

ASCENSION CATHOLIC SCHOOL
PREK-3 AND VPK HANDBOOK
2018-2019



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Accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference



Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 school year at Ascension Catholic School! We will continue to be companions on the journey of educating our students both academically and spiritually. The legacy of the Sisters of Mercy, who founded this school over 50 years ago, will guide our work as we assist all students to grow to be the persons God intended them to be. Our school is one known for developing students who reach high academic standards, who learn to be of service to others, including the less fortunate, and who develop a passion for life-long learning.

In my role as principal, I hope to be able to work with the faculty and staff as we together, seek to provide the best possible educational experience for your child. Thank you for choosing Ascension Catholic School for your children. This promises to be a great year!

Blessings,

**Anita Brady
Principal**

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Ascension Catholic School believes that every child is a gift from God and is unique. Every child deserves a safe, caring and stimulating learning environment where he/she can grow and develop emotionally, socially, physically, intellectually, and spiritually.

Preschoolers learn through their senses, relationships, hands-on experiences, imitation, repetition, curiosity, play, and satisfaction. As educators, we strive to help our students meet their highest potential by providing a fun, hands-on learning environment where they feel safe enough to take risks and step outside of their box in an environment that fosters a love of learning and curiosity.

OUR PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM

Our program stresses a positive approach to learning including centers, creative play, and many hands-on experiences. Research shows us that, for the early childhood years, children learn best through experiences that utilize all of their senses. Our academic curriculum, *Frog Stress Press*, and religion curriculum, *I Am Special*, incorporate integrated lessons, social and emotional development, differentiated instruction, and a joyful approach to learning. The following curriculum areas are addressed through a variety of multi-sensory approaches:

Faith formation

Social and Emotional Development

Mathematics

Physical Development and Health

Creative Arts

Science and Technology

Social Studies

Language, Literacy, and Communication



OUR TEACHER/STUDENT RATIO

Our ratio in our PreK-3 class is one teacher and an aide per 15 students. The ratio in our VPK classes is one teachers and an aide per 20 students.

TOILETING EXPECTATIONS

We expect our students to be able to use the toilet independently and do the following:

- 1. Be able to tell an adult they have to go the restroom before they go.**
- 2. Be able to pull down their underwear and pants and get them back up without assistance.**
- 3. Be able to wipe themselves after using the toilet.**
- 4. Be able to wash and dry hands.**
- 5. Be able to postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the restroom.**

If a PreK-3 or VPK student has a toileting accident and can change him/herself, then our teachers can oversee this. If a student is unable to change him/herself, it will be necessary to call Mom or Dad to assist the child so he/she may return to class. At no time will a child be reprimanded by staff for having an accident. We remind the children of the importance of using the restroom like a big boy/girl.

If a child has more than three accidents in quick succession, we may ask that the child stay home from school for a week or so to enable the family to work with him/her on a more constant basis to ensure that the child is fully

potty trained. This is usually highly effective. Unfortunately, due to the strict guidelines dictated by the state, if a child consistently has accidents, our only recourse will be to suggest that he/she is not ready for preschool at this time. This situation is very rare and will be our last resort.



HEALTH POLICY

We love your child and we also love all the other children in our school! To help us keep all of our students healthy, we ask for your cooperation when your child is sick.

Please keep your child home if he/she is sick. If your child becomes sick while at school, we will call you to pick him/her up. It is a good idea to have a plan for a family member or friend to be a backup to pick up your child in case you are unable to do so.

CLINIC

The school clinic is not staffed by a nurse, but is staffed by a full time employee, entitled the Health Care Coordinator. First aid is administered in case of an accident. Children who become sick may be allowed to rest in the clinic.

In the case of absence due to a communicable disease, a release card from the board of health or a letter from the family physician indicating that the board of health regulations have been fulfilled must be presented when the student returns to school.

