

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

KINDERGARTEN HANDBOOK

2010-2011

"I remembered one morning when I discovered a cocoon in the bark of a tree, just as a butterfly was making a hole in its case and preparing to come out. I waited a while, but it was too long appearing and I was impatient. I bent over it and breathed on it to warm it. I warmed it as quickly as I could and the miracle began to happen before my eyes, faster than life. The case opened, the butterfly started slowly crawling out and I shall never forget my horror when I saw how its wings were folded back and crumpled; the wretched butterfly tried with its whole trembling body to unfold them. Bending over it, I tried to help it with my breath. In vain.

It needed to be hatched out patiently and the unfolding of the wings should be a gradual process in the sun. Now it was too late. My breath had forced the butterfly to appear, all crumpled, before its time. It struggled desperately and, a few seconds later, died in the palm of my hand.

That little body is, I do believe, the greatest weight I have on my conscience. For I realize today that it is a mortal sin to violate the great laws of nature. We should not hurry, we should not be impatient, but we should confidently obey the eternal rhythm."

"Zorba the Greek"
by Kazantzakis

Dear Kindergarten Parents,

Welcome to St. Joseph School and Kindergarten! During our first weeks of school, I will have the opportunity of getting to know your children and you.

I hope that your child will have a happy and productive experience in Kindergarten and that the school will meet his/her special needs. The Kindergarten program is a complete program. Your child will learn the fundamentals of religion, mathematics, reading, social studies, science, and Spanish. It also enhances each child's physical, mental and creative development while expressing his/her feelings, attitudes and relationships. I will strive to provide a stimulating educational environment while helping to increase your child's self-identity, self-fulfillment and the feelings that he/she is truly valuable and unique.

I request that your child comes with a full-sized backpack, lunch bag and folder. These items need to be labeled with his/her name. From my experience, children become responsible for their work and important papers arrive home safely, when they have a backpack and a daily folder. Also, a change of clothes needs to be brought the first day of school. Those will remain in the classroom in case of any emergencies.

The first weeks of school are instrumental because routine and learning patterns are established, as well as friendships within the classroom. I will be able to discover the children's needs and interests. I hope your child will begin to recognize Kindergarten as a secure and happy place where he/she has a chance to experience independence, to develop social contacts with children his/her own age, to express his/her ideas verbally, as well as non-verbally, to experiment, to investigate and to discover.

As the year continues, please feel free to contact me (email and notes work best) if you have any concerns, questions and/or comments.

Yours in Christ,

Miss Payawal

General School Information and Procedures

Starting School

Kindergarten is an important grade and a big step in your child's life! It is a time when your child begins to learn many skills in a large group environment, such as working with new children, adults, classroom rules, and materials. Kindergarten should signify a positive and enjoyable beginning of every child's educational career. Kindergartners need to be nurtured, praised, encouraged and supported continuously throughout the school year. We need to work together to create a learning environment that is interesting, active, challenging, and most importantly, stress-free.

What you can do to help your child

Parents are the primary teachers of their children. Oftentimes, your child imitates actions and/or words he/she hears. Your child may exhibit new and different behaviors throughout the school year. Modeling, positive attention, love, support, and acceptance is important as your child becomes exposed to so many new concepts this year.

Immunizations and Physical Exams

State Law requires all students to receive their immunizations and physical exam prior to entering school. The law states that students who do not have completed records may not begin school until the requirements are fulfilled. Please have these documents completed and in the school office before August 23rd.

Each parent must have a clear TB test verification and Safe Environment Certificate on file in the school office if you are planning to be around the children in any way. A copy of each parent's Driver License and Proof of Insurance (100K/300K liability) must also be on file in the school office for any field trips.

The FIRST Day of School

Bring your child the first day of school, but please do not linger by the windows. I understand that it may be difficult to leave your child the first day of Kindergarten, but you need to leave cheerfully, so your child is reassured that he/she will have a great first day of school. Every morning, (as weather allows) we line up by the Art/Music room.

