Saint Athanasius

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St. Athanasius Catholic School Parent/Guardian **4 Yr. Old Pre-K** Handbook 2026-2027

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4 Yr Old Pre-K Policies and Procedures

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Welcome to St Athanasius 4 Yr Old Pre-K (IQPPS 10.1)

The program's goal is to provide a high quality 4 Yr Old Pre-K program meeting each child's needs, including children with disabilities and those from a diverse background. The 4 Yr Old Pre-K provides a rich learning environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and supports them to take risks that lead to new skill development. It is a setting where children feel safe, respected, and cared for.This is an opportunity for all four-year-old children to take part in planned, active learning experiences to build their readiness skills. This program also serves children on individualized education plans (IEP) that are transitioning from Early Access Services into the public school system. The 4 Yr Old Pre-K program has adopted and meets the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, administered by the Iowa Department of Education. 4 Yr Old Pre-K is funded through the Statewide Voluntary Preschool. The Iowa Early Learning Standards are used to guide expectations for the children and instructional practices.

Mission, Philosophy and Goals (IQPPS 10.1)

Mission:

St. Athanasius school's mission is to provide an exceptional Catholic education for every student within our faith community, built on a foundation of Catholic virtues to learn, lead, serve, and pray as disciples of Christ.

Vision

The St. Athanasius community, formed in faith, is a nurturing and forward thinking environment that teaches well-rounded individuals of a world that exists outside the classroom walls.

4 Great Things

Learning - Faith-Filled Education Rooted in Catholic Virtues -
Leading - Whole Child Development -
Serving - Dedicated and Caring Faculty -
Praying - Strong Community built on Faith and Service -

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1. Learning: Faith-Filled Education Rooted in Catholic Virtues
At St. Athanasius, students grow in both knowledge and faith. Through daily prayer, liturgical celebrations, and a Christ-centered curriculum, we help children build a lifelong relationship with God, living out the values of compassion, service, and integrity.

2. Leading: Whole-Child Development
We believe every child is uniquely gifted by God. Our approach nurtures academic excellence, emotional well-being, creativity, and spiritual growth—ensuring students are supported and challenged to thrive in all aspects of life.

3. Serving: Dedicated and Caring Faculty
Our teachers and staff are more than educators—they are mentors, role models, and partners in your child's journey. Their deep commitment ensures each student receives personalized attention, encouragement, and the tools they need to succeed.

4. Praying: Strong Community Built on Faith and Service
St. Athanasius isn't just a school—it's a family. Rooted in our Catholic mission, we foster a supportive, welcoming community where families, students, and staff come together to learn, lead, serve, and pray as disciples of Christ.

I. Philosophy of St. Athanasius School

At St. Athanasius School, we believe in nurturing the whole child within a Christ-centered environment rooted in Catholic virtues and the teachings of the Church. Our mission is to form disciples of Christ who are prepared to learn, lead, serve, and pray throughout their lives.

• We strive to develop a program that fosters personal growth, moral responsibility, and spiritual formation in a faith-filled community. In this environment, children are guided to discover their God-given talents and develop the skills necessary to live as compassionate, thoughtful, and successful individuals.

• We encourage each student to grow as a self-directed, respectful, and independent child of God, promoting freedom of choice in age-appropriate ways that support moral development and spiritual maturity.

• We are committed to making learning a joyful and meaningful journey, rooted in Gospel values. By honoring each student's individual gifts—learning style, pace, and abilities—we personalize instruction to inspire confidence, creativity, and a love for learning.

• We intentionally cultivate an atmosphere where every student and adult feels valued and loved as a unique creation of God. By celebrating each individual's dignity and worth, we help all members of our community grow in faith and self-esteem.

• We believe that the formation of the whole child—mind, body, and spirit—requires active partnership among faculty, families, parish, and community. Through this collaboration, we draw upon the gifts of the Body of Christ to help students fully realize their potential as servant leaders in the world.

