

ST. HELEN
PRESCHOOL ORIENTATION
2020-2021

SCHOOL MISSION

Based on Gospel values, St. Helen Catholic School is committed to the holistic education of all children.



SCHOOL MISSION

We believe in fostering creativity, motivation, and acceptance in a nurturing and safe environment.

We embrace our multicultural student body and strive to develop a globally aware and responsible school community committed to excellence.

We unite to promote service to the school, parish, and community in the vision of Christ.

We encourage education opportunities that enable children to develop positive self-esteem toward becoming exemplary citizens.



A CHILD'S PLAY IS THEIR WORK!

St. Helen Preschool is a child-centered program designed to meet the needs of our youngest learners. We believe children learn best when they are actively engaged in meaningful hands-on activities. Through this learning the child will begin to develop readiness skills in mathematics, reading, and writing. We provide guided and free-play to nurture their imaginations and problem solving skills. They will also continue to improve those very important language and social skills.



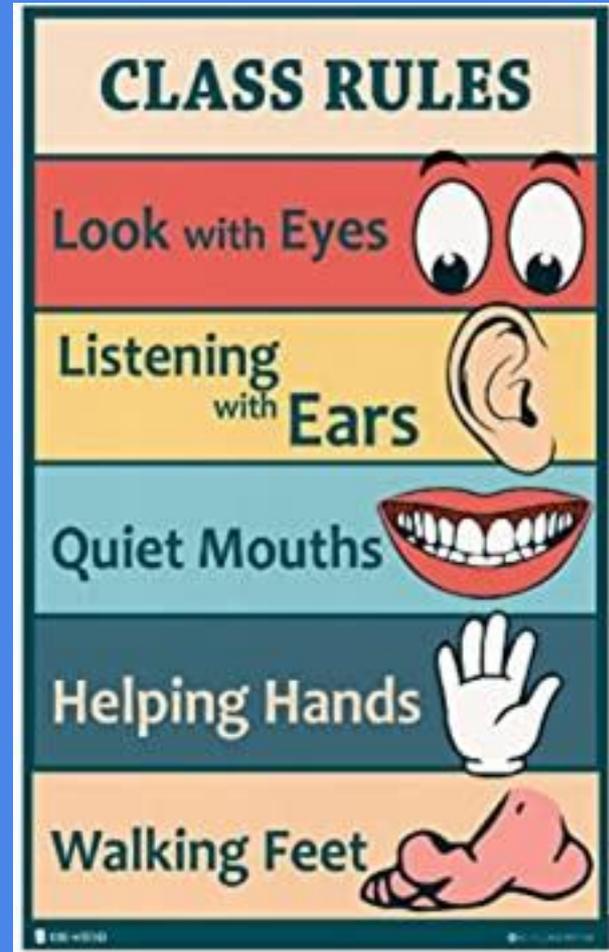
CATHOLIC FAITH

As a unique child of God, each child will be applauded for their own talents. We have daily prayer and weekly religion classes where we share the values and beliefs of our Catholic faith with our students.



CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

We help children gain self-control over their actions by guiding them toward acceptable behavior. They begin to learn to accept responsibility for their actions. We create rules together as a class to help the children take ownership of their environment. We want them to build their confidence and self-esteem while learning how to manage rules and expectations. We emphasize redirection but acknowledge sometimes there will be a loss of privilege or activity.



SO HOW DOES THIS LOOK DURING COVID TIMES?

By following the guidelines set forth by the Archdiocese, the children will still have the opportunity to play, create, and explore while in our classrooms.

*Children will need to wear a **mask** while inside the building at all times. Please have spare masks in their backpacks just in case!

*Children will be able to interact with each other at a **safe distance**.

*Centers will still be available for exploration- they will just look at little different this year.

*Lunch time will still be enjoyed in the classroom with **children safely distanced**.

