



2019 - 2020

Parent Handbook

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Welcome

Welcome to *Saint Miriam School*. We are excited that you have chosen to take this journey with us. We are here to provide the best possible care and early education for your child/ren. Our program offers children learning opportunities by providing a rich environment that encourages learning through experimentation, exploration and questioning. We are proud of our enriched program, our comfortable and well-equipped school and our qualified Staff.

We have prepared this PARENT HANDBOOK to acquaint you with our program and your responsibilities. For the purpose of this handbook, “parent” is defined as the person who has legal responsibility for the care and welfare of the child. Please become familiar with this handbook and refer to it often. It will answer many questions you may have regarding our policies and daily procedures.

We are a fully inclusive preschool welcoming all families. It is our goal to ensure that all families feel supported as partners in their child’s education. We welcome all.

We look forward to having your family in our program.

Mission Statement

Inspired by our patron St. Francis of Assisi, we seek to proclaim the reign of God by growing in *Holiness* through our experience of Christ in word, sacrament and one another, offering Hope to those who hunger for human dignity, and extending Hospitality to all.

Philosophy

Saint Miriam School is a loving, supportive, safe and educationally sound environment for infants through Kindergarten. As the *only* Franciscan Preschool and Kindergarten in the greater Philadelphia metropolitan area our approach includes the on-going development of creativity, cooperation, problem solving and self-expression at all ages as these are critical skills for 21st century students! In support of those goals we proudly offer S.T.E.A.M.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Music, *and* Math) promoting a love of learning in the youngest among us!

Program Goals

To Support Children Socially and Emotionally by providing staff that is responsive to the individual child while encouraging self-care and independence. Staff also facilitates the development of self-control through redirection, structure and age-appropriate consequences.

To Support Children Intellectually by providing opportunities that reflect the child’s interests. These opportunities provide time for interactive exploration while also providing unique and exciting learning experiences that ignite the imagination!

To Support Physical Development by nurturing healthy eaters and getting kids moving! We have an outstanding outdoor classroom, two age-appropriate playgrounds and a variety of physically stimulating activities built into the school day.

Admission Policy

Saint Miriam School, A Franciscan Preschool and Kindergarten admits students of any race, religion, color, sexual orientation, gender status, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at our school. The same policies apply to the school staff, educators, and parents and/or guardians of our student population. *Saint Miriam School*, A Franciscan Preschool and Kindergarten at Saint Miriam does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, sexual orientation, gender status, nationality, or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, its admission policies, scholarship and loan programs and athletic or any other school administered program(s).

Security

Our church, school, students, parishioners, visitors, and entire organization endeavors to keep every person safe while under our employ, charge, care, or while visiting our campus. This is why we have instituted the Keep People Safe email notification system. If you witnessed any form of questionable behavior, abuse, or feel yourself in harm's way in any form, please reach out to our primary oversight person for this program by emailing us at [KeepPeopleSafe\(at\)MySaintMiriam.org](mailto:KeepPeopleSafe(at)MySaintMiriam.org). Every report or inquiry is kept strictly confidential. At Saint Miriam, we keep people safe every day!

Parental Involvement

At *Saint Miriam School*, we believe that we should bring every family into our classroom! Beginning this fall, *Saint Miriam School* introduces ClassDojo to connect teachers with students and parents to build amazing classroom communities!

Teachers can encourage students for any skill or value — whether it's working hard, being kind, helping others or something else and students can showcase and share their learning by adding photos and videos to their own portfolios. Sharing moments with parents no matter where they are!

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are offered yearly. If you wish to have a conference with your child's teacher simply sign-up and one will be arranged for you. The conference is usually 15-20 minutes long and provides time for you and your child's teacher to discuss your child. Conferences may be scheduled as needed at the request of the parent or preschool during the year to discuss your child's progress.

Registration and Enrollment

Annual Registration

An initial registration fee is charged at the time of your family's enrollment. All registration fees and re-enrollment fees are non-refundable.

