

St. Albert Preschool Handbook

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Please sign and return to school immediately.

Signatures of parents and/or guardians and all students are required as an indication of having read the handbook and accepted these policies and procedures as a condition for attendance at Saint Albert the Great School.

I have reviewed the School Handbook and will follow the policies herein.

Student Signature

date

Student Signature

date

Student Signature

date

Parent/Guardian Signature

date

Parent /Guardian Signature

date

This form must be returned to the Preschool Director no later than ten days after the first day of school.

A Letter from the Principal...

Dear Parents and Students:

The entire staff joins me in welcoming you and your children to Saint Albert the Great Catholic School. The parish community has made a commitment to provide its students with the highest quality education, both spiritually and academically. We look forward to working with our school families to create an environment that promotes Catholic values and academic excellence.

This Handbook has been created to inform you of the policies of Saint Albert the Great School. Please keep it handy so you can refer to it when necessary. If you need clarification, or have any questions regarding school policies, please do not hesitate to contact me in the school office.

Yours in Christ,

Sherry Gabert

Principal

A Letter from the Pastor...

I welcome you to Saint Albert the Great School.

I thank our parents for the sacrifice of time, talent, and treasure your commitment to the Faith. We are honored to be part of your children's spiritual and academic growth. Without your spirit of volunteerism we could not possibly offer all the opportunities that we presently can to your children.

We thank the staff and faculty for their dedication to their vocation as Catholic School teachers and administrators. Our teachers do not see this as a job to go to daily, but as a mission to help each child grow in their Faith and to live the Gospel.

Thank you students for providing our parish with your enthusiasm and openness. I hope to see you become a part of our parish community through your spiritual involvement in such ministries as Servers and Readers as well as in other programs.

God bless you.

Fr. Chris Worland

Pastor

Introduction

St. Albert the Great School Vision

Inspired by St. Albert the Great, patron of our parish and school, we will foster in our students a love for knowledge and an appreciation for the arts and sciences. With a strong Catholic identity, based upon a sound theological foundation, we will nurture a Catholic faith community in which we live, we learn and we love with God among us.

Educational Philosophy

The first years of life are of vital importance to a child's growth and development. During these formative years, foundations are laid which influence the ability of a child to accept him or herself, to relate to others, and to respond positively to the environment. Family relationships can provide a young child with a positive model for developing the attitudes, values and appropriate self-control, which will last a lifetime. Interactions with other adults and children enable the young child to build upon and strengthen the lessons learned at home, while promoting positive ways for the child to relate to the world around him or her.

St. Albert the Great Catholic School strives to provide creative learning environments, which support the young child's family life, while enriching the educational experience of the child. Interaction with other children and adults in the atmosphere of Christian love and concern promotes the healthy development of each child. Carefully planned, developmentally appropriate learning experiences and play activities encourage spiritual, cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development.

As a Catholic preschool operating within an active, caring parish school community, St. Albert Preschool provides continuity for the child, fosters a smooth transition to kindergarten, and enhances parish family life.

As a member of a class at St. Albert Preschool, your child will benefit from a whole range of interesting and fun activities planned by teachers certified in Early Childhood Education and implemented specifically to enhance your child's individual development. Your child will quickly see that his or her teachers view him or her as a special, unique person, about whom they care very deeply.

Since the teachers view each child as an individual, the preschool program at St. Albert follows developmentally appropriate practices. This means that each child is allowed to develop at his or her own pace, selecting activities and learning experiences, which are interesting to the child. Allowing children to make these decisions within a nurturing, structured environment fosters the development of responsibility, self-esteem, independence,

and self-confidence in the child while allowing him or her to experience an important sense of control over the environment.

Young children are very active learners who learn by doing and through play. Children at St. Albert Preschool are given ample opportunities to discover, to explore and to set their own learning tasks. Their play is extremely important, and is nurtured and encouraged in a creative, loving, Christian environment.

The entire St. Albert Preschool experience is designed as the groundwork of your child's Catholic education. We are committed to teaching and living Catholic values, building personal character, and achieving academic excellence. (For further information, consult the St. Albert Handbook or SAH under **Mission Statement**.)

