

## Philosophy & Objectives

We at St. Athanasius feel that growth takes love. Learning through love promotes loving to learn. We provide a warm, nurturing environment where children are valued, respected and feel important in the world. Every person in the world possesses a unique individuality, not simply for mere existence, but to fulfill a distinct purpose. Each child, created by God, must be recognized and accepted as an individual with his/her unique qualities, needs, and pattern of growth.

Our Preschool provides a positive learning environment enhancing the child's social, mental, physical, and Christian development. We seek to give children a readiness in social and academic skills by encouraging exploration of their world through creative art, literature, music, food preparation, self-awareness, and play. Further, our Preschool seeks to provide your child with a home parallel to the security and love of your family. Our caring and qualified staff works to aid your child in developing independence and self-control, while gaining new knowledge and friendships.

*Guided by our philosophy, our objective is to aid each child in their unique development, focusing on these goals:*

- 1) Fostering a love of learning lasting throughout the child's academic career
- 2) Developing self-worth and positive feelings about themselves
- 3) Imparting an understanding of the feelings and rights of others
- 4) Growing their appreciation of God's love for them
- 5) Providing a safe, stimulating environment where children can learn through a variety of caregiver and child initiated activities

## Curriculum

St. Athanasius Preschool seeks to provide a diverse and exciting learning experience through a variety of means and methods including: songs, literature, creative art experiences, sharing and conversation time, science and nature activities, food preparation, field trips throughout the community, celebration of birthdays, holidays & family, and most importantly, play. All of these experiences and activities seek to back our primary skill objectives in these specific areas:

**Fine Motor:** Using a variety of manipulatives, art mediums, and games

**Art:** Cutting, pasting, painting, and coloring which develop fine motor skills as well as allowing free expression of creativity.

**Music:** Through singing, dancing, and instruments the child is exposed to new and familiar music, allowing further free expression.

**Literature:** A wide, rotating selection of books in the quiet reading corner for free choice and regular story time help build a lifetime love for reading.

**Discovery:** Develop an appreciation of nature and science by focus on an enjoyment and exploration and respect for nature.

**Language Enrichment:** Story telling, story listening, introducing both Spanish and sign language skills, familiarize children with different types of communication.

**Dramatic Play:** Materials offered to help build and extend social skills encourage imaginative interaction through dramatic play.

**Large Motor Skills:** A safe gymnasium with an inviting arrangement of equipment encourages active large-muscle exploration.

**Readiness:** Introduction to numbers, letter recognition, shapes, and colors. Weekly themes provide exposure to in-depth information on unique topics.

## Preschool Daily Routine

Children learn through routine. A general schedule of your child's routine at St. Athanasius Preschool is as follows (subject to change depending on student needs):

- Wash hands and sign in.
- Table activity until all children have arrived
- Circle time, including:
  - Prayer, songs, assignment of daily helpers, calendar, flag, weather, story
- Gym time
- Centers, including but not limited to: art, science, math, blocks, imaginative play, writing, puzzles, ABC's, technology, games
- Snack: Brought by parents, scheduled on snack calendar (see *Snacks & Nutrition*)
- Library/Storytime
- Religion: Your child will hear Bible stories and be taught from our curriculum *I Am Special*
- Craft/Outside time
- Dismissal

## Facilities

Located within the St. Athanasius School, the classroom is blessed with a wealth of different areas for play and learning. They have access to the gymnasium for physical activity.

The three-year old program is located on the lower level floor of the school and has it's own accessible restroom and lavatory.

## Licensing

St. Athanasius Preschool is fully licensed under the Iowa Department of Human Services.

## School Hours & Closing

**AM Preschool:** 8:00 am - 11:00 pm ~~Monday, Wednesday, Friday~~

The preschool will follow the Elementary School calendar and will be closed the same days as St. Athanasius closings. ***Please follow our academic calendar posted on the Website for details concerning the specific school year.***

## Winter Weather Cancellations, Delays, and Early Dismissals

St. Athanasius preschool follows the St. Athanasius School emergency closing procedures. If the elementary school is cancelled due to inclement weather, the preschool will be cancelled for that day. St. Athanasius School will generally follow the Jesup Public School dismissal/cancellation notices, please check local stations on the questionable days.