4 yr old Pre-K Philosophy: (IQPPS 2.1, 7.2)

4 yr old Pre-K program believes:

- Students learning is the most important element of our society.
- Students learn best in a safe and caring environment.
- Innovative learning activities and various teaching strategies enhance learning.
- Respect for diversity develops tolerance within the school and our society.
- Effective learning produces life-long skills.
- Leaders never lose sight of best practices.
- Teaching the importance of citizenship benefits the school and the community.
- Productive discipline incorporates control, consistency, and care.
- Memorable and enjoyable activities foster learning.
- School, home, and community cooperation facilitates and reinforces learning.

The 4 yr old Pre-K program believes

- Each child should receive quality care and be provided with a developmentally appropriate education.
- All children and families should be treated with respect and kindness. We will always appreciate family, cultural, and individual differences.
- all young children experience success through active learning opportunities within a safe, nurturing environment that meets the individual needs of each child.
- With the combined efforts of parents, educators, community and students, all children will succeed intellectually, physically, emotionally, spiritually and socially. To help in this effort, staff will provide support and resources for families.
- Must create an environment that is warm and caring, which gives our children a sense of security and belonging.
- Young children learn best through activities, exploration, and the use of their senses. Active

thinking and experimenting provides children an opportunity to learn and function at their own developmental age level, to find out how things work, and to learn first hand about the world in which we live.

- Play provides the foundation for future academic learning. Active learning through play enables us to promote the objectives of our early childhood curriculum.

Goals for Children:

- Children will show competence in social/emotional, physical, cognitive, spiritual, and language development skills.
- Children will be enthusiastic and curious learners.
- Children will be safe and healthy.

Goals for Families:

- Families will feel welcome in the classroom and school.
- Families will work with the school in a meaningful partnership to help their children be better prepared to learn to read and write.
- Families will advocate for their children.

Curriculum (IQPPS 2.1, 2.2, 7.2)

Curriculum is a framework for learning opportunities and experiences. It is a process by which learners obtain knowledge and understanding, while developing life skills. It is continually revised and evaluated to make learning fun and exciting. It is the policy of St. Athanasius that the curriculum content and instructional materials utilized reflect the cultural and racial diversity present in the United States and the variety of careers, roles, and lifestyles open to women as well as men in our society. One of the objectives of the total curriculum and teaching strategies is to reduce stereotyping and to eliminate bias on the basis of sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, and physical disability. The curriculum should foster respect and appreciation for the cultural diversity found in our country and an awareness of the rights, duties, and responsibilities of each individual as a member of a multicultural nonsexist society. The 4 yr old Pre-K program uses Teaching Strategies, Gold, Read It Again, and other research and evidence-based comprehensive curricula designed for four- to five-year-olds such as Second Step Early Learning. They include the following areas for development and learning: social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, math, science and technology, social studies, the arts (exploration and expression), and health & safety. The curriculums are modified and adapted as needed.

Enrollment

Equal Educational Opportunity

It is the policy of the St. Athanasius 4 yr old Pre-K to not discriminate in its education programs or educational activities on the basis of sexual orientation, race, religion, color, national origin, marital status or disability. Students are educated in programs, which foster knowledge of, and respect and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary contributions of diverse cultural groups, as well as men and women, to society. Students who feel they have been discriminated against are encouraged to report it to the school district Affirmative Action Coordinator. Inquiries may also be directed in writing to the Director of the region VII Office of Civil Rights, US Department of Education, 310 W. Wisconsin Ave., Ste. 800, Milwaukee, WI, 53203-2292, (414) 291-1111, or the Iowa Department of Education, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, IA 50319-0146, (515) 281-5294. Procedures and levels are outlined in district policy for resolving complaints and are available upon request from the administrative office.

Eligibility

Children must be four years of age on or before September 15th of the current school year. Pre-registration will begin in the spring of the year. Registration materials are available from the St. Athanasius office. Registration will be ongoing until all spaces are filled.