Admission Policy

Students who are three years old on or before September 30 may attend the Tuesday and Thursday session. Students, who are four years old on or before September 30, may attend the Monday, Wednesday and Friday session. (For further information, consult SAH under **Admission Policy**.)

GOALS

To create an atmosphere in which growth is most likely to occur, we strive to provide a program that involves the child exercising self-encouraging guidance.

The St. Albert the Great Preschool program will help the preschool child develop:

1. Increase independence and self-confidence
2. Social skills and appropriate conduct and communication
3. The ability to enjoy being part of a group

4. The ability to respect the rights of others
5. An awareness of being a child of God
6. An appreciation of the beauty and wonder of Nature
7. Good health habits
8. A positive attitude toward school

Arrival and Dismissal

The morning session for the three year olds begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 11:00 a.m. The classroom door opens at 8:55 a.m. For the four year olds, the session begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 11:00 a.m. The classroom door opens at 8:55 a.m. For the afternoon four-year-old class, the session begins at 12:00 p.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. The classroom door opens at 11:55 a.m. Please arrive as close to the starting time as possible. Children, who arrive before the classroom door is opened, should wait quietly with a parent outside the door of the preschool room. Please do not permit excessive noise in the hallway at any time. We have neighboring classes that are already in session, and we do not want to disturb them. The parent or adult caregiver may escort the student into the classroom September through December and help him hang up his coat and book bag and say goodbye. Parents of four year olds please note: Starting in January, to encourage kindergarten readiness, please say goodbye at the door and let the student come in by himself.

In the rare event that you are late, please call the preschool classroom at 293-9452 ext. 232 so that the teacher can reassure your child that someone is on his way. Please strive to pick your child up on time so that he does not become upset. In addition, the teacher needs to prepare for the next class. If repeated tardiness occurs, the parent will be charged a late fee.

Dismissal routine is as follows:

- Children exit from the door closest to the Parish Center
- Children line up against the school building
- Teacher dismisses children one at a time after she recognizes the designated parent or caregiver
- On inclement weather days, children will stay inside the school building and are dismissed one at a time at the door closest to the Parish Center

Emergency School Closing and Delay

When an adverse weather condition exists, and school is closed or delayed, information can be obtained through:

- School Reach
- Local radio or television station
- Preschool website under monthly news

If St. Albert the Great School is on a two hour delay, morning preschool will be closed for that day.

(For additional information, consult SAH under **Emergency School Closing and Delay.**)

Disaster Drills

All disaster drills are very important and should be taken seriously at all times. All drills are conducted in silence. Each disaster drill has its own procedure.

Fire Drill

Fire drills are held monthly throughout the school year to practice rapid safe exiting from the building. The east side door of Room 2 is used exclusively for exiting during fire drills. The students are to move quickly out of the building according to the directions from the teacher in the classroom they are leaving.

Lock Down Drill / Tornado Drill

Security lock down drills will be conducted in the fall/spring of each year. All preschool children will move quickly and quietly into the bathroom inside of our classroom. The classroom door will be locked, the blinds will be closed, and the bathroom door will be shut. We will wait for further instructions from our principal.

Classroom Supplies

St. Albert Preschool provides almost all school supplies and snack items. The teacher may request Kleenex, paper towels, Clorox wipes, and other miscellaneous supplies as needed. It is a requirement that **each student has a book bag marked with his name.** The book bag needs to be large and light weight- large enough to accommodate art projects but light enough

for the child to carry without difficulty. Parents need to check their child's book bag after each session for their child's work and important school information. When escorting your child into the classroom, please encourage him to place his classroom folder into the designated basket.

Children are NOT TO BRING TOYS from home unless specifically for Show and Tell. Children are also not to bring food or candy to share unless the teacher has given permission to the parent in advance. Party invitations, thank you notes, or gifts for other students are NOT TO BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL unless everyone in the class is included. Please conduct ALL social arrangements outside of the classroom. It is hurtful for a child to see and hear party arrangements being made when he is not going to be included.