Electronic Enrollment Process

All enrollment will be through the Saint Miriam School website. You will find the enrollment link at: <https://saintmiriamschool.com/enrollment/> Once enrolled you will be given access to The Parent Portal where you can make updates to your family's contact information, register for additional classes, programs or special events. The Parent Portal also lists billing, payment and credit card information.

PAPER Enrollment Forms Required:

- Copy of the child's current immunizations
- Emergency Contact Form
- Copy of drivers license or other photo ID of any individual authorized to pick-up your child/ren from school
- Birth Certificate for verification of child's birth date

It is important that *Saint Miriam School* maintains current and accurate records on each child so that parents/guardians or other authorized individuals can be contacted in case of an emergency. Each family needs to provide information of at least two people who are authorized to pick up your child. Any changes to emergency contact information can be made via The Parent Portal directly.

Your child's current immunization record must be received prior to or at the time of enrollment and must be kept current at all times. It is your responsibility to notify the Director of any changes. Failure to do so may result in termination of enrollment.

It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent or legal guardian to accurately complete and maintain all information relevant to your child/ren enrollment at Saint Miriam School. By registering on-line and signing off on the agreements you are certifying that you have authority for the child/ren. **Pennsylvania law is clear in that parents who have joint legal custody have equal access to all information regarding the child including enrolling the child and making changes to the enrollment information. Court orders are required to prevent a parent or legal guardian from certain activities such as picking up the child or visiting the child at a preschool. We reserve the right, however, to prohibit individuals from being at our preschool if the health and safety of any child or staff is threatened or compromised.**

Our policies do not allow staff to make copies of forms and other documents or provide testimony, verbally, or in writing, about any child. If subpoenaed by court order, our Director will review the subpoena and contact the attorney. It is not in the best interest of any child for staff to act with partiality to one parent or the other. If you should have any question, please speak with our Director.

Tuition

Tuition represents the largest source of income for *Saint Miriam School* and we rely on these fees to assure that we can provide quality early education and care for your child at the most affordable rates possible. Please refer to our website at www.saintmiriamschool.com for the most current tuition rate schedule. Tuition fees are subject to change at any time with a 10-day written notice.

Since full and timely payment of tuition is critical to our ability to maintain our operations, we would like to outline our policies and procedures regarding the payment of fees to *Saint Miriam School* as follows: Tuition is due monthly, on the first of the month. When registering for the first time you will select your preferred payment method, either using a credit/debit card that you provide during initial registration or by paying at the office. All payments made at the office are due on or before the first of the month.

Personal checks or money orders should be made payable to *Saint Miriam School*. Returned checks will be subject to a \$20.00 fee for each returned check. If a check is returned, you will be notified and will be expected to obtain a money order for the original check amount and the returned check fee. Henceforth, you will be required to pay your tuition with a money order. Checks will no longer be accepted as payment.

There is no reduction in payment in the tuition amount if your child is sick or on vacation. Payment of your tuition assures that your child's place in our program is maintained during his or her absence.

If your child is ill or the family is going on vacation, the Preschool should be notified so that your child's place in the program is maintained. An absence of more than five (5) consecutive days when Preschool staff has not been notified will result in termination of enrollment.

Parents are responsible for tuition until *Saint Miriam School* has been notified that you plan to discontinue enrollment. If you wish to withdraw your child from the program, you are required to notify the a Director by giving a written notice and the child/ren's final date of enrollment at least three (3) weeks in advance of your child's intended withdrawal.

Late PICK-UP Policy and Fee

Please call as soon as you realize that you are going to be late. If your child is not picked up by the end of your contracted day, a late fee of **\$15 for each 10 minute period** will be charged. **While we close at 5:30 P.M. parents should arrive by 5:20 P.M. in order to check in with staff, gather children's belongings and say goodbye.** All parents are personally responsible to pay late fees by the Monday following the week in which the late fee is assessed. Please note: For those parents receiving tuition assistance most programs will not pay late fees on your behalf and you will be personally responsible.