**If the elementary school is delayed, preschool will be cancelled.**

## **Board of Directors**

The St. Athanasius Board of Education, in conjunction with the Archdiocese of Dubuque, governs the school. The board consists of seven members of the Parish plus the Priest. The functions of the Board of Education are to:

- a. Insure that the operation of the St. Athanasius School complies with the laws of the State and with diocesan policy and is in accord with the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.
- b. Develop the budget for the St. Athanasius School.
- c. Oversee the collection and disbursement of financial resources necessary for the operation of the School.
- d. Provide and maintain the facilities necessary to meet the educational goals of school.
- e. Determine and implement a long-range plan for St. Athanasius.
- f. Formulate and adopt general, educational, and financial policies that will guide the administration and enable the School to function efficiently and in such a manner as to maximize educational opportunities and enhance the quality of education provided.

## **Notice of Nondiscrimination**

Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, employees, sources of referral of applicants for admission and employment with schools in the Archdiocese of Dubuque are hereby notified that the schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability as defined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act, in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. Any person having inquiries concerning schools' compliance with the regulations implementing Title VI, and Title IX, of the Civil Rights Laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 is directed to contact: Lynn Osterhaus Contact Info:

Lynn Osterhaus,  
Human Resource Coordinator  
1229 Mt. Loretta Avenue  
Dubuque, Iowa 52004  
Phone: (563) 566-2580

## **Phone Numbers/Contacts**

School Office                      827-1314  
Website                              [SaintASchool.com](http://SaintASchool.com)

## **Admission Policy**

St. Athanasius Preschool admits children regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin or religion. Children who are 3 years old up to kindergarten age are eligible to enroll. Admission requirements and enrollment procedures are as follows:

1. Enrollment is based on a first-come, first-serve basis pending completion of necessary forms.
2. A child must be 3 years old by September 15th of that school year to be admitted into the 3 year old class.
3. Children in the 3 year old class will not be allowed to advance into the 4 year old class during the school year.
4. Children must be fully potty trained to be admitted into St. Athanasius Preschool.
5. All necessary (DHS) forms, medical and immunization records must be completed and on file in the office before the first day of the child's attendance. Forms may be picked up in the school office or online.

### Dismissal Procedures

Sometimes preschool is not the most beneficial option for a child. If a child is exhibiting consistently disruptive or dangerous behavior, we may ask you to withdraw your child. No child will be withdrawn without a conference with the parent, director and teachers.

Parents are asked to provide one month's notice if and when they choose to withdraw their child from the program.

### Tuition

Tuition is \$900 for the year payable in 10 monthly installments of \$90 each. No refunds are given for illness, vacations, snow days, etc.

### General Health Policy

Everyone must wash their hands when entering the classroom. Each child is required by state regulations to have on file a physical examination report and an immunization record.

This is required prior to admission into the center and must be done before EACH school year the child attends the program. The center must also have on file for each child a signed Emergency Medical Consent form authorizing emergency care at the local hospital.

Emergency numbers for reaching the parent or guardian and another authorized person must also be on file.

No child who arrives at the center noticeably ill, with a rash, or with a fever will be admitted for that day. If a child becomes ill, parents will be called to pick up the child.

Parents who are working or going to school are encouraged to have a back-up plan for a sick child. Children absent due to a contagious illness MUST have a signed statement from a physician indicating that the child is no longer contagious in order to re-enter the center. If your child should contract a communicable disease (please reference included chart), please inform the director so that precautions may be taken. We request that you phone in or email the teacher to let us know when your child is ill and will not be attending school. If a child is not feeling well or is running a temperature, other arrangements must be made for that day. Your child MUST be fever free for 24 hours without the aid of Tylenol (or other fever reducer) or have been on an antibiotic for 24 hours upon returning to the center.

