



St. Patrick

CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Faith • Family • Academic Excellence



Early Childhood

PreK & VPK

HANDBOOK

2026-2027



Nurturing Hearts. Inspiring Minds.

Growing in Faith Every Day.





Welcome

TO THE

2026-2027 SCHOOL YEAR



FAITH • FAMILY • ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



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St. Patrick Catholic School is a child care facility operating under an exemption pursuant to the laws of the State of Florida and is not subject to licensure or regulation by the Department of Children and Families.

Section 1: Welcome to Our Early Childhood Family

"Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it."

Proverbs 22:6

Welcome

Welcome to the Early Childhood Program at St. Patrick Catholic School!

We are honored that you have entrusted us with one of God's greatest gifts—your child. The preschool years are filled with curiosity, imagination, growth, and discovery. During these formative years, children begin developing a love of learning, building friendships, exploring God's world, and discovering that they are deeply loved by Jesus.

At St. Patrick Catholic School, our Early Childhood Program provides a safe, nurturing, and faith-filled environment where every child is encouraged to grow spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and academically. Through play-based learning, structured activities, prayer, and loving guidance, our teachers help children develop the confidence and skills needed for future success in school and in life.

We recognize that parents are a child's first and most important teachers. Together, we share the privilege of laying the foundation for a lifetime of faith, learning, and service.

Thank you for allowing us to be part of your family's journey.

With gratitude,

Christopher Meyer

School Principal

Our Mission

The Mission of St. Patrick Catholic School is to lay the foundation for success in students through Catholic traditions, rooted in the Eucharist and Gospel teachings of Christ, with high standards of education in a safe, nurturing, and welcoming environment.

Our Early Childhood Philosophy

Young children learn best when they feel safe, loved, and encouraged.

Our Early Childhood Program provides experiences that nurture the whole child through:

- Faith formation rooted in Catholic values
- Age-appropriate academic readiness
- Hands-on exploration and discovery
- Creative play and problem solving
- Social and emotional development
- Physical development through active learning
- Positive relationships with teachers and classmates

Every child develops at his or her own pace. Our teachers provide a supportive environment where children are encouraged to ask questions, make discoveries, solve problems, and celebrate each new accomplishment.

Our Catholic Identity

Faith is woven into every part of the school day. Children experience God's love through:

- daily prayer;
- Bible stories and religious instruction;
- participation in age-appropriate liturgies and prayer services;
- learning about the lives of the saints;
- acts of kindness and service;
- celebrating the seasons of the Church year.

Our goal is for every child to know that they are a beloved child of God and to begin developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

What Makes Our Program Special?

Our Early Childhood Program emphasizes learning through purposeful play while preparing children for success in Kindergarten and beyond. Children enjoy experiences in:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • language and early literacy | • physical education |
| • mathematics | • outdoor play |
| • science discovery | • social development |
| • art and creativity | • Catholic faith formation |
| • music and movement | |

Learning is joyful, active, and developmentally appropriate for three- and four-year-old children.

Our Partnership with Families

Parents are the primary educators of their children, and a strong partnership between home and school is essential. Together, we strive to:

- nurture each child's relationship with God;
- encourage a love of learning;
- develop independence and responsibility;
- promote kindness and respect;
- celebrate each child's unique gifts.

Open communication and mutual respect allow us to provide the best possible experience for every child.

Our Commitment to Safety

Your child's safety and well-being are our highest priorities. Our Early Childhood Program provides:

- secure arrival and dismissal procedures;
- trained and caring faculty and staff;

- Safe Environment practices required by the Diocese of St. Augustine;
- age-appropriate supervision throughout the school day;
- emergency preparedness and safety drills;
- clean, welcoming classrooms designed for young learners.

Every decision we make is guided by what is in the best interest of our students.

Accreditation

St. Patrick Catholic School is a childcare facility operating under an exemption pursuant to the laws of the State of Florida and is not subject to licensure or regulation by the Department of Children and Families.

St. Patrick Catholic School is fully accredited by the **Florida Catholic Conference (FCC)** and operates under the Diocese of St. Augustine and in conjunction with the policies and procedures of the Early Learning Coalition of Duval County.

Accreditation demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement, educational excellence, and faithful Catholic identity.

Our Core Beliefs

We believe:

- Every child is created in the image and likeness of God.
- Parents are the first and most important educators of their children.
- Faith and learning grow together.
- Children learn best through loving relationships, purposeful play, and meaningful experiences.
- Every child deserves to be treated with dignity, patience, and respect.
- A strong partnership between home, school, and parish helps children flourish.

Early Childhood at a Glance

We Provide

A safe and nurturing environment
 Caring, qualified teachers
 Developmentally appropriate curriculum
 Individual attention
 Strong partnership with families

Your Child Will Experience

Daily prayer and faith formation
 Hands-on learning and exploration
 Music, art, movement, and play
 Opportunities to build friendships
 Preparation for Kindergarten success

We are grateful that your family has chosen St. Patrick Catholic School. Together, we will help your child grow in **Faith, Family, and Academic Excellence**, laying a joyful foundation for a lifetime of learning and discipleship.

Section 2: School Operations

"Let all things be done decently and in order."

1 Corinthians 14:40

Our goal is to make each school day safe, organized, and joyful for every child. The following information explains how our Early Childhood Program operates and outlines the procedures that help us provide a caring and well-managed learning environment.

School Contact Information

St. Patrick Catholic School

601 Airport Center Drive East

Jacksonville, Florida 32218

Phone: (904) 768-6323

Website:

www.stpatrickjacksonville.org/school

School Leadership

Pastor

Fr. Christopher Liguori

Principal

Mr. Christopher Meyer

Assistant Principal

Mrs. Athena Blanchard

VPK Director

Ms. Deborah Williams

Office Hours

School Year

Monday–Friday

7:30 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Summer

Monday–Thursday

9:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Please note that the school office is closed during All-School Masses.

Summer hours may vary during holidays or special events.

Program Hours

PreK-3

7:45 a.m.–10:45 a.m.

Morning VPK

7:45 a.m.–10:45 a.m.

Afternoon VPK

11:45 a.m.–2:45 p.m.

Families enrolled in After School Care may extend their child's day according to their selected program.

Before and After School Care

After School Care is available for families needing extended care. Options include:

- Morning VPK and PreK afternoon care
- Full evening care until 6:00 p.m.
- Drop-in care (registration required)

All After School Care fees are processed through FACTS Management.

Children picked up after 6:00 p.m. will incur a late fee.

Additional information, schedules, and fees are published annually.

Arrival

A calm, predictable morning helps children begin the day successfully. Parents should:

- arrive during the designated arrival window (7:15am-7:45am);
- say good-bye promptly;
- encourage independence as children enter the classroom;
- follow all traffic and parking procedures.

Children arriving after the instructional day begins should report through the school office before going to class.

Dismissal

Student safety is our highest priority. Children will only be released to individuals authorized by the parent or guardian. Parents must notify the school office of any dismissal changes before the published deadline whenever possible. Identification may be requested before releasing a child.

Attendance

Regular attendance is one of the most important factors in a child's early learning success. Because classroom instruction builds each day, families are encouraged to schedule vacations and appointments outside of school whenever possible.

Parents should notify the school office by 8:45 a.m. whenever a child will be absent.

Children returning after extended illnesses or certain medical conditions may be required to provide physician documentation.

Students with fever, vomiting, or diarrhea must remain home until they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours without medication.

Additional attendance requirements for students participating in Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program must also be followed in accordance with state regulations.

Tardiness

Young children thrive on routine. Arriving on time allows children to participate in morning activities, settle comfortably into the classroom, and begin the day successfully alongside their classmates. Repeated tardiness may result in conferences with school administration.

Health Requirements

Florida law requires all Early Childhood students to maintain current health documentation before attending school. Required documentation includes:

- Florida Certificate of Immunization
- Florida School Entry Health Examination

Additional medical forms may be required for children with allergies, asthma, medications, or other health concerns.

Parents are responsible for keeping all health records current throughout the school year.

Tuition and Billing

St. Patrick Catholic School partners with **FACTS Management** for tuition and fee collection.

FACTS is used for:

- tuition payments;
- enrichment fees;
- after school care.

Families may select from available payment plans offered through FACTS.