Saint Miriam School reserves the right to discontinue services if the tuition and any late fees are not paid in a timely manner as detailed above.

There are no refunds for the tuition or registration fees (initial or annual). Please refer to the above stated policy, which requires at least three weeks written notice to discontinue your child's enrollment.

Hours of Operation and Holidays/Days Closed

Saint Miriam School is open 7:30A.M. to 5:30 P.M. Monday through Friday. A calendar of holidays will be provided during orientation.

Early Childhood Program

Saint Miriam School provides an educational program designed to meet the needs of the whole child. This program is based on the premise that young children are active learners involved in a process that uses all their senses as they work and play with people and materials. Professionally trained staff plan and arrange stimulating learning environments which are appropriate for the different developmental stages of a child's life.

Accreditation

Saint Miriam School is registered as a Non-Public Private School by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania under its parent organization Saint Miriam Academy (AUN 223460021) and is a Federally Tax Exempt Nonprofit Organization(501(c)(3) 46-1745096). Saint Miriam School is approved by our Old Catholic Diocese and is a member of the National Old Catholic Educational Association of the Old Catholic Institute. Additionally, Saint Miriam School complies with the Pennsylvania Guidelines for Non-Public Schools.

Curriculum

Our curriculum at *Saint Miriam School* is based on current research that supports developmentally appropriate practices. Developmentally appropriate practices are those that take into account the way children develop and learn. We support the interest of each child, helping them to grow in their socio-emotional and cognitive skill development through hands-on experimentation with materials and concepts. We believe that your child will discover and learn by making the decisions needed to work through an activity, rather than being told exactly how to accomplish a task. As a result you will find that no two-art projects look the same, and your child will discover many individual approaches to accomplish a task; thus, your child will not be asked or required to complete the activities in a specific manner. *Our teachers build their classroom curriculum around ideas of interest to the children. Each day there are opportunities for children to explore materials and create meaningful experiences. This curriculum is often referred to as "Reggio Approach" and is closely related to "Emergent Curriculum."* *The activities emerge from the daily life of the children and adults in the program, particularly from the children's own interest; it reminds us that spontaneity always has a place in the environments where young children play and learn.* Nevertheless, as the word *curriculum* conveys, there is also Teacher planning in such environments, there *is* a curriculum.

Our curriculum provides opportunities in several basic areas:

- **Language and Literacy** – children are encouraged to talk, sing, make-up rhymes and listen to stories. Teachers provide supplies and opportunities for children to experience written material, flannel board stories, dramatic storytelling, dictations and puppet play.
- **Mathematical Thinking** - children are encouraged to develop a sense of number and quantity. Examples are activities that include counting, determining more or less, larger or smaller, how many, recognizing patterns and shapes and developing a sense of time awareness.

- **Scientific Thinking**- children focus on the world they know and understand. Knowledge grows from the child's innate need to discover. Examples are measuring, comparing, using the five senses, questioning, predicting and analyzing results.
- **Social Studies** – children explore the roles of relationships in their world. Examples are dramatic play, block building, recognizing similarities and differences in people, families and professions, and understanding the reasons for social expectations.
- **The Arts** – encourage children to express their creativity through art, self-expression, dance, music, and dramatic play. In art children mix paint, pound and shape clay, and build structures with blocks, boxes and logos. Teachers expose children to a wide variety of ideas and experiences in the arts throughout the day.
- **Personal and Social Development** – children are encouraged to develop a self-concept and self-control through interacting with others, problem solving, and conflict resolution.
- **Physical Development** – includes large and small motor development, and an understanding of personal health and safety.

The day is a blend of child-initiated and Teacher-initiated activities including group time, free choice times, outdoor play, appropriate meals, snacks and rest times.

