



Parent Handbook

2025-2026

Philosophy and Goals

The center's purpose is to provide a safe nurturing and stimulating environment for the enhancement of each child's social, emotional, cognitive, spiritual, and physical potential. We do this by creating an environment that challenges the child to explore, discover, and create. We also believe in modeling the Christian values that the Catholic Church teaches by the words and actions that we employ while working with children. The center is viewed as a precursor to, but not a requirement of, the child's enrollment at St. Sebastian Parish School.

The goals of the center are:

- To instill a love of learning and a hunger for knowledge and creativity.
- To meet the individual child's needs for spiritual, social-emotional, cognitive, and physical growth.
- To help prepare the individual child for the elementary school experience.
- To provide parents with an opportunity to better understand their child's development and how to encourage and foster the attainment of their child's potential.

License

The St. Sebastian Parish School Center for Early Learning is licensed by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (DEW), License # 052522.060962. The program license and letter(s) of compliance are posted on the parent bulletin board in the main hallway of the preschool. Parents may obtain a copy of the inspection reports by making a request to the director. Parents may file a complaint about the program by calling the Ohio DEW at 877-644-6338.

Curriculum

The Center for Early Learning follows the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland's Pre-Kindergarten curriculum, which describes developmentally appropriate activities, learning environment, and approaches that meet the individual needs of the children and are aligned at the domain level to the early learning and development standards adopted by the state board of education.

Admission Policies and Procedures-

A child is considered to be enrolled in the center only after the registration fee has been received, the administrator confirms the availability of space, and the required paperwork is received. This includes basic enrollment and health information. Any change to this information must be communicated to the

director immediately so that current information is always on file. This is for the safety of your child. A medical form signed by a physician, physician's assistant, clinical nurse specialist, or certified nurse practitioner is required to be submitted within 30 days of admission. This medical form must be updated every 13 months from the date that the exam occurred. Healthchek services are available for families that are eligible for Medicaid. Healthchek is Ohio's Early And Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) Program.

It is a service package for babies, kids, and young adults younger than age 21 who are enrolled on Ohio Medicaid.

The Purpose of Healthchek is to discover and treat health problems early. If a potential health problem is found, further diagnosis and treatment are covered by Medicaid.

Healthchek covers ten check-ups in the first two years of life and annual check-ups thereafter and offers a comprehensive physical examination that includes:

- Medical history
- Complete unclothed exam (with parent approval)
- Developmental screening (to assess if child's physical and mental abilities are age-appropriate)
- Vision screening
- Dental screening
- Hearing assessment
- Immunization assessment (making sure child receives them on time)
- Lead screening; and
- Other services or screenings as needed

If your children are enrolled on Ohio Medicaid, Healthchek services are available to them. If you are younger than age 21 and are also enrolled, you can receive Healthchek services, too.

If you are interested in more information about this service, please visit:

<http://medicaid.ohio.gov/FOROHIOANS/Programs/Healthchek.aspx>

St. Sebastian Parish School Center for Early Learning expects all learners to be potty-trained. We are aware that accidents do occur. Please note, if your child has multiple accidents in a week and it continues over a couple of weeks, he or she can be asked to stay home until potty trained, or can be withdrawn from preschool.

The St. Sebastian Parish School Center for Early Learning complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Priority of Admission

Enrollment begins during the month of January and continues until all available spots are filled in a given grade. Priority of enrollment is as follows:

1. Catholic children who are active members of St. Sebastian Parish and are already enrolled at St. Sebastian Parish School/Center for Early Learning.
2. Catholic children who are non-active members of St. Sebastian Parish who are already enrolled at St. Sebastian Parish School/Center for Early Learning.
3. Catholic children who are active members of St. Sebastian Parish and are new to St. Sebastian Parish School/Center for Early Learning.

4. Catholic or non-Catholic students enrolled in the St. Sebastian Parish School Center for Early Learning.
5. Catholic children who are non-active members of St. Sebastian Parish who are new to St. Sebastian Parish/School/Center for Early Learning.
6. Catholic children who are non-members of St. Sebastian Parish.
7. Any non-Catholic child.

Non-Discrimination Policy

St. Sebastian Parish School Center for Early Learning admits students of any race, color, sex, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in this school.

St. Sebastian Parish School Center for Early Learning does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of educational policies, athletic or other school-administered programs.

