

2021-2022 Parent Handbook

St. Mary Magdalene
Catholic Preschool

Rev. Theo Trujillo, Pastor

Mrs. Katie Jupena, Director

2252 Woodruff Road
Simpsonville, SC 29681
(864) 288-4884 ext. 4250

katiej@smmcc.org

www.smmcp.org

<https://www.facebook.com/smmcpsimpsonville>

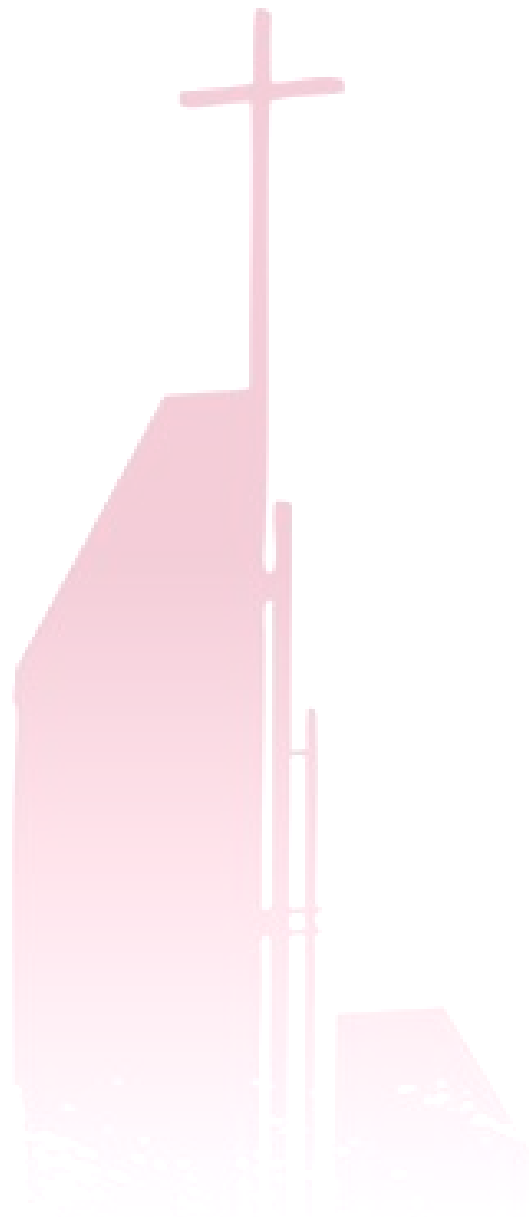


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MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

Each child, having been created in the image of God, has received from Him the ability to learn. At St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Preschool, our mission is to continue the Catholic education begun in the heart of the family in a safe and secure environment. We are committed to providing opportunities to grow academically, physically, culturally, socially and spiritually. We promote an early pursuit of knowledge infused with Catholic teaching that will develop students of character and equip them for a lifetime of learning and service.

Dear Parents,

No one would argue that we are living in a society that is trying desperately to do without God. There are groups fighting to remove prayer from our schools, the Ten Commandments from our courthouses and the mention of God's name in our Pledge of Allegiance. Yet, Jesus, the rabbi and teacher, addressed his apostles for the last time and charged them with this responsibility, "Go teach all nations" (Matthew 28:19) - an insurmountable task if we allow society to view religion as something to be hidden or something of which we should be ashamed.

On the other hand, Jesus' invitation, command and promise are the wellsprings of the Catholic faith; an invitation to know Him more completely, a command to teach His message and proclaim His Good News and a promise that He will abide with us as a community of believers until His second coming. The Catholic school is a "privileged place" to hear this invitation, this command and this promise. Next to the family, it is the most effective place for students to search the mysteries of their faith and to be assured that even before the world was made, God had decreed to call each of them to life and prepare each of them for the fullness of life.

At many Catholic schools, there is a quote posted that reads: "Be it known to all who enter here that Jesus is the reason for this school. He is the unseen but ever present teacher in its classrooms. He is the model of its faculty and the inspiration of its students." This quote, prominently displayed for all to see, leaves no question as to what is central to the school. It gives parents an understanding of the value system they can expect. It conveys a challenge to faculty members to take up Saint Paul's invitation to "clothe yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:22). It gives visitors an unmistakable sign that the school is indeed a special place. It tells students the primary reason for attending. They are all walking on holy ground.