Admissions Priorities The following policies provide guidance on enrollment decisions in the case of limited enrollment or waitlist situations at certain grade levels. Priority enrollment is given to:

1. Children of St. Athanasius employees, currently-enrolled students, and siblings of current students whose families are in good standing.
2. Children from families who are registered, contributing members of St. Athanasius Parish.
3. Children from families who are registered members in good standing at other Catholic parishes.
4. Children from families of other faiths. Date of family registration will determine enrollment priority in the event of high demand for placement in a specific grade level.

Hours

General Information (IQPPS 9.9, 9.12, 10.4)

Prior to participating in the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

- The maximum class size is 18 students.
- Our center maintains a ratio of 1 adult to 10 children at all times including indoors and outdoors. Additional staff may be provided based on the individual needs of children.
- Class size may be reduced based on the number of students needing specialized instruction.
- The 4 Yr Old Pre-K teacher and paraprofessional when applicable will have primary responsibility for students enrolled in the classroom.
- The daily schedule allows for minimal group, staff and classroom transitions.
- All children will be within “line of sight” of adults both indoors and outdoors unless toileting.
- When toileting, students will be monitored by sound and checked visually when necessary.
- A First Aid Kit is available for use in the classroom and taken outdoors at all times.
- The elementary principal will maintain a current list of available substitutes for both the teacher and paraprofessional. Should one of the staff need to temporarily leave the room, arrangements will be made to cover the classroom to maintain the staff-child ratio.

Inclusion (IQPPS 9.10)

The 4 yr old Pre-K program includes all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. Staff are aware of the identified needs of individual children and are trained to follow through on specific intervention plans. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience for teachers, students, other children and their families. The 4 yr old Pre-Kl facility meets the Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility requirements.

A CHILD'S DAY

Who Works In the 4 Yr Old Pre-K (IQPPS 10.3)

Program Administrator: The PK-8 principal is designated as the program administrator supervising the 4 Yr Old Pre-K program. The principal meets all qualifications described in the IQPPS Standards. (IQPPS 10.3)

Teacher: A full-time teacher licensed by the Iowa Board of Educational Examiners and holding an Early Childhood endorsement is assigned to the 4 Yr Old Pre-K classroom.

Paraprofessional: A full time paraprofessional in the classroom carries out activities under the supervision of the teacher. The paraprofessional has specialized training in early childhood education.

School Nurse: The 4 yr old pre-k will have the assistance of the voluntary on call school nurse. The current voluntary nurse is a certified RN and is recertified every three years. When needed she attends to the health needs of the students while they are at school.

Support Staff: Cedar River Valley Area Education Agency support staff provide resources and assistance to the teacher and classroom upon request to help all children be successful in the 4 yr old Pre-K setting. Such staff may include: early childhood consultant, speech and language pathologist, social worker, occupational therapist, physical therapist or others.

Daily Activities

A consistent daily schedule is planned to offer a balance of learning activities. Learning is both formal and informal.

Play is planned for every day. Listening is balanced with talking, group activities with solitary time, indoors with outdoors, quiet play with noisy play. Your child will have the opportunity for the following types of activities every day:

- Large and Small Group Activities
- Self-directed Play
- Learning Center Activities: Art, Construction Zone, Dramatic Play, Book Nook, Puzzles & Games, Computers and Technology, Exploration Station, Writing, Manipulatives and Sensory Table.
- Story Time
- Individual Activities
- Outdoor Activities

Weekly newsletters are sent to the parents.

Supervision Policy (IQPPS 3.7)

No child will be left unsupervised while attending 4 yr old Pre-KI. Staff will supervise primarily by sight. Supervision for short intervals by sound is permissible as long as staff check within five minutes on children who are out-of-sight (e.g. those who can use the toilet independently, who are in the library area, etc.)

Clothing

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as rubber-soled and closed-toe shoes to school. While we encourage the use of paint smocks or shirts during art projects, we can't guarantee that spills or stains will not occur. If needed, families may be asked to provide an extra set of clothing for their child in case of an "accident" or messy play. Please clearly label the clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes. For additional information on dress code please see Parent/Student Handbook.