Our specific policy regarding returning to school after a general illness is:

- Students may not return to school until they have been fever free for at least 24 hours. This means they need to be fever free WITHOUT the use of a fever-reducing medicine. Our policy is that any child with a**

temperature of 99.6 or higher is considered to have a fever.

- Students who are vomiting or who have diarrhea may not return to school until they have been symptom free for 24 hours.**

The Health Care Coordinator may administer medication, but only as specifically directed in writing. Parents must fill out the proper clinic form, and medication must be in its original container and properly labeled. There shall be no liability for civil damages as a result of the administration of such medication when the person administering such medication acts as a reasonable, prudent person would act under the same or similar circumstances.

Florida Statute 232.46 establishes rules governing the administration of medications. The following rules and procedures must be followed:

- Parents must fill out the medication permission form, which is available on the school website, and return it to the school office.**
- A separate authorization form must be filled out for each medication.**
- Prescription medication must be received in the original container, labeled with the student's name, name of the drug, directions concerning dosage, time of day to be administered, name of the physician and date of the prescription.**
- Non-prescription medication must be brought to school in its original packaging and be labeled with the student's name and specific directions for administration and dosage.**
- No more than one week's supply of medication will be accepted.**
- The student will be escorted to the health room to receive medication.**
- Parents are expected to provide a measuring device for all liquid medications.**
- When medication is not in use, it will be stored in a locked receptacle.**
- Changes in medication require a new authorization form to be filled out and signed.**

DISCIPLINE POLICY

We use a loving guidance approach to discipline. The goal of our discipline approach for young children is to help them learn appropriately through the preschool years so they can mature and function as responsible, ethical, well-adjusted persons.

We use the *Conscious Discipline* program in which classrooms are organized around the concept of a School Family. Each member of the family learns skills such as forming relationships, communicating effectively, and being sensitive and respectful to others. These are vital life skills that the children will need to be successful throughout their lives. The children will practice self-control as they use words instead of hostile actions to solve problems. They will be encouraged to talk about their problems and express their feelings as they learn to redirect their actions.

The teaching staff will provide an atmosphere of loving guidance by providing guidelines and nurturing positive behavior in the child.

Intervention when needed will include providing a “safe space” for the child to calm him/herself, discussing alternative behaviors with the child, and removing a child from a situation which could cause harm to him/herself or others.

Prekindergarten students are learning to play and relate with other students. The staff will teach, model and guide students in positive ways to play and interact with other students. Students who continue to exhibit behaviors such as biting, kicking, hitting or spitting may need to be removed from the classroom or school. If a child needs to be sent home, parents will be called to pick them up. Conferences will be held with the family. Ascension will work with the family to resolve the issues. However, if improvement does not occur, a child may be asked to leave the school.

ATTENDANCE

School attendance is directly related to a student’s achievement. It is important to establish a good routine of attending school and arriving on

time. When a student is absent he/she misses out on the lessons and activities of the day and the routine is disrupted. Arriving late to school disrupts the class and can make students feel anxious.

A calendar is given to parents at the beginning of the school year detailing holidays and vacations. In the event of inclement weather, such as a hurricane, Ascension follows the closing policy of Brevard County Public Schools. However, the school may reopen on a different day than public schools.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Students must be 3 years old by September 1st to enroll in the prek3 program. Students must be 4 by September 1st to enroll in the prek 4 program. Ascension accepts Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) vouchers issued by the State of Florida through the Early Learning Coalition of Brevard. To enroll in our program, parents are required to visit the school and complete an application for admission. Each student must have a valid birth certificate, a school entry physical form and an up to date immunization form. When all paperwork is received, an admission decision will be made and communicated to the family.

MORNING DROP-OFF

School begins promptly at 8:00am. Please sign your child in on the sheet located outside of the classroom each morning. Encourage your child to unpack his/her backpack and begin morning routines independently.