Please keep your child home if he/she:

- Has a fever (99°F and over must stay home)
- Is vomiting or has vomited in the last 8 hours
- Has a communicable illness such as chicken pox, Strep infection or any other illness that is considered contagious by Buchanan County Health, please reference included chart under Communicable Disease Chart
- Has diarrhea. If your child is still experiencing diarrhea, do not bring him/her back unless you have a signed, written statement from your physician indicating that it is not contagious.

You will be contacted immediately if your child exhibits any of the above symptoms. You will be asked to remove your child until the symptoms have subsided. ***This policy is for your child's welfare as well as the welfare of other children in the center and will be strongly enforced.***

## **Medication**

Any sort of medication to be given at the center will be given by certified staff. The medication must be authorized for administration and accompanied by clear instructions in writing by the parent/guardian. Authorization forms are included on our website or are available from the center. A parent must complete these forms weekly. The medication must be in its original container with its name, physician's name, and the amount to be given printed on the label. Medications will be stored in a designated area inaccessible to children. Medications may NOT be stored in child's cubby or backpack. Pharmacies will usually divide the medication into two separate bottles upon request.

## **Absences**

We ask that you call the school office (827-1314) if your child will be absent or late, Please also call or email to inform a teacher should there be an inconsistency in usual pickup. For instance, if your child will be picked up early, later or by a different person than usual even if this person is listed on your release forms. Doing so allows the teachers to be prepared and helpful, and on the lookout for unexpected inconsistencies.

## **Clothing**

Preschool does not have a dresscode, however, please keep in mind the following: We encourage the children to explore and engage in fun, sometimes messy activities, clothing should be functional and washable. Additionally, belts, suspenders, jeans with difficult snaps, body suits, and jumpers that button in the back hinder the child's independence (especially in toileting) and should be avoided. Children will have a special cubby area with a hook to store their things.

Every child needs to have an extra set of clothing on hand at all times (seasonally appropriate). As the weather changes we ask that your child be appropriately dressed for outdoors. Additionally, as footwear is important for the activity of children, flip-flops should never be worn to the center, as they tend to cause trips, blisters, and constrict active movement. Sandals must have a back strap. We ask that you label ALL of your child's extra clothing which could get lost or mixed up with someone else's clothing e.g. mittens, boots, hats, coats, shoes, change of clothes.

## **Drop-off & Pick-up**

All Preschool students are to be dropped off and picked-up by a parent/guardian or authorized adult. Preschoolers are not eligible to take the school bus. Children should not be brought to preschool more than 5 minutes before class begins, nor picked up more than 5 minutes after class is over.

The first few weeks of school drop off and pick up can be confusing, so we ask for your help. As the teachers are watching children in the classroom who have already arrived, it is not always possible to greet every parent upon arriving and leaving. The teacher's eyes are on the children coming and going, but to insure the safety of your children we ask you to please make eye contact with a teacher upon arriving and leaving. This will also help us to recognize the parents of the children. Once the parents have arrived at pickup the child is the responsibility of the parents.

## **Newsletter & Calendars**

Periodically a newsletter will be sent via email, available in hardcopy upon request. Please take the time to read through it. It contains information on what your children have done and will be doing at Preschool. Calendars are also posted each month, one containing important dates of upcoming events and the other with the snack schedule for the month.

## Communicable Disease Chart

Below is a list that contains many common communicable diseases, but should not be assumed to be a complete catalogue. Readmission after a communicable illness shall include written permission from the health officer, physician or practitioner, before any child is readmitted to the center/preschool following any disease, which requires exclusion, not mere absence.