CENTERS DURING COVID TIMES

- Blocks will be divided so that children have a fresh set to build with.
- Dramatic play will still be open just with no soft toys or dress-up clothes.
- Children will access centers in assigned groups. Newly sanitized materials will be brought into the center for the next group.
- Manipulatives will be divided into individual bags accessible to children.
- The children will have their own **individual bin of supplies** that they will be able to access throughout the day. **These items will not be shared.** As the children move through the classroom used materials will be set aside to sanitize.

LARGE GROUP TIME

We will still have our **traditional morning meetings and story times** but with a twist. We no longer have carpets in the classroom so children will be in their **assigned chairs** (which they will use for everything!) but not necessarily at the tables. Chairs will be moved around to maximize teacher instruction. Yoga mats may be used in some rooms for the child to have **their own special space**.

SPECIALS

Spanish, music, and yoga will now take place in the classroom. The specials teachers will be masked and will adjust their programs to meet the requirements set forth by the Archdiocese.

OUTDOOR TIME

We will still have our traditional recess time. Every class will have their own individual time to play on the playground. **Children will be able to take their masks off as long as they stay socially distanced.** Each classroom will have its own set of outdoor materials that will be sanitized daily. The playground structure will be available for the children to play on once a schedule is finalized. We will also be taking neighborhood walks to maximize our outdoor time.

EATING TIME

Children will be distanced during our eating times but they will still be able to engage with one another. Some children may be at tables while others may have picnics on the floor (utilizing a yoga mat or other easily-cleaned “picnic blanket”). Teachers will be creative in their execution of these very popular times.

Lunch will be served in the classroom. You still have the option to purchase hot lunch if you wish.

We will not be able to assist children with opening their snacks or lunches for this school year. Please make sure your child is able to open their snack/lunch items on their own prior to the first day of school.

SNACKS

Prior to COVID, families would be sent home with a snack schedule and bring snacks to share with the entire class on their assigned day. Unfortunately, that will not be the case this year. Your child will bring a daily snack just for themselves. Please have the snack labeled and not in their lunch bag.

2020-2021 Snack List

- *Fresh fruit & veggies
- *Crackers
- *Veggie straws
- *Applesauce (pouch only please)
- *Pretzels

NAP TIME

If your child stays for the full day they will have rest time after lunch. Children will be able to sleep with their masks off. They will be spread out throughout the classroom and kept head to toe.

Travel size pillows and **small blankets** will be allowed during naptime. Unfortunately, we cannot allow loveys or stuffed animals from home this year.

BATHROOM BREAKS

Classes will have assigned bathroom times. Children will also be able to use the bathroom as needed throughout the school day.

Bathrooms will be sanitized throughout the day by our maintenance staff.

BATHROOM BREAKS

YOUR CHILD MUST BE FULLY POTTY TRAINED PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.

Please make sure your child is able to easily undress to use the bathroom (avoid outfits with a lot of layers, hard-to-undo buttons etc.) and that they are able to get on/off the toilet without assistance. **We will not be able to assist them with undressing or getting on/off the toilet this year.**

In the event that your child has an accident **we will not be able to provide hands-on assistance.** We will be able to give verbal instructions.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We always emphasize independence in preschool but this year it is more important than ever!

- Help your child become comfortable **wearing a mask inside**. We are so used to wearing them on errands but maybe try during a movie at home or playtime. Make it fun and positive!
- Talk about the importance of social distancing (staying in your bubble) and how they can help keep everyone safe
- **Practice, practice, practice!** Have your child practice opening their snack/lunch. Practice the drop-off routine where goodbyes are said in the car. Practice going potty 100% on their own.

Your child's teacher will reach out with more specific instructions about what to expect in their own classrooms. A few additional supplies are being added to the supply list and they will send you those. Please never hesitate to reach out with questions. We are here to support you in the best way we know how. We are so happy to be able to start the year off in person with your child. We hope to make the most of these unusual circumstances and create memories and skills to last a lifetime!