The curriculum will be enriched through the use of community resources. Local groups such as the police, fire department, musicians, artists and geologists will be invited to visit. *If you have a special interest, hobby or talent you would like to share with the children please let your child's teacher know.*

Staff Qualifications

Saint Miriam School staff is composed of professionals trained in Early Childhood Education. It is important to select the employees with the best education and experience. All Lead Teachers and Teacher Assistants meet or exceed qualifications as required. We encourage Teachers to continue their training at the college level and also provide additional in-service training. Qualified Substitute Teachers are available as needed. Regularly scheduled staff meetings and professional development activities encourage staff members to continually increase their knowledge of developmentally appropriate Teacher practices so that they may better serve young children. At times, other paraprofessional Assistants may be involved in our program.

All staff is fingerprinted for submission to Pennsylvania who then completes a criminal background check. Prospective staff is not allowed to work with children until we have received clearance from the Pennsylvania State Police and the FBI.

Communication Systems

Open communication is vital to your child's successful experience. We have an open door policy. Parents are welcome visitors at any time. We welcome your comments, suggestions and concerns. Several communication channels are established and we encourage you to take advantage of these. You can update your contact information, billing information and class registrations through the Parent Portal on our registration system. A link to the Parent Portal will be emailed to you after you register on-line for the first time at our school. Class Dojo is another tool that will be used to support day to day communications between classroom staff and parents/guardians.

Classroom Calendars

Both *Saint Miriam School* and individual classrooms will have calendars available throughout the year. Our school calendar will list school-wide important information such as field trips, special events, signup deadlines, holidays, early dismissal days, etc. Classroom calendars will be developed by the lead teacher and focus on events and happenings specific to that classroom (i.e. children's birthdays or other in-class celebrations).

Face-to-face Conversations

It is always helpful for Teachers to know when major changes happen in a child's life. These changes could include a family death, moving to a new residence, loss of a parent's job, a parent away for business or military deployment, someone from the immediate family moving out of the home, etc. Children are often worried about these incidents but do not know how to express their concerns and their behavior may be affected. We are better able to assist your child when we are aware of these changes in the home. Staff is available and open to your comments and suggestions. We are here for you and your child, so do not hesitate to communicate with them frequently. Please check with our Director as to the best times for extended conversations.

Health and Safety

Children are expected to be in good health and able to participate in the planned activities. *Saint Miriam School* has several policies and procedures listed below for the health and well being of each child in the program. Please read these carefully and talk to our Director if you have any questions.

Health Information Required

Current immunization, TB records, and a physical examination are required to be on file for each child. Child must have a physical preformed before the start of each school year.

Daily Health Check

Your child's health status will be checked each day. This health check is informal; however, if your child appears to be showing signs of illness, s/he may not be admitted into the program. Daily health inspections allow staff an opportunity to check each child for any potential illness. It also allows time for communication between parents and staff to discuss how the child has been feeling and whether there has been an exposure to any contagious disease.

When doing the daily health check, we are looking for signs of illness such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Unusual behavior (Examples are crankiness, pain, discomfort, very sleepy, the child may not "look or act themselves," or doesn't appear well enough to participate in routine school activities)
- Fever over 100.4 degrees
- Skin that is flushed, pale or unusually warm to the touch
- Sores on any part of the body that are open, have fluid in them or appear infected
- Unexplained skin rash, especially when accompanied by fever or behavior changes
- Red eyes with white or yellow discharge and/or crusty eyes
- Sore throat with fever and swollen glands or mouth sores with drooling
- Head lice or nits
- Runny nose – A child with a runny nose (green, yellow, or clear) should only be excluded if they also appear ill, are too sick to participate and/or have any other symptoms that they need to be excluded for.