Tuition and fees are subject to the current Tuition and Fee Schedule published each school year.

Communication

Strong communication between home and school is essential to every child's success. Families should expect communication through:

- FACTS Family Portal
- Weekly "Week at a Glance" emails
- Classroom newsletters
- Teacher emails
- Parent text alerts for emergencies and important announcements

Parents are encouraged to read school communications regularly.

Parent Conferences

Teachers and parents share responsibility for helping every child succeed. Formal conferences are held during the school year, and additional conferences may be scheduled whenever needed.

Parents should always contact the classroom teacher first regarding academic, behavioral, or classroom concerns.

Please avoid discussing concerns during arrival or dismissal when teachers are supervising students.

Changes to Family Information

Please notify the school office immediately whenever there is a change to:

- home address
- telephone number
- email address
- emergency contacts
- authorized pick-up persons
- custody information

Keeping this information current allows us to respond quickly in the event of an emergency.

Admissions

St. Patrick Catholic School welcomes families who support the mission and philosophy of Catholic education. Admission is based upon available space and successful completion of the enrollment process. Requirements include:

- age eligibility;
- required health documentation;
- registration forms;
- educational records (when applicable).

Final admission decisions are made by the Principal.

A Shared Commitment

By enrolling in St. Patrick Catholic School's Early Childhood Program, families agree to work in partnership with the faculty and administration to create a safe, respectful, faith-filled learning environment where every child can thrive.

Together, we help each child build a strong foundation in **Faith, Family, and Academic Excellence.**

Section 3: Catholic Identity

"Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these.'"

Matthew 19:14

The Catholic faith is at the heart of everything we do at St. Patrick Catholic School. Our Early Childhood Program provides children with their first experiences of learning about God's love in a joyful, welcoming, and age-appropriate environment.

Faith is not limited to Religion class—it is woven throughout every part of the school day. Through prayer, stories, music, kindness, and everyday experiences, children begin to discover that God created them, loves them, and calls them to love others.

Our Catholic Mission

The mission of St. Patrick Catholic School is to lay the foundation for success in students through Catholic traditions, rooted in the Eucharist and Gospel teachings of Christ, with high standards of education in a safe, nurturing, and welcoming environment.

This mission guides every lesson, every interaction, and every decision made within our Early Childhood Program.

Faith in the Classroom

Young children learn best by experiencing faith. Each day, children will:

- begin and end the day with prayer;
- learn simple Bible stories;
- hear about the life of Jesus;
- practice kindness, forgiveness, and respect;
- learn age-appropriate Catholic traditions;
- recognize that every person is a child of God.

Teachers model Christian values through patience, compassion, encouragement, and joyful witness.

Learning About God's World

God's creation provides endless opportunities for wonder and discovery.

Children are encouraged to:

- appreciate the beauty of God's creation;
- care for the environment;
- show kindness toward others;
- respect all people;
- recognize God's presence in everyday life.

These experiences help children understand that faith is lived both inside and outside the classroom.

Prayer

Prayer is an important part of every school day. Children participate in a variety of simple prayers, including:

- Morning Prayer
- Mealtime Blessings
- Classroom Prayer
- Spontaneous Prayer
- End-of-Day Prayer

As children grow, they gradually become more comfortable praying both together and individually.

The Liturgical Year

Throughout the school year, children learn about the seasons of the Church through age-appropriate activities and celebrations. These may include:

- Advent
- Christmas
- Lent
- Easter
- Feast Days of the Saints
- Marian celebrations
- Catholic Schools Week

Through stories, crafts, music, and prayer, children begin to understand the rhythm of the Church year.

Religion Instruction

Religion is integrated naturally into the Early Childhood curriculum. Children are introduced to:

- God's love
- Jesus as our friend and Savior
- the Holy Family
- the saints
- the Church
- Christian virtues such as kindness, honesty, sharing, forgiveness, and gratitude

Instruction is developmentally appropriate and focuses on building a joyful relationship with God.

Mass and Prayer Services

Early Childhood students participate in age-appropriate liturgical celebrations throughout the school year. Whenever appropriate, students may attend school Masses or prayer services with their classes under the guidance of their teachers. Parents are always encouraged to worship together as a family and participate in the sacramental life of the Church.

Christian Virtues

One of the primary goals of our Early Childhood Program is helping children develop Christian character. Children are encouraged to practice:

- kindness
- respect
- honesty
- responsibility
- sharing
- forgiveness
- patience
- gratitude

Teachers recognize and celebrate these virtues throughout the school day.

Parents as Faith Partners

Parents are the first teachers of the Catholic faith. Our school supports families by reinforcing the values taught at home and encouraging children to grow in their relationship with God. Families are encouraged to:

- pray together daily;
- attend Mass regularly;
- celebrate the liturgical seasons at home;
- read Bible stories together;
- model Christian values through everyday actions.

When home and school work together, children develop a strong foundation of faith.

Celebrating God's Gifts

Every child has unique talents and abilities given by God. Our teachers strive to help children:

- discover their individual gifts;
- build confidence;
- appreciate the talents of others;
- use their gifts to serve God and their community.

Children learn that each person is special because they are created in the image and likeness of God.

Catholic Identity at a Glance

Every Child Will Experience... Families Can Support Faith By...

Daily prayer	Praying together at home
Bible stories	Attending Mass regularly
Christian values	Talking about God's love
Liturgical celebrations	Celebrating the Church seasons as a family
Kindness and service	Modeling forgiveness and compassion

Our Early Childhood Program plants the seeds of faith that will continue to grow throughout each child's life. Working together, families and teachers help children discover that they are loved by God, cared for by their school family, and called to share that love with others.

Section 4: Academic Program

"The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind."

— St. John Paul II

Young children learn best through active exploration, meaningful experiences, purposeful play, and positive relationships. At St. Patrick Catholic School, our Early Childhood Program provides a developmentally appropriate curriculum that nurtures each child's spiritual, social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth while laying the foundation for future academic success. Every classroom is designed to encourage curiosity, creativity, independence, confidence, and a lifelong love of learning.

Our Philosophy of Learning

We believe young children learn best when they:

- feel safe and loved;
- actively explore their environment;
- learn through play and hands-on experiences;
- ask questions and solve problems;
- develop positive relationships;
- are encouraged to grow at their own pace.

Teachers intentionally create learning experiences that encourage discovery while helping children develop the skills needed for Kindergarten and beyond.

Learning Through Play

Play is one of the most important ways young children learn. Throughout the day, children engage in purposeful play that develops:

- language skills
- problem-solving
- creativity
- cooperation
- fine motor skills
- self-confidence
- independence

Every activity has a learning purpose while still allowing children to experience the joy of childhood.

Curriculum Overview

The Early Childhood curriculum follows the standards established by the Diocese of St. Augustine and the State of Florida for preschool and Voluntary Prekindergarten programs. Instruction includes experiences in:

Learning Area

Children Develop...

Religion

Knowledge of God's love, prayer, Bible stories, and Christian values

Early Literacy

Listening, speaking, vocabulary, phonological awareness, letters, and early reading readiness

Learning Area	Children Develop...
Mathematics	Counting, patterns, shapes, sorting, measuring, and number recognition
Science	Observation, exploration, nature, weather, and discovery
Social Studies	Family, community, holidays, and the world around us
Creative Arts	Art, music, dramatic play, and self-expression
Physical Development	Large motor skills, fine motor skills, coordination, and healthy habits
Social-Emotional Learning	Friendship, sharing, self-control, independence, and problem-solving

Faith is naturally integrated throughout every learning experience.

Kindergarten Readiness

One of the primary goals of our Early Childhood Program is preparing children for a successful transition to Kindergarten. Children develop readiness skills in:

Academic Readiness

- letter recognition
- beginning sounds
- early writing
- counting
- number recognition
- patterns
- problem-solving

Social Readiness

- following directions
- taking turns
- sharing
- working with others
- listening
- classroom routines

Emotional Readiness

- independence
- self-confidence
- perseverance
- responsibility
- self-regulation

Physical Readiness

- pencil grip
- cutting
- coloring
- balance
- coordination
- self-help skills

Every child develops at his or her own pace, and readiness is viewed as growth rather than comparison.