Daily Classroom Activities

The first part of each session is devoted to socialization and play. Please make sure you depart as soon as you see that your child is occupied and comfortable. It is a temptation for adults to visit with other adults during this period and/or let siblings join in the play; however, we ask that you take visitation to the cafeteria and that you promptly remove children who are not class members. This enables the teachers to focus on the children who are in class. This is a delightful time for the teachers to listen to stories, play and talk with each child and just enjoy mingling with the children. Under the guidance of the teachers, the children learn how to play and interact with each other.

In addition to the play and socialization time, we offer to the children a "Choice or Centers" time. This involves choosing and moving among activities that are both fun and

educational. The toys that are available at this time and the choices are specifically selected for introducing or reinforcing math, science, or language arts.

During choice time, there is a “creative art project” presented in the art center. This project involves cutting, gluing, and painting among other exciting and tactile experiences. The children can create fun and age appropriate works of art to share with their families. When selecting clothes for the children to wear to school, please keep in mind that we offer painting at each session and that while every attempt is made to keep clothes clean accidents do happen! The goal of the project is to have fun while expressing creativity.

The next part of the session consists of putting the toys away and straightening the room. We operate as a team and every student pitches in to help. It is no secret that some children pick up more readily than others; this is an effort that takes some encouragement. If you teach your child to pick up his or her own toys at home, this makes the school an extension of the home and makes the connection between home and school consistent.

We gather at circle time to say our morning prayer, discuss our daily calendar and weather observations and perform daily jobs. This is also a time to look at letters, numbers or shapes, listen to stories, and learn rhymes, songs and finger plays. Furthermore, we will introduce the three year olds to sign language and continue sign language for the four year olds. In addition, once a week your child has the opportunity to visit the Library and listen to a special story.

Snack time follows circle time. Each class member washes his or her hands, and we sit down at the tables for a snack. The snack usually consists of a fruit or vegetable, bread or crackers, and milk or juice. A menu is posted in our classroom. Sometime the snack will be a

special project that the class makes and sometimes the snack is whatever treat that a classmate has brought in to share (advance arrangement necessary).

When it is birthday time, it is customary for the birthday celebrant to bring in the treat for snack time. The class sings "Happy Birthday" and the birthday celebrant gets special recognition. Please consider this for your child's birthday; contact the teacher for a convenient date.

After the snack helper passes the trash can and everyone is ready, we practice as a group to prepare for outdoor play. Please dress your child appropriately because we will be going outdoors whenever possible. If it is below thirty-two degrees, we will stay indoors. At that time the children experience body management which is a practice of moving their bodies, balancing, and cooperating with others. This can be done through music, obstacle courses, games, and through make-believe. This time quickly becomes a favorite with the children, and outdoor play is not missed in the least.

The last day of each week is Show and Tell Day. Each child may bring something special to share with his classmates. Please note that the item must fit inside your child's book bag. This helps to insure the element of surprise at Show and Tell time.

We conclude our preschool day by preparing for dismissal. This time is as important as any other part of the day. Your child will learn to prepare himself to go home. Following directions, putting on his own coat and hat, picking up his book bag, and getting his mail are his responsibilities. This is all done in a timely fashion while being kind and respectful to other children in the classroom.

Health Issues and Concerns

In the event that your child would become ill or injured during the school day, we have a School Nurse on staff and our teachers are trained in first aid and in recognition of communicable diseases. Every effort is made to immediately contact the parent and it is for this reason that two copies of the emergency forms are required; one for the School Office, and one for the classroom.

All allergies and/or medical conditions must be noted on the health forms and should be verbally communicated to the Preschool Director. Medication can only be administered at school with proper forms filled out by a licensed physician and with the School Nurse's acknowledgement. Children are never to bring any topical creams to school.

St. Albert Preschool fully complies with the State of Ohio's policies concerning the management of Communicable Diseases.

Management of Communicable Diseases

All staff members are trained in first aid, communicable diseases, and child abuse as required by the Department of Human Services. Courses will include signs and symptoms of disease as well as proper hand washing and disinfecting procedures.