The Catholic identity of the school is not taken for granted; it is worked at, it is nourished, it is engaged by the students, faculty and community. Sure, virtuous living is preached at Sunday Mass, but that message needs reinforcement all week long. In the Catholic school, family values are supported, and parents know that their children are not only being informed, but formed.

Catholic schools develop leaders for the entire community, in every walk of life. There are high expectations of alumni for ethical business practice, honorable citizenship, and civic-mindedness. All of our futures will be better because of the formation our students receive in Catholic schools.

As for me, it gives me great comfort to know that these children can stand up each day and profess their faith with their classmates. I am pleased that they are learning their prayers and practicing Catholic rituals. And, I am proud that they can pledge their allegiance to "one nation **under God**," especially if the alternative is to simply pledge allegiance to "one nation **under**."

God bless you!
Father Theo

CURRENT STAFF ROSTER

Katie	Jupena	Director	M-F
Jenny	Grooms	K-5	M-F
Margaret	Zwolski	K-4	M-F
Darlene	Varriale	K-4	M-F
Katie	Waldthausen	K-4	M-F
Tassia	Goehring	K-4	M-F
Jaclyn	Lavigne	K-3	MWF
Kathy	Reed	K-3	MWF
Sarah	Hodges	K-3	MWF
Sonia	Varillas	K-3	MWF
Sandy	Agosto	K-2	TR
Bridgette	Aufmuth	K-2	TR
Julie	Halka	K-2	TR
Nadee	Attanayake	K-2	TR
Rosy	Gogna	Spanish	MWF
Tammy	Aho	Reading	MWF
Lindsay	Holland	Music	RF
Mary	Walsh	Music	RF
Deborah	Barber	Bookkeeper	M-F

SCHOOL SCHEDULE AND CURRICULUM

Monday - Friday
9:00 am - 1:00 pm
September - May

(Please note that there is a slightly delayed start schedule on Holy Days of Obligation and First Friday Observances. On these days, classes will begin immediately after the 8:30am Mass concludes so that the teachers can fulfill their obligation. In turn, we will be happy to remain in the classroom until the 12:15pm Mass concludes for parents who would like to fulfill their obligation as well. A reminder will be sent home before each of these days.)

A complete calendar will be provided in the summer mailing in July.

K2 Program (2 Days)

Tuesdays and Thursdays

There is a maximum of 12 children per class staffed with 2 teachers. Children must be 2 years old on or before September 1st.

K3 Program (3 Days)

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

There is a maximum of 15 children per class staffed with 2 teachers. Children must be 3 years old on or before September 1st.

Please note that the children in K3 and beyond need to be toilet-trained.

K4 Program (5 Days)

Monday through Friday

There is a maximum of 18 children per class staffed with 2 teachers. Children must be 4 years old on or before September 1st.

Please note that the children in K3 and beyond need to be toilet-trained.

K5 Transitional Kindergarten Program (5 Days)

Monday through Friday

There is a maximum of 8 children per class staffed with 1 teacher.

Our curriculum is designed to promote Catholic teachings as we increase language, math and motor skills and expose students to art, science, music, and Spanish. If you wish to see the complete curriculum, it is available for you to view on our website.

REGISTRATION

St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Preschool welcomes children of all backgrounds. Our registration is first opened to families presently enrolled in our program. After all currently enrolled students and siblings have secured a position for the following year, the remaining positions are assigned in the following order:

1. Registered members of St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church
2. Non-Parishioners

Registration forms and fees are due at the time of registration in order to secure a place for your child. **Registration fees are nonrefundable.**

Registration Fees

There is a registration fee of \$200.00 for new students. Returning students pay a \$150.00 registration fee.

TUITION

K2 - 2 Days - \$250.00* / \$300.00**

K3 - 3 Days - \$295.00* / \$345.00**

K4 - 5 Days - \$365.00* / \$415.00**

K5 - 5 Days - \$405.00* / \$455.00**

*St. Mary Magdalene Parishioner rate

**Non-Parishioner rate

TUITION PAYMENT OPTIONS

First Monthly payment and Annual payments are due August 5. (Please note that all tuition payments are auto-drafted. You will receive an auto-draft authorization form in July.)