Kindergarten Schedule

8:00 AM- 3:00 PM

Minimum Days: 8:00 AM- 12:00 Noon

Recess & Snack: 10:15 AM- 10:30 AM

Lunch: 12:20 PM- 1:00 PM

Visitors and Classroom Helpers

I enjoy having parents help out in the classroom, but I ask that you do not volunteer until November. Please notify me to make arrangements. I need to show the children that the classroom is a safe, but fun place to learn and establish routines and patterns before other adults enter the classroom environment. When you arrive at school to volunteer, please be sure to sign in at the office. You will be asked to wear a "Visitor's or Volunteer" badge. Please return to the office at the end of your visit to return the badge and sign out.

Arrival and Pick Up

For the safety of your child, follow these traffic regulations when arriving at school.

1. Cars enter on Prune Street and exit on Plum Street.
2. Students are to be dropped off in the morning at safety patrol sites along the patio in front of the Kindergarten through Third Grade classrooms only. Please pull all the way forward and follow the directions of the faculty supervisor and safety patrol. This traffic lane must be kept open with moving traffic at all times in the event of an emergency. Your child should walk in front of your car to the patio. They may drop off any materials in the classroom and then proceed to the other side of the school.
3. Afternoon pick-up for Kindergarteners is in front of Grades 4-5/Art Room. If your child is not present, you must continue circling until they have been picked up or park in the City lot and walk in.
4. No cars may be parked on the school grounds during the school day.

The children, who will be in Extended Care, will walk to Extended Care after obtaining their belongings.

Medication and Absences

All medications must be given to the school secretary with specific instructions in a prescription bottle along with a Medical Authorization form, which is signed by the doctor.

All absences must be called into the school on the day of the absence before 9:30 AM. A signed note must be brought to the teacher the first day your child returns to class. If your child has a contagious disease, please notify the school office immediately. Please do not send your child to school if he/she is ill or feeling ill. Your student will not be productive if he/she does not feel well, and may get other children ill, as well. If your child has a fever, allow at least 24 hours before sending him/her back to school.

Snacks & Lunches

Nutritious snacks and lunch items are strongly encouraged. Research shows that food items high in preservatives and sugars do not support learning in the classroom. They provide short-term energy, but once it wears off, the children become sluggish. Young children need healthy food to stimulate their bodies as well as their minds to learn. I recommend purchasing a thermos for warm food items and for a drink. Drink boxes and/or juice boxes are too large for Kindergartners to finish during snack and lunch times.

Toys

In order to avoid loss or damage, toys are not allowed at school.

Uniforms & Free Dress

The uniform supplier is: Classic Designs
 1551 Taraval Street
 San Francisco
 (415) 661-4700
 www.eclassicdesigns.com

The PTG also maintains a uniform bank where outgrown uniforms can be exchanged and used uniforms are available.

Make sure your child's sweaters, jackets and sweatshirts are clearly labeled with his/her name.

Library

Starting the second week of school, we visit the school library. The children may check out one (1) book. The book is due the following week.

Class Parties

The classroom party parents will receive a list from the teacher as to the parties for the school year. You will be notified by the party parents when items are needed.

Birthdays are celebrated once a month, usually on the last Friday of the month. The party parents will notify you when items are needed.

Progress Reports, Report Cards & Conferences

Progress Reports are given out every mid-trimester and Report Cards are sent home at the end of each trimester. Conferences are twice a year; October & May.

Family Envelopes

Each Monday, a plastic envelope is passed out to the oldest child in the family attending St. Joseph School. Inside there will be a newsletter, information on school happenings, reminders of upcoming events, etc. Please take the time to read this information. Send back through the envelope, all papers that need to be given to various people. Sign and date the envelope, so we know that you have read the information. The plastic envelope should be returned no later than Tuesday. This system could change at one point, so watch for more information to follow.