Learning Centers

Children participate daily in a variety of classroom learning centers designed to encourage exploration and creativity. Learning centers may include:

- Reading Center
- Writing Center
- Math Center
- Science Discovery
- Art Studio
- Dramatic Play
- Blocks and Construction
- Sensory Exploration
- Fine Motor Activities

Teachers guide learning through purposeful questioning, modeling, and hands-on experiences.

Outdoor Learning

Outdoor play is an important part of the school day. Children participate in supervised outdoor activities that encourage:

- physical development
- imaginative play
- cooperation
- healthy habits
- appreciation for God's creation

Outdoor play is provided whenever weather conditions permit.

Technology

Technology is used in moderation to enhance learning and introduce children to age-appropriate digital experiences. Technology is never intended to replace:

- hands-on exploration
- teacher interaction
- imaginative play
- social development

Our goal is to provide a balanced learning environment that prioritizes active engagement and meaningful relationships.

Individual Growth

Every child enters preschool with unique experiences, strengths, and developmental needs.

Teachers observe each child's progress and provide opportunities that encourage continued growth while respecting individual learning styles and developmental readiness.

Children are encouraged to take risks, ask questions, solve problems, and celebrate new accomplishments.

Assessment

Assessment in the Early Childhood Program is ongoing and developmentally appropriate. Teachers use a variety of methods, including:

- classroom observations;
- student work samples;
- developmental checklists;
- individual conversations;
- portfolio collections.

Assessment is used to guide instruction and celebrate each child's progress.

Family Communication

Parents are partners in their child's learning. Teachers communicate regularly regarding:

- classroom activities
- developmental progress
- social growth
- learning milestones
- upcoming events

Parent conferences provide opportunities to discuss each child's strengths and continued growth.

Preparing for Kindergarten

By the end of the Early Childhood Program, our goal is for every child to demonstrate confidence as a learner while being prepared academically, socially, emotionally, spiritually, and physically for Kindergarten. Children leave our program with:

- curiosity about learning;
- confidence in themselves;
- beginning academic readiness skills;
- friendships built on kindness and respect;
- a growing relationship with God.

Our Early Childhood Curriculum at a Glance

Every Child Will Experience... Every Classroom Provides...

Hands-on learning	Caring, qualified teachers
Purposeful play	Developmentally appropriate instruction
Daily prayer	Safe, nurturing classrooms
Music, art, and movement	Opportunities for exploration
Outdoor play	Individual encouragement
Kindergarten readiness	Joyful learning experiences

Section 5: Student Growth & Development

Every child grows, learns, and develops at a unique pace. At St. Patrick Catholic School, we celebrate each child's individual progress while providing the guidance, encouragement, and experiences needed to help them become confident, capable learners. Our goal is not to compare children to one another, but to help every child reach his or her God-given potential.

Our Philosophy of Assessment

Young children demonstrate learning in many different ways. Rather than relying on grades or traditional tests, teachers observe children as they:

- explore
- play
- create
- communicate
- solve problems
- interact with others
- participate in classroom activities

Assessment helps teachers understand each child's strengths while planning experiences that encourage continued growth.

How We Assess Learning

Teachers use a variety of developmentally appropriate assessment methods throughout the school year. These include:

- classroom observations
- work samples
- anecdotal notes
- individual conversations
- classroom participation

Assessment is ongoing and occurs naturally as children learn.

Areas of Growth

Children are observed and supported in several important developmental areas.

Area	Examples of Growth
Faith Development	Prayer, kindness, respect, understanding God's love
Language & Literacy	Listening, speaking, vocabulary, early reading readiness
Mathematics	Counting, patterns, shapes, sorting, number recognition
Cognitive Development	Curiosity, problem-solving, reasoning, memory
Social-Emotional Development	Cooperation, sharing, self-control, independence
Physical Development	Fine motor skills, large motor skills, coordination, self-help skills
Creativity	Art, music, dramatic play, imagination

Teachers celebrate progress in all developmental areas—not just academic readiness.

Developmental Progress

Children develop at different rates. Some children master skills quickly, while others benefit from additional time, practice, and encouragement. Individual differences are expected and respected throughout the preschool years. Our teachers work closely with families to support each child's continued development.

VPK Progress Monitoring

Students enrolled in Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program participate in state-required progress monitoring assessments as established by the Florida Department of Education.

These assessments help teachers:

- monitor learning;
- identify areas needing additional support;
- guide classroom instruction;
- prepare children for Kindergarten.

Assessment results are shared with families and are used to support student growth—not to label or compare children.

Parent Conferences

Parents are valuable partners in their child's development. Formal parent conferences are held during the school year to discuss:

- developmental progress
- classroom experiences
- strengths
- areas for continued growth
- Kindergarten readiness

Additional conferences may be scheduled whenever parents or teachers feel they would be beneficial.

Open communication between home and school is encouraged throughout the year.

Supporting Individual Growth

Teachers intentionally adapt instruction to meet the developmental needs of each child. Support may include:

- small-group instruction
- individualized learning activities
- additional practice opportunities
- enrichment experiences
- collaboration with families

When developmental concerns arise, teachers will communicate openly with parents and, when appropriate, recommend additional resources that may benefit the child.

Kindergarten Readiness

Preparing children for Kindergarten is one of the primary goals of our Early Childhood Program.

Kindergarten readiness includes growth in:

Academic Skills

- recognizing letters and numbers
- early writing
- listening and following directions
- beginning problem-solving

Social Skills

- sharing
- cooperation
- independence
- self-confidence
- classroom routines

Emotional Skills

- managing emotions
- perseverance
- responsibility
- flexibility

Physical Skills

- cutting
- coloring
- pencil control
- balance and coordination
- self-help skills

Readiness is viewed as the development of the whole child rather than the mastery of isolated academic skills.

Transition to Kindergarten

Throughout the school year, teachers intentionally help children develop the confidence and independence needed for a successful transition into Kindergarten. Children are encouraged to:

- work independently
- make responsible choices
- solve simple problems
- develop friendships
- communicate their needs appropriately
- enjoy learning

By the end of the year, children are well prepared to take the next step in their educational journey.

Student Growth at a Glance

Our Teachers...

Observe learning every day
Celebrate individual growth
Communicate regularly with families
Provide encouragement and support
Foster a love of learning

Your Child...

Learns through play and exploration
Develops confidence and independence
Builds Kindergarten readiness skills
Grows spiritually, socially, emotionally, and academically
Is valued as a unique child of God

Section 6: Student Conduct & Positive Guidance

"Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, as God has forgiven you in Christ."

Ephesians 4:32

At St. Patrick Catholic School, we believe that every child is created in the image and likeness of God and deserves to be treated with dignity, patience, love, and respect. The preschool years are a time for learning—not only letters and numbers—but also how to make friends, express emotions, solve problems, and treat others with kindness. Our approach to discipline focuses on teaching appropriate behavior rather than simply correcting inappropriate behavior.

Our Philosophy of Positive Guidance

Young children are still learning:

- how to share;
- how to manage emotions;
- how to solve problems peacefully;
- how to follow directions;
- how to express frustration appropriately;
- how to become responsible members of a classroom community.

Teachers view mistakes as opportunities for learning and growth.

Positive guidance helps children develop self-control, confidence, responsibility, and respect for others.

Our Behavioral Expectations

Children are encouraged to:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| • use kind words | • keep hands, feet, and objects to themselves |
| • listen to teachers and other adults | • use safe choices both indoors and outdoors |
| • follow classroom directions | • show kindness and forgiveness |
| • treat classmates with respect | |
| • care for classroom materials | |

These expectations are taught, practiced, modeled, and reinforced throughout the school day.

Positive Guidance Strategies

Teachers use developmentally appropriate guidance techniques that help children learn positive behaviors. These may include:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| • redirection; | • natural and logical consequences; |
| • gentle reminders; | • helping children identify and express feelings appropriately; |
| • modeling appropriate behavior; | • brief calming or reflection time when needed. |
| • offering choices; | |
| • encouragement and praise; | |
| • problem-solving discussions; | |

Children are never disciplined through humiliation, ridicule, or corporal punishment.

Helping Children Resolve Conflicts

Conflict is a normal part of early childhood development. Teachers help children learn to:

- use words instead of actions
- listen to others
- apologize sincerely
- forgive
- take turns
- solve simple problems together
- rebuild friendships after disagreements

These important life skills help children develop healthy relationships that will serve them well beyond preschool.