Option 1: Monthly -- Remaining monthly tuition payments will be auto-drafted from your designated account on the 5th of each month from October through May.

Option 2: Annual -- One annual tuition payment will be auto-drafted from your designated account on August 5th. A 2% discount applies to this payment method.

Late fees

For auto-drafts returned for lack of available funds, a service fee of \$30.00 will be assessed to cover bank and administrative charges.

Returned Checks

Periodically you may need to provide a check for school activities such as field trips or pizza lunches. A \$30.00 service charge will be assessed for any returned checks. This fee covers bank and administrative charges.

Withdrawal from the Program

If for any reason you must withdraw your child from our program, **we require a thirty-day written notice. No refunds are given for any portion of a month's tuition.**

REQUIRED FORMS

Please be advised that the following items must be on file **before** the director can guarantee your child(ren)'s position(s) in a class:

1. Online Registration Forms including:
 - a. Registration Form
 - b. Release of Liability/Treatment Consent
 - c. Acceptance of Preschool Terms and Policies
 2. Registration Fee
 3. Current SC Certificate of Immunization
-

During the summer (early July) you will receive a packet of information via email and be invited to attend a Parent Orientation. At that time, you will receive a link to the following online documents:

1. Tuition Auto-draft Form
 2. Publications, Video and Internet Release Form
 3. Directory Inclusion/Non-Inclusion Form
 4. Authorized Pickup Form
 5. Health Form (DSS Form 2900)
-

The week prior to our first class, we will host an Open House. At this time, parents and students are invited to see the classroom, meet the teachers and make new friends. At the Open House you will receive:

1. Weekly Folder (for use all year)
2. Volunteer Handbook
3. Allergy Form (if applicable)

IMMUNIZATIONS

You are required to provide a current SC Certificate of Immunization upon your child entering school. If you moved from out of state or if the certificate on file has expired, you will have thirty days to submit a current certificate. After this thirty-day period, your child cannot be permitted to come to school.

HEALTH

Each child is required to have a current copy of his/her South Carolina Certificate of Immunization on file.

It is required that you let the office know if your child has any kind of allergy or condition that could require medical intervention.

If your child has an EpiPen, we **MUST** have one on site should there be an accidental exposure to an allergen. This EpiPen must be in the original container with the pharmacy label. (Your child's doctor can provide a prescription for an extra EpiPen if you do not already have one.) **It is preferable that your child's EpiPen stay in the preschool office at all times**, but, if it is necessary, you may drop it off and pick it up each day that your child attends. There is a cabinet in the office for these items.

The staff will make every effort to protect the health and safety of your child. Your cooperation in helping prevent the spread of communicable diseases is greatly appreciated. Please notify the preschool office if your child displays symptoms of a contagious disease outside of school hours. The director will determine whether or not there was a possible classroom exposure and if it is necessary to notify other preschool families with regard to the exposure.

Please keep your child at home if he/she has a sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rash, cough, earache, enlarged glands or a fever. **Your child should be fever free (without the use of fever-reducing medication), and free of vomiting and/or diarrhea, for at least 24 hours before returning to school.** If your child develops any of these symptoms at school, we will call you to pick up your child.

Any child with head lice will be sent home immediately. The child must be treated and free of live lice and nits in order to return to school.

The Preschool cannot administer any medication.

ARRIVAL/DROP-OFF PROCEDURES

For security reasons, drop off of children will be done only through the main entrance of the Conner Ministry Building. This entrance is open from 9:00am until 9:10am. Once inside the building, you may proceed directly to your child's classroom. Although you are welcome to see that your child is safely in the classroom, please do not extend your stay beyond 9:10am. At this time the teachers will begin the structured activities of the day, and the children's focus needs to be on the lesson/activity in progress. When the doors lock at 9:10am, everyone, except students and staff, is required to exit the building. Teachers have been instructed to take attendance in their classrooms no later than 9:30am.

*If your child has a difficult time separating from you, please remember that long goodbyes are generally no easier than short ones - for either of you. Gently reassure your child and make your exit. We do not want any child to be miserable, and we will contact you if we find him/her to be inconsolable after a period of time.