Registration Procedures

Registration forms will be available to parents beginning during our Catholic Schools Week, the last week of January, and will be accepted beginning after that day. Notices of registration will be placed in the Parish Bulletin prior to that date.

Fees

A non-refundable registration fee of \$150.00 per family is due at the time of registration. An annual fee based on your payment plan is charged by FACTS Tuition Management.

Tuition

4 and 5 year old full day students (M-F)	\$400.00 per month	\$4800 per year
4 half-day students (M-F)	\$230.00 per month	\$2760 per year
3 half-day students (M-TH)	\$202.08 per month	\$2425 per year

Tuition for preschool is charged on an annual basis. Payments may be made monthly beginning in July and ending in June. There is no deduction in tuition for days that the school is closed for holidays, snow days, or teacher in-service days.

Our Tax ID number is available upon request for those families qualifying for Child Care Credit on their income tax forms.

Rebates/Overtime Charges

If a parent pays tuition in advance and finds that he/she must withdraw their child early, the parent will receive a reimbursement of all “unused” time. If a parent does not provide a two-week notice of withdrawal, they will relinquish the equivalent of two weeks' tuition.

Aftercare is available on school days from 2:30-5:30pm. Charges are based on daily attendance at a rate of \$12 per day for each child with an enrollment fee of \$20.00. This rate includes siblings enrolled in the St. Sebastian School Aftercare program. Aftercare payments will be deducted from your FACTS Tuition Management account on a monthly basis.

Hours and Days of Operation

The St. Sebastian Parish School Center for Early Learning follows the St. Sebastian School Calendar (see attached) with only slight modifications. We will begin the school year one week later than the day school starts and will end one week earlier.

The hours of operation vary depending on the class in which your child is enrolled.

4 and 5-year-olds, full day	8:00am-2:30pm-Monday- Friday
4 year old half-day	8:00am-11:00am-Monday-Friday
3 year old half-day	8:00am-11:00am-Monday-Thursday

Drop-off begins at 7:40am. If you need to drop off your child before 7:40am they may go to Z-Hall. Aftercare is available from 2:30-5:30pm Monday through Friday on school days.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Daily Schedules

Four and Five-Year-Old Class – Full Day Pre-K (Monday through Friday)

8:00-8:45	Arrival/Free play/Art
8:45-9:15	Circle time/Calendar/Weather/Helpers/Prayer/Pledge
9:15-9:30	Music/Movement
9:30-10:00	Whole group/Small group instruction
10:00-10:30	Outdoor play
10:30-11:00	Storytime/Language development
11:00-12:00	Lunch/Transition to rest time
12:00-1:00	Rest time
1:00-1:30	M, T, Th Teacher, W Library, F Technology
1:30-2:00	Outdoor play/F Spanish
2:00-2:15	Snack time
2:15-2:25	Closing circle time/Dismissal

Four-Year-Old Class – Morning (Monday through Friday)

8:00-8:45	Arrival/Free play/Art
8:45-9:15	Circle time/Calendar/Weather/Helpers/Prayer/Pledge
9:15-9:30	Music/Movement
9:30-10:00	Whole group/Small group instruction
10:00-10:30	Outdoor play
10:30-11:00	Storytime/Language development

Three-Year-Old Class – Morning (Monday through Thursday)

7:40-8:50	Playtime/Art/Fine motor skills
8:55-9:05	Circle time
9:20-9:40	Group time
9:40-10:00	Language Arts
10:00-10:30	Outdoor play/Gross motor skills
10:30-10:45	Snack
10:45-10:55	Storytime
10:55-11:00	Closing circle time

Rest time

We provide a quiet space for children who want to rest, nap, or sleep in accordance with the developmental needs of the child. Any child who does not fall asleep during a designated nap time shall have the opportunity to engage in quiet activities. We maintain a clear path to each resting child and maintain evacuation routes for free and direct means of escape in the event of an emergency situation. One cot per child is provided with individual bedding that will be labeled with the child's name and thoroughly cleaned regularly.

Meals and Snacks

The noon meal, which parents must provide, must include food from the basic food groups that supply 1/3 of the child's recommended daily dietary allowance. The noon meal will be served to every child present at the center from 11:00 to 1:30 inclusively. A snack that includes 2 of the 4 basic food groups will be served during the time posted on the schedule for the individual classrooms. Parents will send in boxes or bags of healthy carbohydrates on a rotating basis. Notices will be sent home. The preschool will provide water, fruit, or fruit juice.