Outside Play and Learning (IQPPS 5.4, 9.1, 9.2, 9.5)

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. We use the Child Care Weather Watch guidelines produced by Healthy Child Care Iowa to determine if the Wind Chill Factor or Heat Index is safe for outdoor play. The outdoor play area is arranged so that children are supervised by sight and sound. In cases when we cannot go outside (due to weather conditions) children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside and are supervised at the same level as outdoor equipment. Activities offered include, but are not limited to, Bean Bag games, two-person parachutes, crawling tunnel, activity songs such as The Freeze, yoga, etc.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside, it is important to dress him/her according to the weather. When it is cold outside he/she needs a warm coat, mittens or gloves and a hat (labeled with your child's name). For the warmer days, dressing your child lightly is just as important. For those in-between days, dressing your child in layers is a practical idea. It is expected that all students will go outside unless there is a doctor's note indicating the reason why the child cannot go outside.

There are areas on the playground for children to be in the shade and still be active. We encourage you to bring a hat or other clothing for your child to wear as another protection from the sun. Sunscreen or sunblock with UVB and UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher will only be applied to your child's exposed skin when provided by the parents and with written parental permission. We will only use an insect repellent containing DEET when provided by the parents and with written parental permission no more than once a day to protect your child from insect bites when the public health authorities recommend its use. Alternatives to DEET in the original container may be used when supplied and accompanied by appropriate written approval.

Water activities (IQPPS 5.7)

During water table play children are involved in active experiences with science and math concepts. Children with sores on their hands are not allowed to participate with others in the water table to ensure that no infectious diseases are spread. Children are not allowed to drink the water during water play activities. When the activity period is complete, the water table is drained and refilled with fresh water before a new group of children comes to participate. Outdoor water play is limited to tubs and buckets or containers. We do not participate in swimming pool activities. Staff supervise all children by sight and sound in all areas with access to water in tubs, buckets, and water tables.

Objects From Home

Because the4 yr old Pre-K program provides ample toys and learning materials for your child, we ask that you **do not** bring toys from home. If your child brings an “attachment” item from home, we ask that it is small enough to fit inside his/her backpack or cubby. Please do not allow children to bring gum, candy, money, or toy weapons to school. **The program cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys brought from home.**

Weapon Policy (IQPPS 10.5)

No student shall carry, have in his or her possession, store, keep, leave, place or put into the possession of another student any real weapon or a look-alike weapon on any school premises, in any school vehicle or any vehicle used by the school or for school purposes, in any school building or other buildings or premises used for school functions, whether or not any person is endangered by such actions. "Look-alike weapon" means any item that resembles or appears to be a weapon.

Snacks/Foods and Nutrition (IQPPS 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.15)

Attitudes about food develop early in life. The food children eat affects their well-being, their physical growth, their ability to learn, and their overall behavior. We have an opportunity to help children learn about foods, to enjoy a variety of foods from their own culture and others, and to help them begin to appreciate their bodies need to be strong, flexible, and healthy. Eating moderately, eating a variety of foods, and eating in a relaxed atmosphere are healthy habits for young children to form.

Children attending 4 yr old Pre-K are served breakfast at 7:50. They will be served lunch and a snack later in the afternoon. Meals and snacks are at regularly scheduled times 2 hours apart and not more than 3 hours apart. The Pre-K serves a wide variety of nutritional snacks, and encourages children to expand their tastes by at least trying a portion of the food offered.

All food is prepared, served, and stored in accordance with the U.S. Department of Agriculture School Lunch Program guidelines. Snacks and meals brought from home must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Clean, sanitary drinking water is available to children throughout the day. Staff discards any foods with expired dates. Foods that are hotter than 110 degrees Fahrenheit are kept out of children’s reach. Foods requiring refrigeration will be kept cold until served.

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child’s health care provider should provide the program with an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child’s care. Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child’s allergies in the food preparation area and in areas of the facility the child uses to serve as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day. Program staff will keep a daily record documenting the type and quantity of food a child consumes when any child with a disability has special feeding needs and provide parents with that information.