DISMISSAL/PICK-UP PROCEDURES

As with drop-off, pick-up may occur only through the main entrance. The doors will be unlocked from 1:00pm until 1:10pm. Once inside the building, proceed to your child's classroom, and the teacher will dismiss your child "from the carpet." This method ensures that every child is in the care of a parent before he/she leaves the classroom.

There is a fee for late pick-up. This fee is \$10.00 for any child picked up after 1:15pm. This fee will be collected the next school day and **must** be paid in full before the child can attend class.

If someone other than a parent or authorized person (listed on the Authorized Pickup form) is to pick up a child, a written notice must be given to the child's teacher in advance. This note must contain the name, relationship, and phone number of the person picking up your child. For your child's security, we may request a photo ID before releasing your child.

If an emergency should arise, please call the school at 288-4884, extension 4250, so we can make the necessary arrangements.

*Please be aware that drop-off and pick-up times are not acceptable conference times. If you need to schedule a conference, please make a request of the teacher, and a time will be scheduled for you.

*Remember - the safety of our children is paramount. We do not deem it safe to have a car pool line with preschool age children. **Please drive very carefully in our parking lot and be attentive to children and other parishioners moving to and from their cars.**

PARKING

We have a very active Church with Masses taking place and other ministries meeting in various campus buildings during preschool hours. Please be alert while driving on campus and watch your children closely as you cross the parking lots.

Please **do not** park your vehicle in the parking spaces designated as Handicap, Staff Only, or Clergy Only parking.

Curbside parking is prohibited as it restricts access for Emergency/First Response vehicles.

DO NOT allow your child to walk from the parking lot to the school alone.

DO NOT leave children unattended in your vehicle.

SECURITY

- When the doors lock at 9:10am, everyone, except the children and staff, is to leave the building.
- If you have business with the preschool outside of drop-off and pick-up times, you will need to sign in and get a visitor pass at the front desk of the Conner Ministry Building. If we do not have a volunteer greeter, you will need to go to the Parish Center to sign in and get a visitor pass.
- The playground gates should remain closed at all times.
- **Back and side doors are not accessible for entry or exit, unless attended by a preschool staff member. DO NOT permit entry to anyone under any circumstance.**
- Please **DO NOT** knock on windows or disrupt classrooms to gain access to the building.
- The teachers and staff are not permitted to open any exterior doors except for the main entrance.
- Parents who wish to volunteer in the preschool will be required to submit diocesan Safe Environment paperwork and complete a Safe Haven online training class.

PARENT - TEACHER CONFERENCES

Teachers communicate to you via regular newsletters with regard to what your child is doing and what is going on in the classroom. Regularly scheduled conferences are held mid-year. If you would like to have a conference with your child's teacher or the preschool director outside of these times, please make an appointment. **School hours are reserved for the children.**

COMMUNICATION

Strong relationships built through effective and open communication is the core of a successful educational experience. At St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Preschool, we have many ways for parents and staff to stay in touch throughout the year.

Classroom Newsletters will be sent home weekly (monthly for K2) with updates on what is happening in the classroom.

Flocknote, the parish-wide communication system, permits messaging from the director or classroom teachers via email and text to all preschool families, separate classrooms, or individual parents as needed. Parents can reply privately to emails and texts to communicate directly with the sender.

Facebook Groups, which are private and monitored by preschool administrators, allow classroom teachers and parents to share information and photos of classroom happenings in a secure manner. Our St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Preschool Facebook page communicates school-wide information that is accessible to current and prospective parents. Photos are never shared without explicit permission from parents.

DISCIPLINE

Our goal is to help the children develop a positive sense of self and encourage them to be independent while displaying self-control. We do this by providing age appropriate limits, close supervision, guidance and redirection. When necessary, we use a common sense approach called “Logical Consequences” to help the children understand the consequences of their actions and thereby make good choices. Acceptable behavior is promoted with smiles, encouragement, and praise. Unacceptable behavior will result in loss of privilege, time out, etc. We do not use any form of corporal punishment.

PLAYGROUND RULES

- **Do not climb on the outside or top of the play equipment.**
- **Slide down the slides in a feet-first, sitting position.**
- **Do not climb up the slide.**
- **Do not stand on or twist on the swings.**
- **Keep the playground gates closed at all times.**
- **Do not stand or swing on the gates to prevent damaging the hinges.**
- **Close the gates gently to prevent damaging the lock.**
- **Do not climb on the fence.**
- **Do not touch the windows.**
- **Wear shoes at all times.**
- **Report damages, hazards, or accidents to the teacher or director immediately.**

You are welcome to use the playground after preschool hours. If you choose to do so, it is expected that you will enforce these playground rules with your children.

