she may participate in the VPK program. In order to enroll your child in the VPK program for four year olds:

- Call the Early Learning Coalition for an Appointment to complete the enrollment process at 904-208-2044 or follow the instructions at <http://www.elcofduval.org>.
- **ATTENTION PK 3 PARENTS FOR THE 2024/2025 SCHOOL YEAR:** The VPK certificate must be returned to the Administration by Wednesday, February 28, 2024 to participate in the 2024 / 2025 VPK program.

VPK-4 Attendance Policy

VPK attendees must be present a minimum of three hours (9:00AM to 12:00PM) in order to receive the total instructional program. Absences and tardiness may be excused under extraordinary circumstances, if Appropriate documentation is provided, which may include a doctor's note, court documents or military documentation. **A child may not miss more than twenty-seven (27) instructional days, regardless of circumstances. Any student who is absent from the VPK program for five or more consecutive instructional days may be withdrawn from the program, unless specific documentation is provided and Approval has been sought. A child may not be tardy (arriving at 9:01 am or later) more than eighteen (18) days per VPK school year regardless of circumstances.**



Curriculum and Assessments

We are fortunate to live in a time when so much information about early childhood, child development and individual learning styles is available. Furthermore, we have ongoing research studies that provide new and up-to-date methods. At The Cathedral School, we incorporate this information to assist us in doing our best to help our children grow and learn to their fullest.

Learning to read is critical for success. It is never too soon to be reinforcing pre-reading skills. When a child enters our program, we begin a systematic program that enthusiastically incorporates talking, singing, reading, signing and playing into the day. This Approach emphasizes specific sounds, words, symbols, phrases, and sentences. Each of these aspects is a piece to the phonemic awareness “puzzle,” which builds the foundation for reading.

Children also learn phonological awareness through their own verbal and non-verbal language, including spoken, written, and gestured communication. Soon they can begin to use more formal language to express themselves and to learn about the world they live in. Early on our children are regularly encouraged to “use [their] words.” A child’s first attempts at language usually include words that label, classify, identify and position. Our staff reinforces these emergent efforts and the messages delivered. The ability to read does not “just happen...” It requires rich multi-modality experiences at a young age.

We have assembled a wonderfully talented faculty to implement our superior curriculums, which include the Mother Goose Time, DLM Early Childhood Express from the McGraw-Hill Group and ELLM curriculums. These classroom curriculums are designed to meet each child at a level consistent with the individual student’s developmental level. Challenging, hands-on strategies combine with educational discovery centers to provide a well-rounded, multi-modal Approach to learning.

The intention of the curriculum is to prepare “the total child” for the next levels of learning within a positive and nurturing educational environment.



Research-Based Curriculum



DLM Early Childhood Express (www.wrightgroup.com)

This curriculum has been designed by McGraw-Hill Companies to prepare young children for future academic success, nurturing each child by offering carefully selected and sequenced developmental and age-Appropriate learning experiences. This comprehensive program includes literature, manipulatives, and instructional materials that have been created to keep children engaged and excited about learning.

Mother Goose Time (www.mothergoosetime.com)

Mother Goose Time uniquely weaves 33 research-based skills through monthly activities and discovery projects. As children participate, they are naturally exposed to skills which support their ongoing social-emotional, physical, language and cognitive development. Each activity integrates at least two, if not three domains (for example social + physical + math) to offer children rich multidisciplinary learning opportunities.

ELLM *Early Literacy & Learning Model Plus*

ELLM (www.unf.edu/dept/fie/ellm-plus-home.html)

The Early Literacy and Learning Model is a research-based, comprehensive curriculum for 3, 4 and 5 year-old preschool children that has been proven to be effective improving children's early reading achievements. This literacy-focused curriculum builds children's cognitive development through literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts motor experiences and physical health.

Observations and Assessments



The Ounce Scale (www.ounceonline.com)

The Ounce Scale is an observational tool for our infants, toddlers and two year olds, which allows us to get to know your younger child better by observing their everyday activities. We record notes on your child's Developmental Profile to keep track of behaviors and accomplishments throughout the school year. The Ounce Scale is *not* a test, but rather an observation tool to track your child's development. It is a way to observe children as they play and take part in daily activities, such as eating breakfast, playing, participating in resource centers and interacting with children and adults. The Ounce Scale focuses on what children can do, not what they can't do. www.ounceonline.com

DLM Performance Assessment (www.wrightgroup.com)

The DLM curriculum program includes assessment tools that are utilized for the Pre-K 3 students. The observations are completed throughout the school year and assessments are completed bi-annually by the teachers.

ELLM Progress Chart (www.unf.edu/dept/fie/ellm-plus-home.html)

The ELLM curriculum program includes a learning progress chart that is utilized for the Pre-K 4 students. The observations are completed throughout the school year and assessments are completed bi-annually by the teachers.