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Usual Interval</u>	<u>Signs &amp; Symptoms</u>	<u>Minimum Exclusion</u>
Immunization is Available	Between exposure and first symptoms of disease.		
Chicken Pox	13 to 17 days	Mild symptoms and fever. Pustules are distributed over the body, mostly on covered parts of the body.	7 days from onset of pecks or until pecks became dry
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	24 to 72 hours	Itching, redness, and watery discharge, eye discharge.	Until treatment begins or, Or, approves re-admission
Erythema Infectiosum (5th Disease)	4 to 20 days	Usual age 5 to 14 years, unusual in adults, Brief prodrome of low-grade fever followed by Erythema (slapped cheek) appearance on cheeks, lace-like rash on extremities lasting a few days to 3 weeks  Rash seems to roost.	After diagnosis, no exclusion.
Gemini Measles (Rubella)	14 to 23 days	Usually mild. Enlarged glands in neck and behind ears. Brief red rash.	7 days from onset of rash. Keep away from pregnant women.
Hemorrhagic	2 to 4 days	Fever, throbbing, lethargy. Swollen neck and back	Until physician permits return
Hepatitis A	Variable 15 to 50 days, (Average 30 days)	Abdominal pain, nausea, usually fever, Skin and eyes may turn yellow	14 days from onset of clinical disease and at least 7 days from onset of jaundice.
Impetigo	1 to 3 days	Inflamed sores, with pus	45 hours after antibiotic therapy started or Or, permits return
	10 days to fever onset of rash to rash	Begin with fever, conjunctivitis, runny nose, cough, then blotchy red rash,	4 days from
Meningococcal Meningitis	2 to 10 (Commonly 3 to 4) days	Headache, nausea, stiff neck, fever.	Until physician permits return.
Wumps	12 to 25 days	Fever, swelling and tenderness of glands at angle of jaw.	0 days after onset of swollen glands or until swelling disappears,
Pediculosis (Head Lice)	7 days for eggs to hatch	Line and nits (eggs) on hair.	24 hours after adequate treatment to kill lice and nits.
Ringworm of Scalp	10 to 14 days	Scaly patch, usually ring shaped, on scalp,	No exclusion, no swimming, gym or contact sports.
Scabies	2 to 4 weeks Initial treatment. exposure: 1 to 4 days re-exposure	Thy burrows in skin caused by mites	Until 24 hours start
Scarlet Fever Strep Throat	1 to 3 days	Sudden on-set, vomiting, sore throat, fever, rash (not on face) usually only with first infection.	24 hours after antibiotic started and no fever. Rash fever.
Whooping Cough (Pertussis)	7 to 10 days	Head cold, slight fever, cough, characteristic whoop after about 2 weeks.	5 days after start of antibiotic treatment,

## **Snacks & Nutrition**

There will be a morning snack during preschool hours. The snack calendar will inform you as to when your child will need to provide snack for his/her class. Some quick examples of perfect snacks are whole-wheat crackers/carrots, fruit/yogurt, or cheese/apples. Also this is the perfect age to expose children to different fruits and vegetables. If you choose to bring juice make sure that it is 100% juice, not a juice drink. However, we will provide milk or water at school. Our staff (who are all First Aid certified by the American Heart Association) closely supervises snack time. However, please be aware of potential choking hazards when choosing snacks. Special treats for birthdays are acceptable, but must also include other foods to meet the nutritional requirements, such as fruits or vegetables. A suggestion: Angel food cupcakes are a lot less messy than regular cupcakes for young children.

***Food Supplements, Modified Diets, and/or Food Allergies:*** If your child requires a food supplement or a modified diet, you must secure written information from your physician regarding this. Additionally, if your child has a food allergy, please notify the preschool before the first day of attendance so accommodations can be made. Please speak with the administrator for more details regarding this policy.

## **Field Trips**

We will plan a few field trips during the year. The field trips will be marked on the calendar. Several days before our field trips a permission slip will be sent home with your child informing you of the time and place of the trip. This form MUST be signed by you and returned in order for your child to accompany us on the field trip. We will need parent volunteers to go with us on our trips. Parent volunteers will also be asked to help transport the children with carseats. Sign up sheets will be posted in your child's classroom.