AFTERNOON PICK-UP

Students will be dismissed from the car loop in front of the school office between 11:45 and 12:00. You will be given a name card to display in your

car window to help us more easily identify your vehicle. For the safety of the children and to keep the carline moving, please drive slowly, remain in your car and do not use cell phones while in the carline. A teacher will bring your child to your vehicle for you to buckle into the carseat. You will also be asked to sign your child out on our attendance roster. Please do not take this time to ask questions or talk to the teachers. Children not picked up by 12:00 will be taken to extended care and you will be charged accordingly.

EXTENDED CARE/AFTERCARE PROGRAM



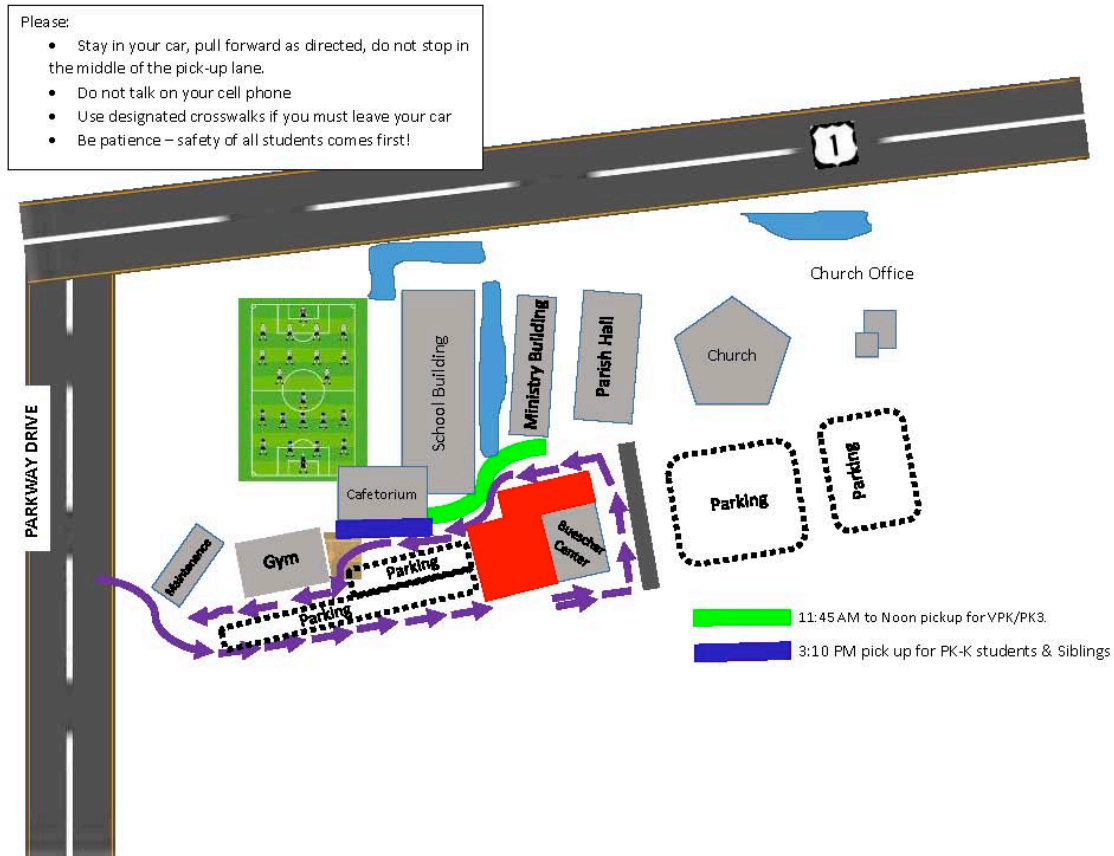
If you intend to use the extended care program from (12:00-3:10) or the aftercare program from (3:10-6:00) please indicate on the calendar on the front of your child's folder. Extended care is provided in the classrooms. There will be a sleep room in which children nap following the lunch period and an awake room in which children participate in quiet indoor and outdoor activities with their classmates. Please let your child's teacher know which classroom you would like your child in.