Extended Care

St. Joseph School offers quality Extended Care before and after school on all school days from 6:45 AM and after school until 6:00 PM. There are contracted and drop-in rates. Extended Care information is included in the Registration packet or may be obtained in the school office.

Students may not be dropped off at school before 7:30 AM. Children will be placed in Extended Care if it is before 7:30 AM. or after 3:15 PM. and no one has picked them up.

Field Trips

Many of the field trips we go on are within the City of Pinole. The bank, Post Office, Police/Fire Station, bakery, church, and the library are just a few of our field trips. Parents are requested to assist the teacher by driving or chaperoning the children. A special form is filled out for any field trip that requires driving. Siblings are not allowed to attend the field trips.

Emergency Preparedness Policy

Parents are required to complete appropriate information cards for emergency student dismissal. It is imperative that the office be informed in writing of all new phone listings and change of address. Make sure if there are changes in numbers or contact persons, that the office is notified. The children will be cared for until pick up and then released to appropriate person.

Also, an emergency food bag is provided by parents or purchased from the Student Council. Non-perishable, nutritious food items are placed in a Ziploc gallon bag. There is emergency water in the storage container. Place a picture of your family, and an "I love you" note. This bag will stay in the classroom until the last day of school.

Kindergarten Program

Throughout the year, any work done in Kindergarten is for the learning experiences involved and not for the end product. Remember to praise and encourage the work brought home. Your child spent time doing it.

The artwork and papers may not be perfect according to adult standards, but more importantly they will be is/her own work. Praise your child for his/her work daily!

Curriculum

Our program is a busy one and includes many different kinds of activities. Through all our activities, your child will be encouraged to develop good feelings about himself/herself and school, and to attempt new experiences.

Religion: In Kindergarten, we introduce the children to the wonders of God's creations. We help them discover the uniqueness of the world around them. We help them learn how to care for themselves and others as Jesus did.

Reading: The reading program is a complete program of language arts, phonics, and writing. The children learn the sounds, blending, then eventually, progress to reading books by mid-year. We work on writing sentences and understanding parts of a story.

Mathematics: Understanding of numbers, shapes, positions, and problem solving are explored during math through manipulatives, games, and song.

Social Sciences: Appreciating the world around us and the differences around the seven continents, as well as learning about God's creatures and life cycles.

Art: Basic art skills such as cutting, folding, gluing, and using different art materials will be introduced to the Kindergartners.

Music: The children will learn new songs and gain an appreciation for the art of music.

Physical Education: Through this program, your child will have the opportunity to develop a better understanding of balance, large muscle coordination, and creativity through movement. Our program will include basic locomotor skills such as walking, running, jumping, hopping, rolling, skipping, leaping, and balance. Skills involving equipment such as balls, hoops, ropes, obstacle courses, balance beams, and parachutes are included.

Spanish: The children will learn how to say "The Our Father" as well as learn basic colors, months, numbers, days and body parts in Spanish through writing, music and movement activities.

Computers: The Kindergartners will experience a variety of programs which cover number recognition, adding and subtraction. Our Computer Lab experience will offer many opportunities on a Macintosh computer. The students go to the Computer Room once a week.

Learning Centers: During this time, the children work independently in small groups. Activities will be in the form of games and learning manipulatives. The children will be able to strengthen skills learned throughout the week, but most importantly learn interaction skills with his/her peers.

Kindergarten Homework Policy

Dear Kindergarten Parents,

The experiences, which a child has at home, can have an important influence on a child's success at school. I would like to make the following homework assignments for all Kindergarteners.

1. Read aloud to your child 15 minutes every day.
2. Take your child to the public library at least once every 2 weeks and let him/her choose books to enjoy at home.

By reading to your child at home you will be helping her/him:

1. Learn to appreciate and enjoy reading.
2. Expand concepts and knowledge.
3. Increase vocabulary and language development.
4. Develop an ear for language and grammar.
5. Develop auditory and listening skills.
6. Lay a solid foundation for the time when they begin reading on their own.