1. A person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease or other illness shall observe each child daily as he enters a group. A "person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease" means any person trained in

prevention, recognition and management of communicable diseases as required by paragraph (D) of Rule 3301-37-07 of the Administrative Code.

2. The following cautions shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease:

The program shall immediately notify the parent or gaurdian of the child's condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.

- Diarrha (more than one abnormally loose stool within a twenty-four-hour period)
- Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or make a whooping sound
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Conjunctivitis
- Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit taken by auxiliary method in combination with other signs of illness
- Untreated infected skin patch(es)
- Unusually dark urine and /or grey or white stool
- Stiff neck
- Evidence of lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation

3. A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated from other children. Decisions regarding whether the child should be discharged immediately or at some other time during the day shall be determined by the director and the parent or gaurdian. The child, while isolated at the program, shall be

carefully watched for symptoms listed in paragraph (B)(2) of the Rule as well as the following:

- Unusual spots or rashes
 - Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing
 - Elevated temperature
 - Vomiting
4. Program shall follow the Department of Health “child day care communicable disease chart” for appropriate management of suspected illnesses.
5. A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be:
- Cared for in a room not being used in the preschool program
 - Within sight and hearing of an adult at all times. No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised.
 - Made comfortable and provided with a cot. All linens and blankets used by the ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child. After use, the cots shall be disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent, or, if soiled with blood, feces, vomitus or other body fluids, the cots shall be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with as appropriate germicidal agent.
 - Observed carefully for worsening condition
 - Discharged to parent, guardian, or person designated by the parent or guardian as soon as practical.

Each program shall have a written policy concerning the management of communicable disease. The policy shall include, at minimum:

1. The program's means of training all preschool staff in signs and symptoms of illness and in handwashing and disinfection procedures
2. Procedures for isolating and discharging an ill child and policy for readmitting such child
3. Procedure for notifying the parent or guardian immediately when a child is exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness or has been exposed to communicable disease
4. Procedures regarding the care of the mildly ill child. "Mildly ill child" means a child who is experiencing minor common cold symptoms, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in paragraph(B) in this Rule or a child who does not feel well enough to participate in activities, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in paragraph (B) of this Rule.
5. Procedures for notifying all parents of enrolled children when children are exposed to diagnosed communicable disease such as pink eye, ringworm, chicken pox or lice.

(For additional health information, consult SAH under **Health**.)

Dress Code

When dressing your child for school, please keep in mind his need for freedom and safety of movement. Gym shoes should be worn and fitted properly and should never be slippery or high-heeled. We skip, sing, dance, climb, and therefore, all preschool students need to move about unencumbered by restrictive clothing. It is not safe to send children in open sandals or flip-flops. Your child's safety and dignity are of utmost importance. Parents, please have the girls wear shorts under their dresses or skirts. Belts are difficult to handle and discourage your child's independence in the bathroom. Please keep a change of clothes in a

plastic bag inside your child's book bag. In the event that a child soils himself in some way, he is made as clean and as comfortable as possible. Then, the parent is notified. Repeated soiling sometimes indicates illness or uneasiness to be in a group/school situation. ALL STUDENTS OF OUR PRESCHOOL MUST BE TOILET TRAINED AND ABLE TO USE THE TOILET INDEPENDENTLY.

Behavior Management and Discipline

The teachers at St. Albert the Great Preschool follow well researched and developmentally appropriate assertive discipline techniques, thereby maintaining a positive approach to fostering the development of desired behavior.

This approach is built on the understanding that young children are natural learners. Their curious, inquisitive spirit is fostered and encouraged through carefully planned activities and opportunities for exploration and discovery provided by the teachers at St. Albert Preschool. As a natural extension of their normal experience of the world around them, preschool children also explore the acceptable limits of behavior, discovering what is expected and permitted in different situations.