The 4 Yr Old Pre-K does not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment, nor will staff ever threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Birthdays (IQPPS 5.10)

Birthdays are an important and significant event in the life of a child. They afford the opportunity for children to be given special recognition. Accordingly, students who wish to bring treats for the class on their birthday may do so. Food that comes from home for sharing among the children must be either whole fruits or commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers. Those who have summer birthdays are welcome to choose a school day to celebrate with their class. Invitations to parties outside of school that do not include the entire class will not be distributed at school.

Child Guidance and Discipline (IQPPS 1.3)

The 4 yr old pre-k staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, planning ahead to prevent problems. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Where the child understands words, discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. The staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property and learn to be responsible for their actions. The staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.

Challenging Behavior (IQPPS 3.6)

The staff in the 4 yr old pre-k is highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. They anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors, the staff promotes prosocial behavior by:

- interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
- modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors
- helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed

The staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious, and challenging behavior, the staff, parents, and AEA support staff will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. The staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior.

Permissible Methods of Discipline: (IQPPS 1.3)

For acts of aggression and fighting (biting, scratching, hitting) staff will set appropriate expectations for children and guide them in solving problems. This positive guidance will be the usual technique for managing children with challenging behaviors rather than punishing them for having problems they

have not yet learned to solve. In addition, staff may:

- Separate the children involved
- Immediately comfort the individual who was injured
- Care for any injury suffered by the victim involved in the incident.
- Notify parents or legal guardians of children involved in the incident.
- Review the adequacy of the teaching staff supervision, appropriateness of program activities, and administrative corrective action if there is a recurrence.

Prohibited Practices

The program does not, and will not, employ any of the following disciplinary procedures.

- harsh or abusive tone of voice with the children nor make threats or derogatory remarks.
- physical punishment, including spanking, hitting, shaking, or grabbing, psychological abuse or coercion.
- any punishment that would humiliate, frighten, or subject a child to neglect, withhold nor threaten to withhold food as a form of discipline.

Child Assessment (IQPPS 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9)

Guiding principles:

It is this school's belief that formal and informal assessment of young children should be purposeful, developmentally appropriate, and take place in the natural setting by familiar adults. Families will have access to information about assessments used and staff will work with families to determine the best assessment methods for their child. The results will be used for planning experiences for the children and to guide instruction. Assessment will never be used to label children or to include or exclude them from a program. A family's culture and a child's experiences outside the school setting are recognized as being an important piece of the child's growth and development. All results will be kept confidential, placed in each child's file, and stored in a secure filing cabinet. Children are assessed in the following ways:

- Teaching Strategies Gold is modified to align with the Iowa Early Learning Standards. It records student progress in all developmental areas at the beginning, middle, and end of the year.
- Observation data provides an ongoing anecdotal record of each child's progress during daily activities.
- Individualized Growth and Development Indicators (IGDI's) are given at the beginning (fall), middle (winter), and end of the year (spring) to monitor the growth of early literacy skills.
- Child portfolios are organized by the teaching staff and include the assessments, observational data, and child work samples collected on an on-going basis.
- Families are asked to contribute information about their child's progress. Young children often show different skills in different settings. Working together, the teaching staff and families can gather a complete picture of a child's growth and development through enrollment paperwork, other questionnaires, informal and formal P/T conferences, etc.

The information from the above is used in the following ways:

- To provide information about children's needs, interests, and abilities in order to plan developmentally appropriate experiences for them
- To describe the developmental progress and learning of children
- To provide information to parents about their children's developmental milestones
- To indicate possible areas that require additional assessment.

(IQPPS 7.3, 7.5, 8.1, 8.2) Assessment information will be shared formally with families during Parent Teacher Conferences in the fall and spring. In addition, written 4 Yr Old Pre-K progress information will be communicated to families three times during the school year.