Once at School, if a child develops the following symptoms, the parent or other authorized persons will be called and may be required to pick up the child within a reasonable amount of time:

- Fever – over 100.4 degrees
- Flu Symptoms
- Cough – severe uncontrolled coughing, wheezing or difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea – runny or watery stools more than two times in an hour, any bloody diarrhea
- Vomiting – more than two times in 24 hours
- Stomach ache – pain lasting more than one hour

- Ear ache or foreign body/injury in the ear that causes pain or bleeding
- Head Injury – if the child has associated symptoms
- Lacerations – a wound that will probably require sutures
- Unexplained skin rashes – especially accompanied by fever and/or behavior changes
- Unusual behavior

Please remember that staff is making “assessments” regarding potential illnesses and will speak with school nurse. They look at each child’s case individually and are sensitive to the fact that family members need to go to work and school. Exclusion from school is to protect your child as well as others at *Saint Miriam School*. If there is a disagreement between the parent and staff member regarding exclusion, please talk with the Director and School Nurse

Plan ahead:

Parents must keep emergency phone numbers current and can do so directly through the Parent Portal. We must be able to reach you if your child becomes ill. Once contacted the parent has 90 minutes to either pick-up the child or send an authorized contact to *Saint Miriam School*.

- Please make plans for who will care for your child if they are too sick to attend *Saint Miriam School* or need to go home unexpectedly

When your child is sick, please be sure to promptly notify the office staff of their diagnosis and treatment. Also notify them if your child has a contagious disease or has been exposed to one. Such reports are treated with confidentiality. When necessary, staff will need to notify families of a potential exposure to a contagious disease.

Guidelines for Returning to School

Children should be symptom free, and fever free for 24 hours before returning to school. Children may return to school as long as the child is feeling well, remains fever free, and symptoms are resolving. Children who are prescribed antibiotics, in any form, are required to be on the medication for a period of 24 hours prior to returning to school. A permission to return to school note from the Physician is required for:

- Pink eye or conjunctivitis
- Contagious looking rashes e.g., scabies, impetigo, scarlet fever, hand foot and mouth disease
- Strep throat or mouth sores with drooling
- Hepatitis in family
- Meningitis in family
- Any child that has been sick and doesn’t seem to be improving
- Any time a child is hospitalized or has a procedure done as an “outpatient” basis

We have the right to request a permission to return to school note at any time it is in the best interest of *Saint Miriam School*. We also reserve the right to exclude a child with signs of illness even if a permission to return to school has been obtained. If you felt it was serious enough to seek medical assistance, please remember to ask for a permission to return to school note while still at the Physician’s office.

Injuries

The staff work very hard to keep children safe and well, however, occasionally typical childhood accidents, such as bumps, scrapes and falls, occur while in care. Staff and school nurse will tend to minor injuries that can be adequately dealt with by using soap, water, antiseptic solution, ice and bandages. An injury report will be completed to inform you of the type of injury, location on the child's body, how the injury occurred, where the injury occurred, treatment and child's reaction to the injury. Please sign the injury report and leave it with your child's Teacher. If you would like a copy of the report, check the box on the form indicating so. Parents will be notified immediately of accidents requiring more extensive intervention.

If your child becomes injured while at *Saint Miriam School*, these steps will be followed:

1. The seriousness of the injury will be assessed.
2. First-aid will be administered, school nurse will be notified, and if necessary emergency personal will be contacted.
3. Parents will be contacted.
4. Persons listed on your emergency form will be contacted if we are unable to contact you. *It is essential that you notify the staff if you are not going to be at your regularly scheduled work or training site, and leave an alternate phone number.*
5. Arrangements will be made to have the child taken to the emergency room if necessary.
6. You or the person you designate (must be on emergency form authorizing them to pick up) must pick up your child as soon as possible if you are called.
7. After a medical evaluation and/or treatment are administered, please contact the preschool to inform us of your child's status.

Saint Miriam School is not responsible for the payment of fees such as medical or ambulance fees that may be associated with an injury that occurs on the premises.