For those students bringing their lunch, one-third of the daily dietary allowance would include nutritional food from the following food groups: protein, grain, and two foods from the fruit/vegetable group. A milk product is also required and may be purchased at the center. If a lunch does not meet the nutritional requirements, then the center is mandated to provide the additional food(s). If a child's lunch is frequently supplemented by the center, a charge of \$1.00 per item will be charged.

Food Supplements or Modified Diets

If your child requires a food supplement or a modified diet, you must secure written information from your physician regarding this. Please speak with the administrator for more details regarding this.

Birthdays

Children love celebrating their birthdays, and we love celebrating with them. To not "overdue the day," we keep the celebration simple by asking you to send in a special treat for your child to share at snack time. Please make arrangements with the classroom teacher in advance of the special day.

Outdoor Play

Outdoor playtime is included in the child's daily schedule. We will limit the amount of time outside when the temperatures are very warm or very cold. Children will not be taken outside when the temperature (wind chill and heat index factored in) drops below 20 degrees or rises above 90 degrees. If the situation requires it we will also adjust outdoor time due to rain, threatening weather, ozone warnings, etc. On days that outdoor play is not provided due to these conditions, we will include a time for indoor gross motor activities. Please send your children with the proper clothing so they may be comfortable and safe whenever we are outside. This includes snow pants, hats, mittens, and boots in the wintertime.

Staff Child Ratios and Maximum Group Size

The center observes the following staff/child ratios and small group sizes, which are required by law:

Staff/child ratios:

3 year olds-1:12

4 and 5 year olds-1:14

The ratios that the St. Sebastian Parish School Center for Early Learning maintains are lower than are required by law. The average ratio overall is close to 1:6, with group sizes much lower than required. This allows us to give your child more individualized learning opportunities.

Maximum group size is defined by the number of children in one group that may be cared for at any time. Limitations do not include nap time, lunchtime, outdoor play, or special activities.

Supervision Policy

Supervision of Preschoolers: At no time will a child be left unattended. Staff will supervise children at all times, including nap time. If a child becomes ill they may be isolated in a section of the room not in use, but within the sight and hearing of a staff member.

Arrival/Departure

A teacher's aide will be at the door to greet children as they arrive and to usher them inside the building. They will then enter the classroom to be greeted by the teacher. If a child arrives after the normal arrival time, the parent is to ring the door buzzer to be admitted into the building and will present the child to the classroom teacher.

At dismissal, either the teacher or aide will walk the children out to the south-facing door, where parents will pick them up.

Release of Child from the Center

The release of a child from the center to anyone other than a parent or guardian, or other specifically designated person will require written permission or verbal confirmation from the parent. Parents are asked to complete a form that allows them to list all persons permitted to pick up their child at dismissal or in case of illness.

Attendance

Teachers will note the arrival and dismissal of children on the attendance form as each occurs. Attendance forms will remain with the group at all times, including outdoor play time, routine field trips, school programs, or to anywhere the group may travel.

Child Abuse Reporting

All staff members are mandated reporters of child abuse. If staff have suspicions that a child is being abused or neglected, they MUST make a report to the local children's services agency. The safety of the children is always our first concern.

Custody Arrangements

If specific court-ordered custody arrangements exist, a copy of the document must remain in the child's folder. The center may not deny a parent access to their child without proper documentation.

Field Trips/Transportation of Children

The center will not transport children in life-threatening emergency situations. If a child requires transportation, the parent or the emergency squad will be contacted.

The policy for transportation for routine trips, field trips, or special outings: The center will solicit volunteer parent drivers who have a valid Ohio Driver's License and available working seatbelts for all children riding in their vehicle. For those children who weigh less than 40 pounds, the parent will provide a car seat to be used. A staff member trained in First Aid, CPR, and Communicable Disease will attend the field trip and will be responsible for carrying a First Aid Kit. Before departing the center, a count will be

taken of all the children using the teacher's attendance form. Upon arrival at the destination, attendance will again be taken, with periodic attendance taken during a prolonged visit. The same attendance routine will be repeated for the return trip to the center. Before any child participates in either a routine or field trip, the center will obtain written permission from the parent or guardian using the prescribed Diocesan Field Trip Permission Form. Swimming is not part of the program.