## **Guidance Policy**

Acceptable behavior is encouraged by use of positive reinforcement. This gives children good feelings about his/her behavior and serves as an example to other children to act in such a way to receive praise. At St. Athanasius we treat all children with dignity and respect in all situations. Rather than reprimand, we work to redirect. When a child acts inappropriately, the child will be pulled aside quietly and privately reminded of the appropriate behavior.

There are some cases when time out may be necessary, for example, if a child is hurting another or has been reminded several times to correct a specific behavior. In this case, the child will sit their age in minutes (3min. for a 3 y.o., 4min. for a 4 y.o., etc.). Following the sit, the teacher and child will discuss the event, focusing on the negative behavior (rather than the child), requiring the child to think about the inappropriate behavior to encourage development of their self-control. All consequences to negative behavior will be clear, reasonable, logical (to a child), and followed through with the child as an opportunity for learning and development.

## **Biting Policy**

Biting is a natural part of a child's development. Children bite for a variety of reasons such as teething, lack of verbal skills, overstimulation, hunger, fatigue, aggression, attention-getting, etc. Biting often surfaces when preschoolers are first in a new setting. Biting, however, is not an acceptable behavior. The staff will carefully, thoughtfully, and consistently handle any biting situation by:

- Stopping the action quickly by saying "No" or "Stop"

- Assessing the situation quickly to determine the cause of biting (child's frustration, hunger, teething, fatigue, separation anxiety, etc.)
- Attending to the child that has been bit.
- Talking to the biter in the following manner:  
"Teeth are not for our friends." "At preschool we use our words."
- Redirecting the biter to another activity or area.
- Finishing the interactions on a positive note by reassuring the biter that he or she is still important to you and the rest of the staff.

If the biting continues, the child will be put in time out for (1) minute per year of age. If a bite breaks the skin and/or draws blood, the child will be sent home for the day. The staff will notify the parents of the biter and the parents of the child that was bitten in writing as an incident report, informing them of its severity.

Parents will be asked to work cooperatively with staff to rectify the biting situation, If the biting becomes ongoing and more severe, and the child continues to bite and injure other children, it will be necessary for the parents to withdraw their child from the program. The parents will be given one week to make alternative arrangements. *It is the responsibility of the preschool staff to ensure the safety of all children in our care.*

### Outdoor Play

Research has shown that children stay healthier when they have daily outdoor play. Based on this information and DHS requirements, outdoor play will be included in our program when weather permits. We will limit the amount of time outside when the temperatures are very warm or very cold. If the situation requires it, we will also adjust outdoor time due to rain, threatening weather, ozone warnings, etc. On days that outdoor play is not provided, we will include a time for indoor gross motor activities. Please send your children with the proper clothing so they may be comfortable and safe whenever we are outside.

### Supervision & Access

We have an open door policy toward parents and primary caregivers at St. Athanasius. Parents should feel free to visit at any time (a phone call first is always appreciated), although we ask that care is taken to cause minimal disruption to the program.

In the interest of child safety, it is necessary to take precautionary and preventative measures to assure access to children is limited to only those persons with authorization. Staff will release children only to authorized persons on the release form provided by the parent. If an emergency arises, the parent must provide a written, signed note giving permission for a specific person to pick up the child. If staff does not recognize, or is unsure of the identity of any person, Photo Identification may be checked.

All staff have regular background checks and are responsible for ensuring the safety of children and preventing harm by being proactive and diligent in supervising not only the children, but other people present at the facility. Parent volunteers, when present with St. Athanasius preschool, should follow the policies set forth in this handbook and the guidance of present staff. Staff will provide the primary supervision over both children and volunteers, monitoring all present, assuring proper care and conduct.

**Unlimited Access** (*posted in accordance with DHS regulations of all preschool facilities*): Parents shall be afforded unlimited access to their children and to the teacher caring for their children during the preschools hours of operation or whenever their child is in preschool, unless parental contact is prohibited by court order. The provider shall inform all parents of this policy in writing at the time child is admitted to preschool.