Please remember that during preschool hours of operation, the playground is reserved for students only.

SNACKS AND LUNCH

On a rotating basis each family will be asked to provide a healthy snack for the entire class. You may bring dry cereal, goldfish, fruit, vegetables, etc. Children should not bring candy or gum to school. Birthday treats are welcome, but please coordinate with the teacher in advance.

We ask that you provide a healthy lunch (including drink) for your child. Do not send food that requires heating. Be sure to label your child's lunch box/bag.

To ensure the safety of children with acute peanut and tree nut allergies, we are a **nut-free school**. Any snack or lunch item containing nut products will be returned.

If your child has a food allergy, you will be asked to provide specific documentation before classes begin. Food allergies will be posted in the office and outside of each classroom. Please be prepared to provide an alternate snack for your child in the event that a daily snack or birthday treat contains an allergen.

CLOTHING

Parents are encouraged to dress their children in seasonally comfortable play clothes and appropriate shoes that will allow them to participate in indoor and outdoor activities.

During the winter months, please expect that your child will participate in playground time unless the temperature is below freezing and/or other weather conditions prevent playground use. Always ensure that your child has proper outerwear for outside play.

All students need a complete change of clothing sent to school in a labeled zip lock bag. Please keep this bag inside your child's backpack.

Please be sure to label all of your child's belongings.

SCHOOL PHOTOS

Photos of the children are taken during October. Individual and class photos will be taken and will be available for purchase. Your child's teacher will provide scheduling information.

BOOK ORDERS

Through Scholastic Book Club your child can enjoy reading fun each month and build those early reading skills! Scholastic Book Club flyers will come home on a regular basis throughout the school year. For every order, our school earns bonus points for the purchase of classroom books and supplies.

To order through the school coordinator, please fill out the order form and return it to your child's teacher with a check made out to Scholastic Book Clubs. You can also order online at www.scholastic.com/bookclubs; after creating an account, connect to our Reading Teacher, Mrs. Aho, by entering our Class Code: GVRWP. This will ensure that your purchases are credited to our preschool so we earn our free books. You can choose home delivery or school delivery at checkout.

TOYS

Your child will be assigned a day for Show and Tell. Children may bring toys, books, or any other item of interest as indicated by the teacher on Show and Tell days **ONLY**. Toy weapons should not be brought to school. They will be placed in a safe place and returned to the parent at the end of the day.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering is a terrific way to be involved in your child's preschool experience, and we would like to make good use of your talents. Please let us know how you wish to contribute your time and talents to our program by reading the volunteer booklet that you receive prior to the beginning of the school year and signing up for a position when the online form is sent to you via email after Open House. Not only will you find this rewarding, but you'll be setting an excellent example for your child.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS AND INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Understanding that we have families with siblings in both the public and private school settings, we create a yearly calendar that reflects the holidays and breaks of the local schools as much as possible. **Please note that our calendar will not follow any other school's (public or private) calendar entirely.**

With regard to inclement weather, we follow the school closing decisions of the Greenville County School District. Whenever Greenville County schools decide to delay or transition to e-learning DUE TO WEATHER, we

will close. **We do not operate on a delay.** Greenville County closings are posted on the GCS social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), their website homepage, as well as local radio and television stations. You will also receive notice from SMMCP through Flocknote text and/or email.

If snow falls after school is in session, please pick up your child as soon as possible. The school will close as soon as all parents have picked up their children.

The preschool may close for circumstances deemed necessary by the parish office or diocese.

Please be reminded of the no-refund policy as written on page 8.

PRESCHOOL TERMS AND POLICIES

I understand that my child(ren) may be dismissed from the program if:

- Tuition is 30 days past due.
- SMMCP cannot appropriately meet my child's specific needs.
- There is continual negligence by parents of the policies and procedures.
- My child cannot participate effectively in classroom activities or interferes with the participation of other children. (Should this occur, the teachers, along with the director, will make the final decision regarding what is in the best interest of the entire class.)