Medications

It is encouraged for parents to give medications to their children at home. However, if it is necessary for your child to receive medication while at *Saint Miriam School*, the following will apply:

Prescription Medication

- Container must have the original pharmacy label listing the child's name, physician's name, name of medicine, issue date, dosage, expiration date, and directions for administration and storage.
- Container must be child resistant
- Medication must be prescribed in the United States
- Medication must be for the current illness

If your child needs to receive the medication during the day, inform the School Nurse or Lead Teacher who will give the medication to them. Parents will need to complete a Medication Consent Form for all medications (prescription). Parent's instructions on the consent form must be in accordance with the instructions from the Physician. If the consent form is incomplete, medication will not be administered and parents may have to return during the day to give the

medication until the form is completed. A new form needs to be completed whenever there is a change i.e., dosage. Medications can only be given to the child indicated on the label. Twins and siblings cannot share medications! Parents may ask their Pharmacist to dispense a second labeled medication container for school. Children may not bring self-administered medicines i.e., aspirin, cough drops, eye drops.

Non-Prescription Medication

Non-Prescription medication cannot be administered at school.

Medical Treatments

If your child is required to have one of the specific allowable treatment procedures, such as a inhaler, Epi-pen, or blood glucose monitoring, while in our care, you will be asked to complete additional permission requirements, plus demonstrate for School nurse and staff the proper use of the treatment.

Sunscreen

It is strongly recommended that children wear sunscreen to prevent sunburn. Parents should apply sunscreen of SPF 30 or higher before children come to school.

Allergies

If your child has been diagnosed with allergies, you must notify the School Nurse and Director. We must have a statement in writing from your child's Doctor describing the specific allergy, documented reaction, emergency medication management (ie. Epi-pen, Benadryl, Zyrtec) and any special precautions.

If your child has any food allergies for which substitute foods or beverages are required, you must provide the statement from the child's Doctor stating the nature of the allergy and what substitutions are necessary.

Emergency Information

Your child will be instructed on emergency procedures while at school. S/he will participate in regular fire drills and learn other rules of safety. In the event of an emergency or natural disaster, staff will continue to care for your child until such time as you or your authorized representative can pick up your child. Each center has sufficient food and water or juice and other supplies to take care of children and staff for up to two days. Staff has disaster/emergency training. At all times, at least one staff member on duty has been trained in Infant/Child CPR. In any kind of natural disaster, as long as our facility has been determined to be safe, all children will remain on site unless an injury requires release to an emergency medical facility. In the event of an evacuation, signs will be clearly posted *at Saint Miriam School* giving destination of evacuated children. Only adults previously authorized on the emergency forms will be able to sign out children.

Emergency Center Closure

The center may close or delay opening if the following conditions are present:

- Natural disaster which prevents use of the facility,
- Room conditions prevent adequate ventilation and breathing,

- Disruption of utilities which prevent meeting the nutritional needs of the children or natural light is diminished to be a risk to children and staff,
- Presence of live wires,
- Loss of water that disrupts hand washing, and toileting with clean running water.

Emergency Center Closure due to Inclement Weather Specifically

- In the event of a Pennsylvania issued or Montgomery County issued “Weather state of emergency” our school will be closed until the “state of emergency” order is lifted
- If weather forecasts indicate dangerous conditions for the next day all efforts will be made to make a decision about closing or delayed opening will be made by **10PM on the evening before the weather event.**
- If dangerous weather conditions are forecasted but conditions continue to change during the evening and overnight a decision about closing or delayed opening will be made by 5AM the day of the event

NOTIFICATIONS to PARENTS about Closure or Delayed Openings:

- Saint Miriam Pre-School and Kindergarten is #3499 on KYW News radio & TV
- Saint Miriam School web at www.saintmiriamschool.com
- Saint Miriam Parish web at www.mysaintmiriam.org
- Saint Miriam School and Parish Facebook pages
- Email notification to all parents and guardians
- Text notification to all parents and guardians

DEFINITION of Closure, Delayed Opening and Early Dismissal:

- If school is closed there are no staff or teachers on site. Closure includes early drop off and extended day programming.
- DELAYED OPENING is at 11AM. On days when there is a delayed opening there is no early drop off program. Our staff and teachers will be on site and ready to welcome children at 11AM (two hours after the start of the core school day).
- EARLY DISMISSAL is at 1PM or as soon as possible after the emergency is declared. Parents will be notified about early dismissal using all the same notification channels listed above.