Partnering with Families

Parents and teachers share responsibility for helping children develop positive behaviors. When behavioral concerns arise, teachers will:

- communicate with parents promptly;
- work together to identify strategies;
- provide consistent expectations between home and school whenever possible;
- celebrate progress as children develop new skills.

Open communication allows children to experience consistency and encouragement in every environment.

Individual Behavior Support

Some children may need additional support as they develop social-emotional skills. When appropriate, teachers and administration may:

- observe classroom behaviors;
- implement individualized strategies;
- develop a behavior support plan;
- schedule parent conferences;
- recommend outside resources when appropriate.

Our goal is always to help children experience success while supporting the needs of the entire classroom community.

Serious Behavioral Concerns

The safety and well-being of every child is our highest priority. While most behavioral challenges are resolved through positive guidance and parent partnership, some behaviors require additional intervention. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- behavior that places the child or others at risk of injury;
- repeated aggressive behavior toward classmates or staff;
- persistent destruction of school property;
- repeated inability to participate safely in the classroom environment.

When these concerns arise, the school will:

1. document the behavior;
2. communicate with parents;
3. meet with the family to discuss concerns;
4. implement appropriate interventions or behavior supports whenever possible;
5. determine whether the program can continue to meet the child's needs safely and effectively.

Withdrawal or Dismissal

St. Patrick Catholic School is committed to helping every child succeed. Occasionally, despite collaborative efforts between home and school, the administration may determine that the Early Childhood Program is unable to meet a child's developmental, behavioral, emotional, or educational needs while maintaining a safe learning environment for all students. In these rare situations, the administration may recommend withdrawal or dismiss a child from the program.

Such decisions are made prayerfully, individually, and only after careful consideration of the child's needs and the well-being of the entire school community. *The Principal's decision regarding continued enrollment is final.*

Bullying

Because children in the Early Childhood Program are still developing social and emotional skills, disagreements and conflicts are generally viewed as opportunities for learning rather than intentional bullying. However, repeated behaviors intended to hurt, intimidate, or exclude another child will be addressed promptly through positive guidance, parent communication, and appropriate intervention. Parents are encouraged to report concerns to the classroom teacher or administration as soon as possible.

Respect for School Property

Children are taught to care for:

- classroom materials
- books
- toys
- playground equipment
- school furniture
- learning centers

Parents may be responsible for replacing or repairing property intentionally damaged by their child.

Positive Guidance at a Glance

We Teach Children To...

Be kind and respectful

Solve problems peacefully

Follow directions

Teachers Support By...

Modeling Christian behavior

Guiding conversations

Providing consistent routines

We Teach Children To...

Take responsibility

Show self-control

Grow in virtue

Teachers Support By...

Using natural consequences

Encouraging positive choices

Celebrating successes

Section 7: Uniforms & Student Appearance

"Whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God."

1 Corinthians 10:31

School uniforms promote a sense of belonging, school pride, equality, and readiness to learn. For our youngest students, uniforms also provide comfort and simplicity while allowing children to participate safely in classroom activities, outdoor play, physical education, and creative exploration. Students should arrive at school each day clean, neatly groomed, and dressed in the appropriate St. Patrick Catholic School uniform.

Uniform Supplier

Official school uniforms must be purchased through:

Risse Brothers School Uniforms

8595 Beach Boulevard, Suite 324

Jacksonville, FL 32216

(904) 374-5317

www.rissebrothers.com

Daily Uniform Requirements

Girls (PreK-3 & VPK)

Students may wear **either** of the following:

Option 1

- Green embroidered polo dress
- "Biker" shorts worn underneath the dress
- Crew socks (white, navy, or black preferred)
- Athletic sneakers

Option 2

- Green embroidered polo shirt
- Khaki shorts or khaki pants (Risse Brothers)
- Crew socks (white, navy, or black preferred)
- Athletic sneakers

Cold Weather

Girls may wear:

- black, white, or navy tights
- sweatpants over the uniform when weather requires

Leggings and compression pants are not part of the school uniform.

Boys (PreK-3 & VPK)

Students wear:

- Green embroidered polo shirt
- Khaki shorts (warm weather) or khaki pants (Risse Brothers)
- Crew socks (white, navy, or black preferred)
- Athletic sneakers

Shoes

Because children participate in active learning throughout the day, proper footwear is essential.

Students must wear:

- closed-toe athletic sneakers;
- secure shoes appropriate for running and climbing.

Velcro shoes or elastic laces are encouraged for children who are still learning to tie their shoes.

For safety reasons, the following are **not permitted**:

- light-up shoes;
- sandals;
- Crocs;
- boots (unless approved for weather-related circumstances);
- open-back shoes.

Outerwear

PreK-3 and VPK students may wear:

- school sweaters;
- school sweatshirts;
- school fleece;
- or other solid-colored jackets appropriate for the weather.

Because young children spend time outdoors each day, families are encouraged to send jackets during cooler weather.

Please label all outerwear with your child's name.

Physical Education

PreK-3 and VPK students participate in Physical Education while wearing their regular school uniform. No separate PE uniform is required. Students should always wear athletic shoes on PE days.

Irish Spirit Days

Throughout the school year, students may participate in designated Irish Spirit Days.

Students may wear:

- official St. Patrick Catholic School Spirit Wear shirt;
- regular uniform shorts or pants;
- regular school athletic shoes.

Spirit Wear shirts are available through the school's approved Spirit Store.

No Uniform Today (NUT) / Dress-Out Days

From time to time, students may participate in designated No Uniform Today (NUT) or Dress-Out Days. Appropriate attire includes:

Students May Wear

- jeans without holes or tears;
- modest shorts;
- skirts or dresses of appropriate length;
- T-shirts with appropriate messages;
- sweatshirts;
- athletic clothing suitable for school activities;
- athletic sneakers.

Students May Not Wear

- clothing with inappropriate language or images;
- tank tops or spaghetti straps;
- extremely tight clothing;
- ripped or torn jeans;
- leggings worn as pants;
- pajamas;
- hats inside the building (unless approved);
- sandals, Crocs, or unsafe footwear.

The administration reserves the right to determine whether clothing is appropriate for school. Students who are not dressed appropriately may be asked to change into acceptable attire before participating in the school day.

Student Appearance

Students should come to school each day:

- clean and neatly groomed;
- dressed appropriately for school activities;
- ready to learn.

Hair should be kept neat and should not interfere with learning or safety, including having adornments, such as beads, that might interfere with the classroom environment.

For safety and comfort, no jewelry should be worn.

Earrings or accessories that could interfere with classroom activities or playground safety should not be worn.

Because preschool is an active learning environment, children should avoid bringing decorative accessories that could become lost or damaged.

Label Personal Belongings

Please clearly label all personal items with your child's name, including:

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| • sweaters | • water bottles |
| • jackets | • hats |
| • lunch boxes | • extra clothing |
| • backpacks | |

Labeling belongings greatly increases the likelihood that lost items will be returned.

Uniform Quick Reference

Item	Requirement
Polo Shirt	Official embroidered green St. Patrick polo
Bottoms	Khaki shorts or pants (Risse Brothers)
Girls' Dress	Green embroidered polo dress with biker shorts
Shoes	Closed-toe athletic sneakers
Socks	Crew socks (white, navy, or black preferred)
PE	Regular school uniform
Spirit Days	Official Spirit Wear shirt with uniform bottoms
NUT Days	School-appropriate casual clothing and athletic shoes

Section 8: Student Enrichment

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord."

Colossians 3:23

Learning extends far beyond the classroom. At St. Patrick Catholic School, our Early Childhood Program provides opportunities for children to explore new interests, build friendships, develop confidence, and discover the unique gifts God has given them. Through enrichment activities, celebrations, and special events, children experience the joy of learning while becoming active members of our school family.

Enrichment Opportunities

Throughout the school year, students participate in a variety of age-appropriate enrichment experiences designed to support the development of the whole child. These opportunities complement the classroom curriculum by encouraging:

- creativity;
- physical development;
- confidence;
- cooperation;
- curiosity;
- joyful learning.

Program offerings may vary from year to year.