There is probably no better way to help your Kindergartener at home to succeed in his/her future school endeavors.

Let your child choose books which appeal to her/him. At times, if you want to help increase some of the social studies and science concepts which we work on at school you might want to choose some books on the following topics:

Home, Family

Autumn, Winter, Spring, Summer

Holidays

Indians

Growth

Senses

Colors

Transportation

Community Workers

Weather

Space

Habitats

Here are a few pointers about your reading time:

1. Always make reading sessions pleasurable.
2. At times, discuss what you've read, but don't make it a question and answer session.

Ways To Help At Home

Many parents have asked for suggestions for ways which they might help their child at home. Below are listed some suggestions which you might want to try. As the year progresses, we will include others that are relevant to your child and to our program.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

1. Read to your child often. This should be a warm, friendly experience. Discuss together the books you have read.
2. Make certain that your child has books available which he/she can handle and look at independently. Trips to the library are an excellent experience.
3. Help your child choose good TV programs and later discuss them, casually, with him/her. Educational TV programs, such as children's specials or Reading Rainbow, are always a good choice.
4. Have good conversation at the dinner table with thought-provoking questions, but do not make it a question-and-answer session. Your child is at an age where he/she is learning many new facts. She/he needs the opportunity to express these facts verbally and your help as he/she organizes them so that they have meaning.
5. Encourage your child to listen for and follow directions. Play games with him/her which requires concentration.
6. Encourage your child to accept responsibility at home which is adjusted to his/her maturity and interests.
7. Take your child on trips to points of interest in the local community.
8. Encourage your child to make decisions. Give her/him choices and let her/him choose such things as the variety of breakfast food she/he will eat, the color of his/her bedroom, what he/she will wear each day for play, etc.
9. Encourage your child to notice his/her environment, to touch, smell, taste, see, and hear everything educational in his/her immediate surroundings. Let him/her experience the thrill of discovery.
10. Have paper, pens, pencils, crayons, and markers available for writing and drawing.

Ways Parents And Teachers Can Work Together

1. Visit the classroom whenever you can. Observe classroom activities and get to know your child's teacher and friends. Remember to check in at the office first.
2. Talk to your child about his/her day.
3. Show your child you are happy about all the new things he/she is learning to do by displaying his/her artwork or special projects at home.
4. Share your ideas or concerns about the children's activities with the teacher.
5. If you have some time and talent to share such as singing, dancing, sewing, or carpentry, please let us know. If you work for a public service, please let us know, because we like to have guest speakers come to our classroom when we study about community workers.
6. Tell us how we can help you with your child. You are encouraged to request a conference at any time.
7. Encourage your child to dress and feed him/herself. Invite your child to help you at home (i.e. cooking, setting the table, etc.).
8. Attend scheduled parent meetings and conferences.
9. Join us for field trips or special activities.
10. Share your culture and ethnic background with us.

PLAY

It is important to respect children's play. A good Kindergarten will not only respect play, but will encourage it by providing important centers which will naturally allow for and motivate socio-dramatic play such as Playhouse and Block areas and sand and water areas. The classroom for young children should be an environment and atmosphere conducive to play and the activities planned should be playful in nature.

Play is important for the intellectual growth and development of children. Make believe play requires children to recall and keep images in their minds for long periods. During play, language development is stimulated as children who are actively involved communicate their ideas and express their thoughts to others. During play, a child has the opportunity to explore and to test ideas and to try to make sense of those things, which they are trying to understand. Play empowers children and allows them to learn skills of working with people and to learn the importance of both leading and following. It offers opportunities for children to learn cooperation and other skills, which relate to their social development.

We have read the enclosed information on the Kindergarten program. If we have any questions or concerns, we will direct them to the teacher. The homework procedure is understood.

Your signature _____

Child's name _____

(Please print)