Nutrition

*Saint Miriam School is a **Peanut and Tree Nut Free** environment. We ask that parents follow Healthy Eating Guidelines. A Teacher is present and adequate time is given for eating and pleasant conversation. Children are encouraged to serve themselves and try all foods, but are never forced to eat. We ask that **only staff serves food to the children.** This is done in order to avoid serving foods to children who may have specific food allergies.*

General Policies

Sign In and Out

KidCheck is the system that will be in place. Once children are signed in they are the responsibility of the school staff. Once children are signed out they are the responsibility of the parent. Children may not be left unattended in the building or on the playground.

Children will be released only to those authorized persons (at least 18 years old) designated in KidCheck. Picture identification will be required. The name on the identification must match the name in KidCheck and the picture must match the person presenting it. A photocopy of the identification card will be made in the office. It is the parent's responsibility to update any emergency contact information in KidCheck. You may update this information at any time. We do not accept any notes or phone calls from parents stating that someone not on your Emergency Form will be picking up your child; they must be listed on the Emergency Form. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

State law requires that all children must be secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint (safety seat or booster seat), until they are at least 6 years old OR at least 60 pounds. Never leave any child alone in the car no matter how short the time! It is not only unsafe, but also illegal.

Extra Clothing

Please provide your child with at least two complete changes of clothing. Water activities may occur throughout the year. Children who are prone to wetting should bring plenty of extra underwear.

Blankets and Nap Sheets

Each child who naps at *Saint Miriam School* is required to provide a sleeping bag or nap sheet and a small blanket. The sleeping items are to be taken home at the end of the week and washed. If *Saint Miriam School* has to provide a sheet a fee of \$2 for each incident will be charged to the parent.

Confidentiality

The use or disclosure of all information pertaining to the child and his/her family shall be restricted to purposes directly connected with the administration of the program.

Child Abuse Reporting

All *Saint Miriam School* staff is mandated by Pennsylvania law to report cases of suspected child neglect and/or abuse (physical, emotional, and/or sexual) immediately to a child protection agency. Child Abuse law considers discipline that results in bruises and any other injuries caused by spanking to be a form of child abuse. If you need information about disciplining your children or help with other parenting issues, please see the Director who will give you information, assistance and/or referrals to the appropriate services.

Parent Responsibility

It is the goal of *Saint Miriam School* to maintain a safe, caring, and respectful environment for children, staff, and parents. Unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated. Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Use of abusive or offensive language including, but not limited to harassment, threats, yelling, rudeness, and profanity.
- Theft or damage to property.
- Physical or verbal abuse of children, staff or other parents.
- Defiance of authority or disrespectful behavior of any kind

Alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs and smoking are prohibited on the Saint Miriam campus. No child will be released to anyone who appears to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs.

Parents, children, and staff are expected to maintain a respectful relationship with each other. Parents demonstrating any of the above unacceptable behaviors may be terminated from the program.

It is not appropriate for parents to approach other parents or children to address an incident that happened at the Preschool. Parents must deal with such concerns through the Teacher or Director.

1. If an incident occurs, the parents will be asked to leave the premises.
2. The parent will be required to meet with the designated administrative staff person in order for the child to remain the program.
3. Continuation in the program will be determined on a case-by-case basis depending on the severity of the incident.
4. If the family continues in care, another such incident will result in termination from the program.

Clothing

Active play is very important to children's overall development. Your child will regularly participate in "messy" activities such as painting, cooking, sensory activities, etc. Sturdy and comfortable play clothes that are easy for little hands to manage are appropriate and help children to become self-sufficient. Play shoes that are low-heeled, lace-up, or have Velcro closure, and a rubber sole are recommended.