Soccer Shots

Soccer Shots is an optional enrichment program offered on campus during the school year. The program introduces children to the fundamentals of soccer while promoting:

- coordination
- balance
- teamwork
- listening skills
- confidence
- sportsmanship

Activities are developmentally appropriate and emphasize fun, encouragement, and positive participation.

Registration, schedules, and fees are provided separately by Soccer Shots.

Dance Program

Oceanway Dance Studio offers an optional dance enrichment program on campus during the school year. Children participate in age-appropriate movement activities that encourage:

- rhythm
- coordination
- balance
- creativity
- self-expression
- confidence

Registration and fee information are provided separately by Oceanway Dance Studio.

Special School Events

One of the joys of preschool is celebrating together as a school family. Throughout the year, children participate in a variety of special events that may include:

- Catholic Schools Week
- Grandparents Day
- Advent celebrations
- Christmas activities
- St. Patrick's Day activities
- Easter activities
- Field Day
- Color Run
- Classroom celebrations
- Family events
- Special visitors and presentations

These experiences help create joyful memories while strengthening our school community.

Learning Beyond the Classroom

Children may participate in age-appropriate educational experiences outside the classroom. These opportunities may include:

- nature walks
- special presentations
- classroom visitors
- educational performances
- campus activities
- field trips

Parents will receive advance notice whenever permission or additional information is required.

Field Trips

Field trips provide meaningful opportunities to extend classroom learning through real-world experiences. Participation requires:

- a completed permission form;
- compliance with school behavior expectations;
- appropriate supervision.

Parents may be invited to volunteer for selected field trips in accordance with diocesan Safe Environment requirements.

The administration reserves the right to determine student participation when safety or behavioral concerns exist.

Birthdays & Classroom Celebrations

Birthdays are special milestones and are celebrated in age-appropriate ways. Families wishing to provide treats should:

- coordinate with the classroom teacher in advance;
- provide commercially prepared food items;
- follow all classroom allergy and health guidelines.

Birthday celebrations should be simple and should not interrupt classroom instruction.

Private party invitations may be distributed at school only if every child in the class or every child of the same gender is invited.

Family Events

Families are an important part of the St. Patrick Catholic School community. Throughout the school year, families are invited to participate in activities such as:

- Family Nights
- Christmas programs
- Grandparents Day
- School fundraisers
- Classroom celebrations
- Volunteer opportunities

These events strengthen the partnership between home and school while creating lasting memories for our students.

Student Participation

Students participating in enrichment programs or school activities are expected to:

- follow teacher directions;
- demonstrate kindness and respect;
- use safe behavior;
- care for school equipment;
- represent St. Patrick Catholic School positively.

Participation in optional enrichment programs is a privilege and may be limited if a student's behavior creates safety concerns.

Student Enrichment at a Glance

Every Child Can Experience...

Soccer Shots (optional)

Dance Classes (optional)

Field Trips

Special School Events

Family Activities

Classroom Celebrations

Children Learn To...

Cooperate with others

Build confidence

Explore new interests

Celebrate school traditions

Grow socially and emotionally

Experience the joy of learning

Many of our students' favorite memories are made outside of the daily classroom routine.

From celebrating Catholic Schools Week to enjoying Christmas performances, Field Day, and family events, these traditions help children build friendships, strengthen their faith, and experience the joy of belonging to the St. Patrick Catholic School family.

Our goal is for every child to leave our Early Childhood Program with happy memories, growing confidence, lasting friendships, and a love of learning that will continue throughout their educational journey.

Section 9: Health, Safety & Student Welfare

"The Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore."

Psalms 121:8

At St. Patrick Catholic School, the health, safety, and well-being of every child are our highest priorities. Our Early Childhood Program provides a safe, nurturing environment where children are supervised, encouraged, and cared for throughout each school day. We are committed to maintaining practices that protect every child's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being while partnering closely with families to ensure each child receives the care they need.

Our Commitment to Safety

Every member of our faculty and staff shares responsibility for providing a safe learning environment. Our program includes:

- secure arrival and dismissal procedures;
- continuous adult supervision;
- age-appropriate playground safety;
- emergency preparedness drills;
- Safe Environment practices required by the Diocese of St. Augustine;
- regular health and sanitation procedures;
- secure visitor procedures.

Children are supervised at all times while participating in school activities.

Required Health Records

Florida law requires that all children have current health documentation before attending school.

Required records include:

Required Documentation

Florida Certificate of Immunization

Florida School Entry Health Examination

Emergency Contact Information

Allergy and Medical Information

Medication Authorization Forms (when applicable)

Children may not attend school until all required documentation has been received unless otherwise permitted by Florida law.

Parents are responsible for updating health information whenever changes occur.

Daily Health Screening

Parents are asked to assess their child's health each morning before arriving at school.

Please keep your child home if he or she has:

- a fever;

- vomiting;
- diarrhea;
- unexplained rash;
- persistent cough accompanied by illness;
- contagious illness;
- symptoms that prevent comfortable participation in classroom activities.

Keeping sick children home helps protect the health of our entire school community.

Returning to School After Illness

Children may return to school when they are:

- fever-free for at least **24 hours without fever-reducing medication**;
- free from vomiting for **24 hours**;
- free from diarrhea for **24 hours**;
- cleared by a healthcare provider when required.

The administration reserves the right to request medical documentation before a child returns following certain illnesses.

Medication

Whenever possible, medication should be administered at home.

If medication must be given during school hours:

- it must be delivered to the school office by a parent or guardian;
- it must remain in its original prescription or manufacturer's container;
- all required authorization forms must be completed before medication can be administered.

Children may not transport medication in backpacks or lunch boxes.

Allergies & Medical Conditions

Parents must notify the school of any medical condition that could affect their child's health or safety. Examples include:

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| • food allergies | • seizure disorders |
| • asthma | • chronic illnesses |
| • diabetes | • other medical concerns requiring accommodations |

When appropriate, individualized health plans will be developed in partnership with the family and healthcare provider.

Diapering & Toileting

Children are encouraged to develop independence with toileting at their own developmental pace.

Families should provide extra clothing, as well as wipes (if requested by the classroom).

Teachers assist children respectfully and maintain appropriate hygiene practices.

Parents will be notified when additional clothing or supplies are needed.

Accidents & Minor Injuries

Minor bumps and scrapes are a normal part of childhood exploration. When injuries occur:

- immediate first aid will be provided;
- parents will be notified when appropriate;
- emergency medical services will be contacted when necessary.

If parents cannot be reached during a medical emergency, the school will act in the best interest of the child by seeking emergency medical treatment.

Emergency Preparedness

The school maintains comprehensive emergency plans for situations including:

- fire
- severe weather
- lockdowns
- evacuations
- medical emergencies
- other emergency situations

Children participate in age-appropriate safety drills throughout the school year in accordance with Florida law. Teachers carefully prepare students for drills using reassuring, age-appropriate language.

Visitors

To protect our students:

- all visitors must report to the school office;
- visitors must present identification upon request;
- visitors must sign in before entering campus;
- visitors must wear visitor identification while on campus.

Parents should not enter classrooms during instructional time without prior approval.

Emergency Information

Parents must immediately notify the school of changes to:

- home address
- telephone numbers
- emergency contacts
- employment information
- custody arrangements
- medical information

Accurate emergency information is essential to student safety.

If custody arrangements change during the school year, parents must provide updated court documentation to the school office immediately. Until official documentation is received, the school will continue to operate according to the most recent legal documents on file.

Custody Arrangements

St. Patrick Catholic School recognizes that family circumstances vary and is committed to supporting all students and their families with fairness, compassion, and respect. Our primary

responsibility is to ensure the safety, security, and well-being of every child while complying with applicable laws and court orders.

Custody Documentation

Parents are responsible for providing the school with complete and current legal documentation regarding custody arrangements. When applicable, families must provide:

- a copy of the current court order or custody agreement;
- parenting plans or time-sharing schedules;
- any court orders affecting parental rights, communication, or student release;
- updated documentation whenever changes occur.

The school cannot enforce custody arrangements that have not been documented through official court orders.

Authorized Pick-Up & Emergency Contacts

For students from divided or shared households, both parents are expected to collaborate in completing the school's **Authorized Pick-Up and Emergency Contact Form** whenever legally permitted.

Unless a court order specifically limits parental rights:

- both parents should review and sign the Authorized Pick-Up and Emergency Contact Form;
- both parents may designate individuals authorized to pick up their child;
- both parents are responsible for keeping emergency contact information current.