Resource Enrichment Programs

Christian Education

On a regular basis, all students will hear bible stories, sing Christian songs and pray before meals. Pre-K 3 and 4 students will attend weekly Chapel at the Cathedral. Chapel will be with a clergy member as well as the teachers. Parents are welcome to attend weekly chapel.





Art

Art is a means by which children express themselves visually. The art program at The Cathedral School is designed to be both fun and educational. It builds student confidence and allows individual expression through a variety of art forms. Students are always encouraged to create their own masterpiece.

Music and Movement

Music is an exciting hands-on and multi-modal experience for children. The program at The Cathedral School will provide ample opportunity for each child to perform in a wide range of musical formats. As with art, music and movement builds self-confidence and provides children a means to express themselves. The students also sing during class time, perform in several programs throughout the year and showcase their emerging talents throughout the year.

Free Play

Physical exercise is an important part of a child's day. Depending on weather conditions, there is scheduled twice daily outside play time on the playground equipment or covered porch depending on the age-Appropriateness. Organized games focus on teamwork, gross and fine motor skills and fun activities to enrich the physical well-being of each child. Free play provides time for social interaction and physical release.



Wellness Policy

Our school is dedicated to providing consistent, quality education and care to all children and staff by maintaining a sanitary, healthy environment. We strive to maintain wellness throughout The Cathedral School through the prevention of airborne viruses and the spread of communicable diseases and illnesses by:

- Providing sanitary wipes and spray
- Sanitizing toys and surfaces daily
- Contacting parents early for sick child pick-up
- Isolating contagious child in business office
- Sending home staff members showing symptoms
- Installing ultraviolet bulbs on the major air handling system

The Cathedral School expects parents to respond in a timely manner to the school's concerns and reports, and to follow the Well Child Policy guidelines regarding their child's departure from and return to the school. When a caregiver is contacted regarding a child needing to leave TCS due to illness, it is required for the child to be picked up within thirty (30) minutes of the initial phone call. After thirty (30) minutes, if the child is still at TCS, a TCS staff member will begin contacting those listed on your child's emergency contact list. As parents, we understand that you also expect the facility will be properly cleaned and for the staff to use "best health practices" to prevent the spread of illnesses.

If a child has a **fever** of 100 degrees, or higher, the parent(s) will be notified of the need to come pick the child up from school. The temperature will be determined by sanitary thermometers kept in the front office of the school. The child will be checked if a temperature is thought to have occurred and monitored thereafter for improvement.

If a child is **congested** with a head cold (i.e., clear mucus, no fever), we will administer medicine as outlined below to maintain the child's comfort. However, if the child Appears to have an infection (i.e., green mucus) or is having respiratory problems, the parent(s) will be notified of the need to come pick the child up from school for medical attention.

If a child has a very loose **bowel movement**, we will call the parent(s). After the second occurrence of diarrhea, the parent(s) will be notified to come pick the child up from school. Children are most contagious early in these episodes and we Appreciate parents' urgent and timely response.

If a child is **vomiting**, the parent(s) will be called immediately to come pick the child up from school.

If a child Appears to be excessively fussy and are **lethargic** (i.e., loss of energy and enthusiasm, abnormal behaviors or interactions), we will call the parent(s) to notify them of our concern. If the child continues to be abnormally uncomfortable and lethargic based on the staff's judgment of the child's well-being, the parent(s) will be notified of the need to come pick the child up from school.

Fever-related illnesses

Students should not be sent to school with a fever or given medicine to reduce the signs of a fever. A child should be “fever free” for 24 hours, without medication, before returning to school. If a child contracts a contagious disease, the parent should notify the school immediately so information related to the illness may be communicated to other parents. A child’s name will not be disclosed in any communication regarding contagious disease. The child cannot return to school without a doctor’s note stating the child is not contagious.

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) OR Croup

RSV is a common virus responsible for mild symptoms of the common cold in older children and adults. In infants and young children, RSV infection may cause only mild cold symptoms; however, it may produce serious lower respiratory tract infections, Croup, particularly pneumonia (lung infection) and bronchiolitis (infection of the smaller airways).

It is easily spread by physical contact. Touching, kissing and shaking hands with an infected person can spread RSV. It is also spread by sneezing or coughing and can live up to 6 hours on countertops and for several hours on used tissues. RSV often spreads very quickly in crowded households and preschool centers. Nearly all babies are exposed to RSV by age 2.

Conjunctivitis

Conjunctivitis, commonly known as pinkeye, is an inflammation of the conjunctiva, the clear membrane that covers the white part of the eye and lines the inner surface of the eyelids. It is a fairly common condition and usually causes no danger to the eye or your child’s vision. The inflammation can have many causes, the most common of which are infectious, and irritant.

Infectious conjunctivitis is usually caused by either bacteria or viruses. All types of infectious conjunctivitis are contagious and can spread from one eye to the other by touching the eyes. The incubation time for bacterial conjunctivitis is a few days. In viral cases, it can be up to one week. Return to school is dependent upon Doctor’s note.