Inclement Weather/Calamity Days

Inclement Weather/Calamity Days: On rare occasions, it may be necessary to close the center due to poor weather conditions or other occurrences beyond our control. This information will be managed by the Instant School Alert System through local TV networks and the *Bloomz* communication app. If AKRON PUBLIC SCHOOLS are closed, we are usually closed. Anytime the principal of St. Sebastian Parish School closes the school, the preschool is also closed.

Guidance Policy

St. Sebastian Parish School Center for Early Learning staff believe that helping the child learn self-control is very important. We hope that each child will learn self-discipline through careful guidance. Your child will be treated with love and respect. If children are treated with respect, they, in turn, learn to respect the teachers and their friends. Our expectations will be kept within the child's capabilities, and the child will be made aware of these expectations. Positive reinforcement (commenting on children doing the "right" thing) and positive redirection (removing the child and giving them an appropriate activity) will be used. A child may be asked to sit for a short period of time to give the child a chance to regain control if they are having a difficult time. Time-outs or Thinking Time will be age-appropriate in length and done within the classroom. A teacher will ask the child if they are ready to return to the group. Staff will not impose punishments for failure to eat, sleep, or accidents involving toileting. This discipline policy applies to all staff and parents while they are at the center.

If the child demonstrates behavior that requires "extra attention" from the staff member, we may choose to develop and implement a behavior management plan. This plan would be developed in consultation with the parents and could be consistent with the requirements of Rule 5180-37-10 OAC.

If, for some reason, the child becomes a true danger to himself or others because of his/her ongoing actions, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child from the program. This would be the most extreme case and would occur after conferences with the teacher, director, and parents. The school principal would also be involved in this decision.

Behavior Management/Discipline Policy

The following policy is mandated to be added to the Parent Handbook.

A preschool staff member in charge of a child or a group of children shall be responsible for their discipline.

The center shall have a written discipline policy describing the center's philosophy of discipline and the specific methods of discipline used at the center. This written policy shall be on file at the center for review. (See above "Guidance Policy") Constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques are to be used at all times and shall include such measures as redirection, separation from problem situations, talking about the situation, and praise for appropriate behavior.

The center's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:

- There shall be no cruel, harsh, corporal punishment or any unusual punishments, such as but not limited to, punching, pinching, shaking, spanking, or biting.
- No discipline shall be delegated to any other child.
- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as in a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
- No child shall be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or a similar cubicle.
- No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family, or other verbal abuse.
- Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, failure to sleep, or for toileting accidents.
- Discipline shall not humiliate, shame, or frighten a child.
- Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest, or toilet use.
- Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability, and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted, and well-ventilated space.
- The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.

The parent of a child enrolled in a center shall receive the center's written discipline policy. (See above "Guidance Policy")

All preschool staff members shall receive a copy of the center's discipline policy for review upon employment.

Accidents/Emergencies

School safety drills will take place at intervals throughout the year. Staff provides students with strategies to utilize in the event that there is an unsafe situation or individual in the school setting. As is any other emergency, students, staff, and guests will be expected to follow the directions of the school officials. These plans are filed with local and state emergency and government offices annually.

The school has devised several procedures to follow in the event that an emergency would occur while a child is in the center's care. In the event of a fire or tornado, staff would follow the written instructions posted in each classroom, describing emergency evacuation routes and the procedures to be followed to ensure that children arrive at the designated spot. In order to prepare children for the unlikely need to evacuate, the school conducts monthly fire drills and periodic tornado drills. Both students and staff participate in school safety drills at intervals throughout the year. Should we need to evacuate due to fire or weather conditions, or the loss of power, heat, or water to the center, our emergency destination is the school gymnasium located across the street on S. Hawkins Ave. (Byrider Hall). School communication systems will be utilized to inform you of the location where you can pick up your child. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible to come to pick up your child. If a parent cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts as listed on your child's enrollment information. A copy of your child's emergency transportation authorization is included in the St. Sebastian School Emergency Kit.

There is always at least one staff member present who has received training in First Aid/Communicable Diseases, CPR, and Administration of Medication. In the case of a minor accident/injury, staff will administer basic first aid and TLC. If the injury were more serious, first aid would be administered, and the parents would be contacted immediately to assist in deciding an appropriate course of action. If any injury is life-threatening, the EMS will be contacted, parents will be notified, and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital with all available health records. Staff may not transport children in their vehicles. Only parents or EMS will transport.