Any changes to authorized pick-up persons must be submitted in writing to the school office.

School Communication

Unless prohibited by a court order, both parents have the right to receive:

- school communications;
- report cards and academic information;
- conference opportunities;
- school event information;
- emergency notifications.

Parents are encouraged to communicate respectfully with one another regarding school-related matters to promote consistency and stability for their child.

Student Release

Students will be released only to:

- a parent or legal guardian whose rights have not been restricted by a court order; or
- an individual listed on the student's current Authorized Pick-Up Form.

The school will follow all valid court orders regarding custody and student release that have been provided to the administration.

Custody Disputes

St. Patrick Catholic School does not serve as an intermediary or decision-maker in custody disputes between parents. The school does not favor one parent over another and will not interpret legal documents beyond their clear direction.

Our focus remains on the safety, welfare, and educational success of the child while supporting both parents as valued members of our school family whenever legally appropriate.

Parents are expected to resolve custody disagreements through appropriate legal channels rather than involving school personnel. School staff may rely upon the most recent court documentation provided by the parents when making decisions regarding student release and access to educational information.

The Principal reserves the right to consult legal counsel or the Diocese of St. Augustine whenever questions arise regarding the interpretation or implementation of custody-related court orders.

Child Abuse Reporting

Florida law requires all school personnel to report suspected child abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Faculty and staff are mandatory reporters and comply with all state reporting requirements. The safety and protection of every child remain our highest priority.

Safe Environment

St. Patrick Catholic School follows all Safe Environment policies established by the Diocese of St. Augustine. All employees and volunteers who work with children must complete required Safe Environment training and background screening before serving with students. These requirements help provide a safe and secure environment for every child entrusted to our care.

Student Welfare

Every child deserves to feel safe, valued, and respected.

Teachers intentionally create classrooms where children learn to:

- treat others with kindness
- include classmates
- express feelings appropriately
- solve problems peacefully
- seek help from trusted adults whenever needed

Children are encouraged to speak with their teacher whenever something makes them feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Health & Safety at a Glance

Families Help By...

Keeping sick children home
Updating emergency information
Providing current medical forms
Following medication procedures
Keeping custody documentation current

We Promise To...

Provide a safe, nurturing environment
Supervise children throughout the day
Communicate promptly with families
Respond quickly to emergencies
Protect every child's dignity and well-being



When Should My Child Stay Home?

Help keep our school community healthy! Please use the guidelines below to determine when your child should stay home and when they may return to school.



SYMPTOM	KEEP HOME?	RETURN WHEN
 Fever (100.4°F or higher)	 Yes	 Fever-free 24 hours without medication
 Vomiting	 Yes	 24 hours after the last episode
 Diarrhea	 Yes	 24 hours after the last episode
 Persistent cough with fever	 Yes	 When symptoms improve and, if required, cleared by a healthcare provider
 Pink Eye (conjunctivitis)	Follow physician guidance	 As directed
 Rash	Until evaluated if contagious suspected	 As advised
 Head lice	Follow school guidance	 After appropriate treatment and clearance, if required
 Minor cold (no fever)	 Usually no	 Student should be well enough to participate in class



Thank you for helping us keep our students and staff healthy!
If you have questions, please contact the school office.



Section 10: Tuition & Financial Policies

"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart... for God loves a cheerful giver."

2 Corinthians 9:7

St. Patrick Catholic School is grateful for the trust families place in our Early Childhood Program. Tuition and fees support the high-quality Catholic education, nurturing environment, and enriching experiences that help our youngest learners grow in faith, knowledge, and confidence. Our goal is to provide excellent stewardship of the resources entrusted to us while maintaining a strong partnership with every family.

Tuition & Fees

Tuition and fees are established annually by the Pastor and Principal.

Current tuition rates, fees, scholarship information, and After School Care rates are published annually by the school administration and are communicated to families at the end of January (before re-enrollment begins). Updated tuition rates, fees, scholarship information and After School Care rates are maintained on the school's website.

The current Tuition & Fee Schedule is published each year and includes:

	PreK-3	Half-Day VPK	Full-Day VPK
Registration Fee	\$250	Paid by Florida ELC	Paid by Florida ELC
Tuition	\$3,995	Paid by Florida ELC	\$4,389 (wrap-around)
Home and School Fee	\$25	Paid by Florida ELC	\$25 (part of wrap-around)

Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK)

St. Patrick Catholic School proudly participates in Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Education Program. Eligible four-year-old students may participate using a VPK Certificate issued by the State of Florida. Families participating in the VPK Program are responsible for:

- completing all state registration requirements;
- maintaining eligibility throughout the school year;
- complying with attendance requirements established by the Florida Department of Education;
- completing required VPK assessments and documentation.

Additional enrichment tuition may apply for extended-day programming beyond the state-funded instructional hours (wrap-around fee).

Registration & Enrollment

Enrollment is complete when all required items have been received, including:

- registration forms
- health documentation
- emergency contact information
- tuition agreement
- FACTS enrollment (when applicable)
- registration fee

Enrollment is subject to available classroom space and administrative approval.

Tuition Payments

St. Patrick Catholic School partners with **FACTS Management** for tuition collection. FACTS is used for:

- tuition payments
- registration and activity fees
- After School Care charges
- incidental billing

Families may choose from available payment plans established each year.

Parents are responsible for maintaining current payment information within their FACTS account.

Financial Responsibility

Parents or legal guardians who sign the Enrollment Agreement accept responsibility for all tuition, fees, and other financial obligations associated with their child's enrollment. Financial responsibility is governed by the signed Enrollment Agreement and is not altered by:

- student absences
- illness
- family schedule changes
- withdrawal during the school year
- custody arrangements

Parents with shared custody remain jointly responsible for financial obligations unless otherwise agreed to by the school in writing.

Late Payments

Tuition payments are expected according to the selected FACTS payment schedule.

Accounts that become delinquent may be subject to:

- late payment fees assessed by FACTS;
- meetings with the Business Office;
- interruption of enrollment for the following school year;
- other actions consistent with the Enrollment Agreement.

Families experiencing temporary financial hardship are encouraged to contact the Business Office promptly. We are committed to working compassionately with families whenever possible.

Returned Payments

Returned checks or declined electronic payments may result in additional processing fees.

Repeated returned payments may require future payments to be made by certified funds or other approved methods.

After School Care

Families enrolled in After School Care are responsible for all applicable program fees.

Current rates, hours of operation, and late pick-up charges are published annually.

Outstanding balances for After School Care are considered part of the family's school account.

Withdrawal from the Program

Families planning to withdraw their child should notify the Principal in writing as soon as possible. Withdrawal from the Early Childhood Program does not automatically release a family from financial obligations outlined in the Enrollment Agreement. Refunds, if applicable, will be determined according to the terms of the Enrollment Agreement.

Outstanding Financial Obligations

Families with outstanding balances may be unable to:

- register for the following school year;
- receive certain school records where permitted by law;
- continue enrollment in the Early Childhood Program.

The school reserves the right to pursue collection of unpaid balances as outlined in the Enrollment Agreement.

Tuition & Financial Policies at a Glance

Families Agree To...	The School Commits To...
Pay tuition according to the Enrollment Agreement	Provide a safe, nurturing Catholic learning environment
Keep FACTS information current	Communicate financial expectations clearly
Notify the Business Office of financial concerns promptly	Steward school resources responsibly
Complete VPK requirements (when applicable)	Support families through open communication and partnership

Section 11: Admissions & Enrollment

Admissions Philosophy

St. Patrick Catholic School welcomes families who desire a Christ-centered education rooted in the Catholic faith and committed to academic excellence. Admission is based upon the school's ability to meet the educational, behavioral, and developmental needs of each student, as well as the family's willingness to support the mission, philosophy, policies, and expectations of the school. Enrollment at St. Patrick Catholic School is a privilege, not a right.

Admission to St. Patrick Catholic School represents a commitment by both the school and the family to work together in a spirit of mutual respect, open communication, and shared responsibility for the education and formation of the child.

Non-Discrimination Policy

St. Patrick Catholic School admits qualified students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school. The school does not discriminate in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletic programs, or other school-administered activities, except as permitted by applicable law and diocesan policy.