Hand, Foot and Mouth

The hand, foot and mouth disease is a very common virus that affects children five years-old and younger. Adults carry the virus but seldom show symptoms. Hand, foot, and mouth disease is common in infants and young children. It usually causes fever, painful sores in the mouth, and a rash on the hands and feet. It is very contagious. Students may not return to school until all blisters/sores are completely healed and with a Doctor’s note.

Return Policy

A child may return to school when he/she is **symptom-free** for twenty-four (24) hours or medicated for twenty-four (24) hours with antibiotics. Please keep the school’s administration apprised of your child’s improving health. A doctor’s note may be required to return depending on the symptoms.

Dispersal of Medications

All medications should be left at the front desk with a Medical Release Form filled out directing the staff of the medicine type, amount to dispense, times needed, and other pertinent information. All prescription and non-prescriptions medications must be in the original container with the doctor’s prescription label affixed. **Following the Department of Children and Families’ (DCF) policy, we are unable to dispense over-the-counter medications to children under the age of two without a doctor’s daily instructions.**

Discipline

All children have the ability to behave with respect and consideration to the adults in their lives as well as to their fellow classmates. Older children should come to the classroom prepared to behave in a manner conducive to a fun learning experience. Children should respect the teachers at the school and listen, cooperate and treat their classmates in a loving manner.

If there are any behavioral problems with a child, the situation will first be handled in a loving manner by the classroom teacher. We discipline with firmness, but without anger. (Anger only teaches a child fear; a child cannot learn in a state of fear.) Additional issues with the same child will involve the Head of School and administrative staff and will be handled on an individual basis. Self-control requires motivation and practice. The staff at The Cathedral School is dedicated to providing the environment in which to master self-control. Self-control also enhances a child's overall self-esteem.

Knowing that the educational process is a joint effort between parents and teachers, parents are asked to communicate to the school any challenges at home that might impact the child's behavior at School. Discipline is a cooperative effort.

The following is a list of procedures which is followed at TCS for each child:

- Positive reinforcements, interactions and interventions. Our staff is trained to use positive reinforcement, guidance and redirection in their classroom as we recognize the process of teaching children how to behave Appropriately.
- A child's ego is built and self-esteem strengthened through praise and reward.
- The individual child will be directed, redirected and talked to about the challenge, giving consideration to "the total child" and their individual developmental level.
- Using the child's name first, teachers will request a specific behavior, and then proceed with redirection; redirection will precede interventions.
- Interventions, to include a "quiet time," will follow redirection when necessary.
- We encourage behavior that respects the rights of the individual child, the group, and the adult.
- Child behavior will be observed and recorded.
- Parents will be consulted with on a regular basis through an open channel of communication.
- Intervention plans, if needed, will involve the administration, parents and teacher(s).
- Consistency on the part of all parties is the key!

Our discipline in the classroom or playground may include isolation for an individual or the group for a limited amount of time, preventing contact with other children. Children may be asked to sit while others play or be excluded from special activities.

In the event of repeated or unusual negative behavior patterns, including but not limited to biting, hitting and kicking, the Head of School will confer with parents to ensure a continuity of consequences and reinforcements. Most discipline problems will be handled by the classroom teacher. Excessive disciplinary actions will be handled by the Head of School. Children who are given reasonable choices and options are encouraged to strive for independence. Through positive discipline based on consistency, love and acceptance of the individual, our children become confident students who make positive choices.

If a student displays aggressive behavior - repeatedly biting, temper tantrums such as kicking, hitting or throwing themselves to the ground as some examples - the parent will be contacted and may result in the student being required to leave for the remainder of the day. For safety purposes, no students or staff will be subjected to these types of behaviors. After three incidents of biting or aggressive behavior, the Head of School has the option to dismiss the student at her discretion.

Special Events

Field Trips

Field Trips will be planned and communicated to parents well in advance. Parental permission is required for children 3 years of age and older to participate in trips related to our units of study. Parents may be asked to volunteer as chaperones on these trips. There may be requirements made of each parent wishing to chaperone small groups of children. The school will provide chaperone guidelines to the parents. Siblings are not allowed to participate in field trips as parents are asked to give their attention exclusively to the children under their supervision.

Birthday Parties

A child's birthday may be celebrated at school by a parent providing a healthy snack or dessert for the entire class. The food, drink and timing must be discussed and approved by the classroom teacher. It is important to have all classmates participate in the event and therefore consideration must be given to all of our students, including those who have specific food-related allergies or dietary requirements. "Treat bags" are allowed if they are age-Appropriate and do not contain hard candy or food that contains peanuts or peanut products. Due to the potentially toxic nature of peanut products, it is never served to children and is not allowed to be given to any child within the school facilities.

Class Parties

Throughout the school year several scheduled class and school-wide parties occur. School communications will provide advance information on the dates, themes, needs, and volunteer opportunities of these parties. Healthy food and drink are always encouraged and Appreciated by parents and school staff. Due to the potentially toxic nature of peanut products, it is never served to children and is not allowed to be given to any child within the school facilities.





The Cathedral School

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