Mark all clothing with your child's name. Staff will encourage children to take care of their belongings; however, we cannot be responsible for lost or damaged items. There will be a Lost and Found Box at the center. Please help your child learn to take care of his/her belongings.

We reserve the right to offer children alternative clothing if it is determined that a child is inappropriately dressed.

Weather

Children are outside on a daily basis as they explore the outdoor classroom. Children should come to school wearing appropriate clothing for the season in order for them to be comfortable while outdoors. On days of extreme temperatures (cold or hot) the amount of time outside may be reduced, but nonetheless, children will spend some time outdoors. Cold temperatures do not make children sick, germs do.

Toys

Please help your child keep toys at home. Security objects such as a favorite stuffed animal are an exception and are welcome. Books and items related to the current unit of study are encouraged at any time; just check with your child's teacher before bringing them in to the center. Please mark these items with your child's name. ***Toy guns, weapons and money are not allowed.***

Birthdays

A child's birthday is a day of celebration for some families and we will be happy to help make this a special occasion. Children start talking about their birthday weeks ahead of time, telling the Teachers, "It's going to be my birthday." We will provide your child with a special birthday crown and sing the happy birthday song.

Visitors

All visitors *at Saint Miriam School* need to sign-in at the Administration Office. Any visitors to see children need to show their picture identification and be listed on the Emergency Form as an authorized individual.

After Hours Care

Staff is not permitted to solicit or provide care for children enrolled outside normal working hours. Staff is not permitted to provide transportation for children enrolled.

Discipline and Guidance

The goal of *Saint Miriam School* discipline policy is to assist children in developing emotional regulation and self-discipline through respectful interactions that support children's emotional growth. The early years are a time of immense cognitive, physical and emotional growth for young children. Young children are still egocentric, meaning they still think mostly of their own needs and wants as opposed to the needs of others. Because of this, it is not unusual for young children to use physical or verbal aggression in attempt to get their needs met. It is our job as adults in the environment to guide children through this time by setting clear limits and following through appropriately and consistently. Staff helps children understand the expectation for reasonable behavior by discussing, giving examples and by redirecting children to appropriate activities. Gradually, children are helped toward self-control and gain a sense of pride in their ability to care for themselves and each other.

"Rules" to Keep Everyone Safe

In our environment there are behaviors that need to be stopped by adults:

1. Physical aggression such as:
 - a) Hitting
 - b) Slapping
 - c) Pinching
 - d) Biting
 - e) Throwing objects at others
2. Willful destruction of school property such as:

- a) Ripping books
- b) Breaking toys
- 3. Engaging in activities that may be physically or emotionally harmful to themselves or others such as:
 - a) Teasing
 - b) Name calling
 - c) Threatening language
 - d) Using equipment in a dangerous way

This list is not meant to cover every eventuality that may occur. It is important that the adults in the environment manage each case individually.

Procedures for Dealing with Unacceptable Behavior

The use of corporal punishment which includes physical force is **not allowed**. This includes but is not limited to spanking, shaking, pulling, jerking, or frightening the child.

If the unacceptable behavior persists over time the following procedures will be followed: The teacher will help the child to change the behavior. Methods used may include redirection, reinforcement of positive behaviors and/or choices between acceptable behaviors. If the negative behavior continues further action may be required and will include a parent conference, behavioral plan, observation and referrals. If the behavior endangers others, is persistent the child may be removed from the program.

Termination Policy

Saint Miriam School reserves the right to exclude children and/or families when it is in the best interest of the program. Termination may include but is not limited to:

- Chronic late payment
- Excessive absence
- Fraudulent information
- Safety and Health concerns
- Failure to follow policies
- Failure to comply with state regulations and guidelines
- Failure to maintain current contact information
- If the staff is unable to meet the physical, social or emotional needs of the child