Research in Early Childhood Development shows us that young children need to know the acceptable limits of their behavior, to discover where the "boundaries" are. At St. Albert Preschool, we recognize that young children sometimes need to test these boundaries, as part of natural developmental processes. As teachers, we believe we are most effective in helping children learn and develop self control when we provide clear expectations for behavior within a friendly, warm, and nurturing environment where praise and encouragement are offered generously.

First and foremost, teachers at St. Albert Preschool set examples for expected behavior and explain behavioral expectations to our children in a clear, positive and developmentally appropriate manner. We demonstrate respect for others by showing our respect for each child. We demonstrate the expectation of listening to each other during “circle” time by carefully listening to each child without interrupting. When we use the “lights out—hands on head” signal to get the children’s attention, we too, place our hands on our head. In this way, we can demonstrate our understanding that our children learn by what they see, and what they see in school is expected behavior being demonstrated by their teachers over and over again.

When necessary for safety and orderliness, children are reminded of behavioral expectations in a pleasant, matter-of-fact, and non-judgmental way. Children might be reminded to “use their walking feet” if running in school, or “keep your feet on the floor” if sitting on a table or kneeling on a chair. Preschool children respond very well to these techniques in school, and further teacher action is rarely required.

A preschool child’s undesirable behavior can often be handled through simple redirection of behavior. A child who runs through the room during free play needs a teacher’s help in finding and becoming engaged in an interesting activity. The teachers at St. Albert Preschool will provide that redirection, and ensure that the child uses his or her time in a way that is fun, interesting, constructive, and above all, safe.

The teachers of St. Albert the Great Preschool know that children will respond to a happy, supportive, and caring environment in which each person is highly valued and respected. We strive to provide that kind of environment, one in which your child is secure to explore, develop and learn.

St. Albert Preschool fully complies with the State of Ohio's policies concerning behavior management and discipline. (Rule 3301-37-10 of the Administrative Code)

1. A preschool staff member in charge of a child or a group of children shall be responsible for their discipline.
2. 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. Constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques are used at all times and shall include such measures as redirection, separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation and praise for appropriate behavior.
3. 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, shaking, spanking or biting.
 - 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 a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
 - No child should 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, or for toileting accidents.
 - Techniques of 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 child abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.
4. The parent of a child enrolled in a center shall receive the center's written policy.
 5. All preschool staff member shall receive a copy of the center's discipline policy for review upon employment.

St. Albert Preschool also recognizes that it is part of a larger community. The Preschool, along with St. Albert the Great Parish, recognizes, supports, and incorporates the Code for Everyday Living. (For further information, consult SAH under **Behavior**.)

Playground Rules for Preschool

Outside activity is an important part of the physical and emotional development of all preschoolers. To help insure their safety, a specific time is designated for preschool play. The purpose of the following rules is to provide a safe environment during outdoor play. All children must:

- Stay inside the fenced-in area
- Slide down the slides
- Make sure no one is on the slide before going down
- Understand that no tag should be played on the equipment
- Listen to whistle commands

First whistle means to freeze.

Second whistle means to line up

(For further information, consult SAH under **Recess, Playground.**)

Parental School Visits

When a parent wants to observe his child, it is a common occurrence that the child behaves differently. To get an accurate observation, it is best not to let your child know of your presence. It is appropriate for a parent to let the teachers know of his or her presence, but to stay in the area outside the classroom door and to observe unobtrusively from the area. It is imperative that the teacher be informed of your presence and that you have a visitor's pass from the Office.

St. Albert operates in accordance with the Ohio School Safety Procedure, and therefore NO ONE is permitted to enter the school without official permission. The Visitor's Pass is required for anyone who is to be in the building. In accordance with proper safety procedure, the door in our classroom, which leads outside (East side of Room 2), is for exit only.

Any discussion relating to a child's academic progress, classroom behavior or to a situation requiring privacy should be conducted between the teacher and parent outside of the time allotted for arrival and dismissal. Parent/Teacher scheduled conferences will be held twice each year. Please feel free to call 293-9452 ex 232 or email sminham@sta-school.org at any time to set up an appointment or to privately discuss your child.