Admissions Process

Families seeking admission should complete the school's application process and submit all required documentation. Depending on the student's grade level and educational background, the admissions process may include:

- Campus tour
- Student shadow day (when appropriate)
- Review of academic and behavioral records
- Entrance assessment (Grades 2–8)
- Parent and/or student interview
- Review of educational evaluations, support plans, or other documentation, when applicable

Admission is not considered final until all required documentation has been received, reviewed, and approved by the school administration.

Required Enrollment Documents

Prior to enrollment, families must provide all required records, including, when applicable:

- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Baptismal Certificate (Catholic students)
- Florida Certificate of Immunization (DH 680)
- Florida School Entry Health Examination (DH 3040)

- Previous report cards and standardized test scores (if applicable)
- Academic transcripts (if applicable)
- Custody documentation (if applicable)
- Any Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, psychological evaluation, educational testing, behavior plan, or other documentation related to the student's educational needs

Parents are expected to provide complete and accurate information regarding a student's academic, behavioral, disciplinary, medical, and psychological history during the admissions process. Failure to disclose relevant information may result in the denial or revocation of enrollment.

Student Support Services

Students who have an IEP, Section 504 Plan, Service Plan, or other educational accommodations will have their documentation reviewed before admission to determine whether St. Patrick Catholic School can reasonably meet the student's educational needs.

As a parentally placed private school, St. Patrick Catholic School is not required to implement an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan in the same manner as a public school. When appropriate, the school may develop a Student Support Plan that outlines the accommodations and services the school is able to provide.

Admission decisions are based upon the school's ability to provide an appropriate educational program while maintaining the integrity of its instructional mission.

Age Requirements

Students must meet the age requirements established by the State of Florida for admission.

- VPK students must be four (4) years of age on or before September 1.
 - If a child's fourth birthday falls between February 2 and September 1, parents can choose to skip VPK that year. They can wait and enroll the child the following year when the child turns 5.
-

Admissions Priority

When space is limited, admission is granted in the following order:

1. Siblings of currently enrolled students and children of faculty and staff
2. Registered members of St. Patrick Catholic Church
3. Registered members of other Catholic parishes
4. Other qualified applicants

Admission is subject to available space and the school's ability to meet the needs of the student.

Probationary Enrollment

All newly enrolled students are admitted on a 45-school-day probationary period. During this time, the administration will evaluate the student's academic progress, attendance, behavior, and overall adjustment to St. Patrick Catholic School.

The school reserves the right to discontinue enrollment during or at the conclusion of the probationary period if it determines that the student's needs cannot be appropriately met, the student or family is not meeting school expectations, or continued enrollment is not in the best interest of the student or the school community.

Continued Enrollment

Enrollment at St. Patrick Catholic School is renewed annually and is contingent upon:

- Continued support of the school's mission and philosophy
- Satisfactory academic progress
- Appropriate student conduct and attendance
- Compliance with school policies and procedures
- Timely fulfillment of tuition and financial obligations
- Ongoing cooperation between the school and the family

The Principal reserves the right, in consultation with the Pastor when appropriate, to deny admission, placement, re-enrollment, or require the withdrawal of a student in accordance with diocesan policy when continued enrollment is determined not to be in the best interest of the student, the school, or the school community.

Section 12: Parent Partnership

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

Proverbs 22:6

At St. Patrick Catholic School, we believe that parents are a child's first and most important teachers. During the preschool years especially, children thrive when home and school work together with trust, open communication, and shared expectations. Our Early Childhood Program is built upon a partnership rooted in faith, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to helping every child grow spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. Together, we create a joyful learning environment where children feel safe, loved, and encouraged every day.

Parents as First Teachers

The Catholic Church teaches that parents are the primary educators of their children. Our teachers have the privilege of partnering with families by building upon the values, routines, and experiences children receive at home. Together we help children:

- grow in their relationship with God
- develop a love of learning
- become confident and independent
- build friendships
- practice kindness and respect
- prepare for Kindergarten

When home and school work together, children experience consistency, security, and success.

Our Shared Commitment

Families...

Encourage a love of learning

Support school policies

Communicate openly and respectfully

Reinforce positive behavior at home

Participate in school life whenever possible

St. Patrick Catholic School...

Provides a safe, nurturing environment

Offers a developmentally appropriate Catholic education

Maintains open communication with families

Encourages each child's individual growth

Treats every child with dignity, patience, and love

Communication

Strong communication is one of the most important parts of a successful preschool experience.

Families can expect communication through:

- FACTS Family Portal
- classroom newsletters
- weekly "Week at a Glance" emails
- teacher emails
- parent conferences
- school website
- emergency text and email notifications

Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher whenever questions or concerns arise. Whenever possible, concerns should first be discussed with the classroom teacher before being referred to the administration.

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences provide valuable opportunities to celebrate each child's growth and discuss future goals. Formal conferences are scheduled during the school year, and additional meetings may be arranged whenever requested by a parent or teacher.

Because teachers supervise students during arrival and dismissal, parents are asked to schedule conferences rather than discussing concerns during these busy times.

Supporting Learning at Home

Children benefit greatly when learning continues beyond the classroom. Families are encouraged to:

- read together every day;
- pray together as a family;
- establish consistent bedtime routines;
- encourage independence with dressing, toileting, and self-help skills;
- talk about each day's learning experiences;
- celebrate effort and perseverance.

Small daily routines at home have a lasting impact on a child's confidence and success.

Parent Conduct

Parents and visitors are expected to model the Christian values we teach our students. Families are asked to:

- treat faculty, staff, volunteers, and other families with kindness and respect;
- communicate concerns constructively;
- support classroom expectations;
- avoid discussing disagreements in the presence of children;
- follow school procedures and policies.

Positive relationships between adults help children feel safe and secure.

Harassment, threatening behavior, intimidation, or disruptive conduct toward members of the school community is inconsistent with the mission of St. Patrick Catholic School and may result in restrictions on campus access or other appropriate action.

Volunteers

Parent volunteers play an important role in strengthening our Early Childhood Program. Volunteer opportunities may include:

- classroom assistance
- family celebrations
- special events
- Home & School Association activities

- field trips
- school fundraising events

Volunteer opportunities vary throughout the school year.

Safe Environment Requirements

To ensure the safety of every child, all volunteers must comply with the Safe Environment requirements established by the Diocese of St. Augustine.

Requirements include:

- successful background screening;
- completion of required Safe Environment training;
- compliance with all diocesan child protection policies.

Only approved volunteers may supervise children or participate in activities requiring clearance.

Home & School Association

The Home & School Association (HSA) supports the mission of St. Patrick Catholic School by strengthening the partnership between families and the school. Parents are encouraged to participate in HSA activities whenever possible. HSA helps support:

- family events;
- classroom activities;
- teacher appreciation;
- fundraising;
- school traditions;
- community-building opportunities.

Family Events

Families are invited to participate in many school events throughout the year. These opportunities may include:

- Grandparents Day;
- Christmas performances;
- Catholic Schools Week;
- family nights;
- classroom celebrations;
- volunteer opportunities.

These experiences strengthen relationships between home, school, and parish while creating lasting memories for our children.

Partnership During Family Changes

We recognize that family circumstances sometimes change. Whether families experience divorce, separation, relocation, or other life transitions, our goal is to provide a stable, caring environment where every child continues to feel safe and supported. Parents are responsible for keeping the school informed regarding:

- custody arrangements;
- emergency contacts;
- authorized pick-up persons;
- significant changes affecting their child's well-being.

Additional information regarding custody arrangements may be found in the **Health, Safety & Student Welfare** section of this handbook.

Resolving Concerns

Questions and concerns are best resolved through respectful communication.

Parents are encouraged to:

1. Speak with the classroom teacher.
2. If necessary, contact the Assistant Principal or Principal.
3. Work together to identify solutions that best support the child's success.

Our shared goal is always the well-being and development of every child.

Parent Partnership at a Glance

We Ask Families To...

Pray for our school community
Communicate openly
Reinforce school expectations
Participate in school life
Encourage independence at home

We Promise To...