An incident/injury report will be completed and given to the person picking up the child on the day of the incident/injury if any of the following occur: The child has an illness, accident, or injury that requires first aid; the child receives a bump or blow to the head; the center has to administer charcoal (for poisoning); the child has to be transported by emergency squad; or an unusual or unexpected event occurs which jeopardizes the safety of the child. If a child requires emergency transportation, the report shall be available within twenty-four hours after the incident occurs.

Management of Illnesses

St. Sebastian Parish School Center for Early Learning provides children with a clean and healthy environment and teaches children basic hygiene and self-care. However, we realize that children become ill from time to time. If this is your child's first group experience, it is possible that they may experience more frequent illness at the beginning before their immune system becomes more active. We observe all children as they enter the program to quickly assess their general health. At all times that the center is open to children, one or more staff members will be trained in recognizing illness and communicable disease. Please plan ahead and have a backup care plan in place if you are not able to take time off from work/school.

If teachers or aides are ill a substitute will be asked to fill in for them.

Parents are asked to keep their child home from the center if they feel their child is ill or exhibits the following symptoms. The following symptoms will also require isolation and discharge from the center if the onset is during the school day.

- A temperature of 100 degrees F, in combination with any other signs of illness
- Diarrhea (more than three abnormally loose stool within a 24-hour period)
- Severe coughing (causing the child to become red in the face or to make a whooping sound)
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Redness of the eye, obvious discharge, matted eyelashes, burning, itching
- Untreated skin patches, unusual spots, or rashes
- Unusually dark urine or gray or white stools
- Elevated temperature with a stiff neck
- Evidence of untreated lice, scabies, or other parasitic infestation
- Vomiting
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing

Any child demonstrating signs of illness not listed above will be isolated and carefully observed for symptoms. The parent will be notified. If a child does not feel well enough to participate in center activities, the parent will be called to pick up the child. Anytime a child is isolated, they will be kept

within sight and hearing of a staff member. The cot and any linens used will be washed and disinfected before being used again.

Parents will be notified by written note if children have been exposed to a communicable illness. Children will be readmitted to the center after at least 24 hours of being free of fever and other symptoms. If they are not symptom-free, a doctor's note will be required stating that the child is not contagious. The ODHS Communicable Disease Chart is located in the main hall of the center.

Medications

The center will administer medications to a child only after the parent completes a request for **Medication Form**. All proper sections must be completed, and the medication handed to the teacher each day. **Parent permission** is needed for the **application of topical products and lotions**, and is to be applied according to the manufacturer's instructions. Medications will be stored in a locked container and may NOT be stored in the child's cubby or book bag.

Prescription medications must be in their original container and administered in accordance with instructions on the label. Over-the-counter medication must also be administered in accordance to label instructions. If parents request any different dosages or uses, a physician must provide written instructions on the **Medication Form**. Over-the-counter medications will not be administered for more than three days without instructions from a physician.

Parent Participation

If a parent needs assistance with a problem or complaint related to the child care program, the parent is asked to first talk to the teacher if it is directly classroom-related.

If the problem or complaint is still not resolved, the parent can then talk to the St. Sebastian Parish School Principal.

Parent participation is welcome in the classroom, provided that the participation is approved by the classroom teacher in advance. Parents may be asked to assist in holiday celebrations or special events.

Parents are asked to meet with teachers after the 2:30 dismissal if they have questions regarding their child's progress or to exchange information about the program and/or their child. We ask that parents respect the time that teachers are scheduled to be with the children in the classroom.

The center provides scheduled parent/teacher conferences to discuss the child's behavior, progress, social and physical needs, or any other pertinent matter. These conferences will occur in the fall and spring of each year. Parents or teachers may request a conference at any time.

Daily notes to the teacher should be handed to the teacher's aide at the door at the time of your child's arrival or handed to the teacher if the parent walks the child into the center.

Any parent of a child enrolled in the program shall be permitted unlimited access to the school during its hours of operation to contact a child, evaluate the care provided by the program, the premises, or for other purposes approved by the Principal. Upon entering the premises, the parent shall report to the school office.