Students going home at 3:10 will be dismissed from the cafeteria. Please follow the carline which pulls up along the side of the cafeteria, display your child's name card in your front window and your child will be brought to your vehicle for you to buckle into his/her carseat. Students who will be staying for aftercare after 3:10 will be brought to the Ministry Center. You should park your car and go into that building to pick your child up.

Both extended care and aftercare programs cost \$3.50 an hour. Families will be billed monthly for extended care fees and weekly for aftercare fees. Accounts must be kept up to date. In the event of a negative balance of

more than \$25, a student may not be allowed to attend until a payment is made.

We should include a map with the pick up carlines following this page.



SNACKS AND LUNCH

We will have a scheduled snack time each day. Please send in a healthy snack and drink for your child each day. Water is encouraged and we will refill water bottles as needed.

Students who stay for extended care will eat lunch at school. They will need to either bring a lunch and drink or purchase the hot lunch provided by the school cafeteria. If you would like your child to purchase the hot lunch you will need to set up a Lunchtime Account for him/her.

VERBAL MESSAGES

The staff cannot accept verbal messages brought by children. Please correspond with teachers through email or by sending a note in your child's communication folder.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Children may not bring personal items such as toys to school. We will have a large assortment of toys and activities each day for the children. Students may bring educational items to share on "Show and Tell" days which will be assigned by your classroom teacher.

Children may not bring toys of violence to school such as play swords, guns and action figures that use such items. We realize that these toys have a useful place in the play-acting of young children, but here at school we will be stressing the biblical principal of "love one another".

PARENT CONFERENCES

Parent Conferences will be held twice during the school year in conjunction with the first and second trimester developmental reporting periods. These conferences are intended to better inform you about your child's school progress. Teachers are happy to arrange a time to meet with you outside of the regularly scheduled conference days as well. Please notify your teacher if you would like to set up a conference.

UNIFORMS

Ascension students wear uniforms in both PreK-3 and VPK. Our uniforms consist of black Ascension logo shorts, yellow Ascension logo t-shirts, white socks, and shoes. For the safety of the children during outside playtime,

closed toed shoes such as sneakers with nonskid soles are required. Children will not be allowed to participate on climbing equipment with sandals or smooth soled shoes such as boots and dress shoes. Shoes with velcro that your child can fasten independently are preferred.

During colder weather students may wear black or navy sweat pants and sweatshirts. You may also purchase Ascension logo sweatshirts and jackets. Both new and used uniform sales are scheduled at the school throughout the school year. You may also purchase uniform items at Sir Walters Uniforms located at 500 S Plumosa St #500, Merritt Island, FL 32952. Their website is <https://store.sirwalteruniforms.com>

Makeup including nail polish and jewelry other than small stud earrings for girls with pierced ears are not allowed.

NUT DAYS

NUT (No Uniform Today) Days are scheduled throughout the school year. Students will be notified of any special occasions when they are allowed to wear NUT day clothing. Students may choose to donate \$1.00. NUT days are run by the Student Service Council, and the monies collected go to a wide variety of charitable causes. Appropriate NUT Day attire includes closed toed shoes with nonskid soles. Students may not wear pajamas, tank tops, shirts that show a bare midriff or have inappropriate sayings on them.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are a big event for PreK-3 and VPK students. Please coordinate this day with your child's teacher. Students whose birthdays fall on a weekend, normally celebrate the next school day before or after their birthday. Those with summer birthdays either celebrate on their half birthday or at the end of the school year.

Students may wear NUT Day attire on the day they celebrate their birthday at school. You are welcome to send in a class snack for your child's birthday. Please arrange a day and time with your child's teacher for you to send in a snack. Cookies, donuts, and mini cupcakes that are easy to pass out are best. We also request that the birthday snack items you send in are

all the same flavor with the same color icing, etc. If you plan to host a birthday party for your child, we will only send invitations home from school if the entire class is invited or for, all boys only, or all girls only events. If you are inviting only a few classmates, invitations should be mailed.