Nurture every child with love and respect
Listen with care and professionalism
Provide a safe, joyful learning environment
Partner with families in every child's growth
Prepare children for Kindergarten and beyond

Our Covenant of Partnership

By enrolling in the Early Childhood Program at St. Patrick Catholic School, families and school personnel enter into a partnership centered on faith, trust, and the shared desire to help every child flourish. Together, we commit to:

- nurturing each child's relationship with God;
- encouraging curiosity and joyful learning;
- treating one another with kindness and respect;
- communicating honestly and compassionately;
- celebrating every child's unique gifts and accomplishments.

Working together as one school family, we lay the foundation for a lifetime of **Faith, Family, and Academic Excellence.**

Section 13: General Policies & Procedures

"Let all that you do be done in love."

1 Corinthians 16:14

The following policies help ensure that each school day runs smoothly while providing a safe, organized, and joyful environment for every child. Many of these procedures reflect the unique needs of our youngest learners and help children develop independence, responsibility, and confidence.

Personal Belongings

Children should bring only those items needed for the school day. Please label all personal belongings, including:

- backpacks
- lunch boxes
- water bottles
- sweaters and jackets
- extra clothing
- blankets or nap items (if applicable)

Clearly labeled items are much more likely to be returned if misplaced.

The school is not responsible for lost, damaged, or misplaced personal property.

Extra Clothing

Accidents and spills are a normal part of early childhood. Every child should have a complete change of clothing at school, including:

- shirt
- shorts or pants
- underwear
- socks

Families should replace extra clothing whenever items are sent home.

Backpacks

Children should bring a backpack large enough to carry:

- school communications
- artwork
- folders
- lunch (when applicable)
- personal items

Please check your child's backpack every evening for important school information.

Lunch & Snacks

Children should bring healthy lunches and snacks as directed by their teacher or according to their program schedule. Families are encouraged to:

- pack nutritious foods;
- avoid glass containers;
- clearly label lunch containers and water bottles.

Because of food allergies, children should not share food with classmates. Teachers may communicate additional classroom allergy guidelines when necessary.

Water Bottles

Students are encouraged to bring a labeled reusable water bottle each day.

Only water should be brought into the classroom unless otherwise approved by the teacher.

Rest Time

Children enrolled in programs that include a scheduled rest period will participate in quiet rest time each day. Parents may be asked to provide:

- a small blanket;
- a crib sheet or nap mat cover (if applicable).

All rest items should be clearly labeled and will be sent home regularly for washing.

Toys from Home

To prevent loss and classroom distractions, children should leave toys and treasured personal belongings at home unless:

- requested by the teacher;
- part of Show and Tell;
- part of a classroom activity.

The school cannot be responsible for personal toys brought from home.

Classroom Celebrations

Teachers coordinate classroom celebrations throughout the year. Parents wishing to send treats should:

- contact the teacher in advance;
- provide commercially prepared items;
- follow classroom allergy guidelines.

Simple celebrations help children enjoy special occasions while maintaining a positive learning environment.

Birthday Invitations

Private party invitations may be distributed at school only when:

- every child in the class is invited; or
- every child of the same gender in the class is invited.

Otherwise, invitations should be distributed outside of school.

Weather & Outdoor Play

Outdoor play is an important part of each child's daily experience. Children will generally participate in outdoor activities whenever weather conditions are safe. Parents should dress children appropriately for the day's weather. During periods of excessive heat, lightning, or severe weather, outdoor activities may be modified or moved indoors.

Inclement Weather & School Closings

School closings or schedule changes due to severe weather or emergencies will be communicated through:

- FACTS Parent Alert;
- email;
- the diocesan website (www.dosaeducation.org);
- official school social media.

Families should ensure that emergency contact information remains current throughout the school year.

Photographs & Media

Throughout the school year, photographs and videos may be taken during classroom activities, performances, celebrations, and special events.

Images may be used for:

- school publications;
- newsletters;
- yearbook;
- social media;
- promotional materials.

Parents wishing to restrict the use of their child's image should notify the school in writing.

Lost & Found

Items found on campus should be turned in to the designated Lost and Found area.

Unclaimed items will be donated periodically.

Labeling personal belongings greatly increases the likelihood that lost items will be returned.

Pest Control

To maintain a healthy learning environment, the school conducts pest management in accordance with applicable state regulations.

Parents may request additional information regarding pest management procedures through the school office.

Child Protective Investigations

Florida law provides that any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is abused by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person responsible for the child's welfare must report such knowledge to the Department of Children and Families (DCF). The school will cooperate with all child protective investigations by DCF or the local law enforcement agency. Reports should be made to Florida's Department of Children and Families by calling the Abuse Hotline at: 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).

Child protective investigations by DCF or local law enforcement agencies sometimes include interviews of students at school and may occur without advance notice. When it is reasonably possible, the school will request of the investigator that the school be allowed to notify the parents that their child has been asked to participate in a child protective investigation. The school may also request the presence of a school staff member during investigative interviews on school property. However, the school will follow the direction of the investigator with respect to these requests.

Restroom Policy

St. Patrick Catholic School complies with the requirements of §553.865, Florida Statutes, the Safety in Private Spaces Act. Except where facilities are specifically designated as unisex, the school's bathroom and locker rooms/changing facilities are designated exclusively for use by biological females or biological males. Any student who willfully enters a school restroom or locker room/changing facility designated for the opposite sex and refuses to depart when asked to do so by any school personnel will be subject to disciplinary consequences as established by the school principal unless a specific statutory exception applies.

Rilya Wilson Act

Pursuant to s.39.604, Florida Statutes, a child from birth to the age of school entry, who is under court-ordered protective supervision or in out-of-home care and is enrolled in an early education or childcare program must attend the program 5 days a week unless the court grants an exemption. A child enrolled in an early education or childcare program who meets the requirements of this act may not be withdrawn from the program without prior written approval of the Department or community-based care lead agency. If a child covered by the act is absent, the program shall report any unexcused absence or seven excused absences to the Department or the community-based care lead agency by the end of the business day following the unexcused absence or seventh consecutive excused absence.

Educational stability and transition are key components of this act to minimize disruptions, secure attachments and maintain stable relationships with supportive caregivers of children from birth to school age. Successful partnerships are imperative to ensure that these attachments are not disrupted due to placement in out-of-home care or subsequent changes in out-of-home placement. A child must be allowed to remain in the childcare or early education setting that he/she attended before entry into out-of-home care, unless the program is not in the best interest of the child. If a child from birth to school-age leaves a childcare or early education program, a transition plan needs to be developed that involves cooperation and sharing of information among all persons involved, respects the child's developmental stage and associated psychological needs, and allows for a gradual transition from one setting to another.

This law provides priority for childcare services for specified children who are at risk of abuse, neglect or abandonment. These children are also known as Protective Services children.

Community-based Care Lead Agencies Contact Information:

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/community-based-care/docs/leadagencycontacts.pdf>

General Information at a Glance

Please Remember To...

Label all belongings

Pack a complete change of clothes

Check backpacks every evening

Keep emergency information current

Leave toys at home unless requested

Our School Will...

Provide a safe, nurturing environment

Communicate regularly with families

Celebrate each child's growth

Maintain a clean, welcoming campus

Partner with families every step of the way

A Final Word

Thank you for choosing St. Patrick Catholic School's Early Childhood Program.

We recognize that entrusting your young child to someone else's care is one of the most important decisions a family can make. We are honored by your confidence in our school and are committed to providing a joyful, faith-filled environment where your child is known, loved, and encouraged every day.

Together, we are laying the foundation for a lifetime of **Faith, Family, and Academic Excellence**. May God bless your family throughout the school year.

Appendix

Right to Amend Policies

Because no handbook can anticipate every situation, St. Patrick Catholic School reserves the right to interpret, modify, amend, or discontinue policies and procedures when necessary. Whenever possible, families will be notified of significant policy changes.

Parent/Student Handbook Acknowledgement

Each family is required to sign and return the **Parent/Student Handbook Acknowledgement Form** provided during the Back-to-School Bonanza. By signing the acknowledgement, parents and students affirm that they have received the handbook and understand their responsibility to comply with its policies and procedures.

Failure to sign or return the acknowledgement form does not exempt a student or family from complying with the policies, procedures, and expectations contained in this handbook. Enrollment at St. Patrick Catholic School constitutes acceptance of these standards.

We appreciate your cooperation and thank you for your partnership in supporting the mission of St. Patrick Catholic School.