The 4 yr old pre-k staff will communicate weekly regarding children's activities and developmental milestones. Informal conferences are always welcome and can be requested at any time.

If, through observation or information on the Teaching Strategies, Gold, or IGDI's Assessment, the teacher feels that there is a possible issue related to a developmental delay or other special need, she/he will communicate this to the family during a conference, sharing documentation of the concern. Suggestions for next steps may include the following, with the knowledge and consent of the parents:

- The staff requests assistance from the Central Rivers Area Education Agency (AEA) as an early intervention process. This team engages in problem identification, plan interventions, provide support, and make outside resources available to those individuals requesting assistance. The AEA team is available and functional for all students and staff in the building.
- A request made to ceCentral Rivers Area Education Agency for support and additional ideas or more formalized testing can be made.

The 4 yr old pre-k staff would assist in arranging for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

If the appropriate team determines a child needs special accommodations, those accommodations are included in the materials, environment, and lesson plans for that child. Examples include, but are not limited to, sign language and visuals for children with hearing impairments or language delays and behavior plans for children whose behavior does not respond to the typical strategies used by staff in the classroom.

The program provides families with information about programs and services from other organizations, such as Central Rivers AEA, DHS, Child Care Resource and Referral, Parents as Teachers programs, medical professionals, etc...

Program Assessment (IQPPS 10.15)

4 yr old Pre-K implements the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards. We had a verification visit during the 2022-2023 and a desk audit in the 2023-2024 school year to confirm we are meeting these standards. Administrators, families, staff, and/or other routinely participating adults will be involved annually in a program evaluation that measures progress toward the program's goals and objectives. The annual evaluation process includes gathering evidence on all areas of program functioning, including policies and procedures, program quality, screening effectiveness, children's progress and learning, family involvement and satisfaction, and community awareness and satisfaction. A report of the annual evaluation findings is available to families, staff, and appropriate advisory and governing boards. The program uses this information to plan professional development and program quality-improvement activities as well as to improve operations and policies.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES (IQPPS 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 8.1)

The program will promote communication between families and staff by using written notes as well as informal conversations, e-mail or Seesaw. Families are encouraged to send written notes with important information so all the staff who work with the child can share the parent's communication. The staff will communicate with families weekly. Staff will use these communications to inform families about the child's experiences, accomplishments, behavior, and other issues that affect the child's development and well-being. Parents are encouraged to maintain regular, on-going, two-way communication with the 4 Yr Old Pre-K staff in a manner that best meets their needs - email, in person, notes, or phone calls.

Open Door Policy

Parents and legal guardians are welcome to visit the 4 yr Old Pre-K classroom in accordance with the St. Athanasius' Return to Learn Plan. Visitors are asked to please use discretion with regard to bringing babies and toddlers to school as young children may disrupt class sessions. Photo identification will be required for any unknown visitor to the classroom.

Arrival and Departure of Children (IQPPS 10.5, 10.9)

All motor vehicle transportation provided by parents, legal guardians or others designated by parents or legal guardians will include the use of age-appropriate, and size-appropriate seat restraints.

Arrival: If you plan to drive your child to school, please do not arrive before 7:45 am. When arriving at school, we ask that you park your car in the **south parking lot** *(out front)* and turn off the engine before entering the building. Parents, please hold your child's hand, as you approach the door of the building to decrease the possibility of an accident. **Parents or legal guardians** must leave their child in the care of one of the teaching staff. (Downstairs in the lunchroom, Mrs. Bader, Mrs. Huffman or Mrs. Gebel).

Departure: Students will exit through the gymnasium entrance with their classroom teacher (Mrs. Bader) and associate, either (Mrs. Huffman or Mrs. Gebel). No child will be permitted to leave the building without an adult. ***If you are picking up your child before 2:30 p.m. please enter the front doors and exit through the front doors.

Other than parents or legal guardians, only persons with prior written authorization (Parent Consent Form) will be allowed to pick up a child from the school. Anyone who is unfamiliar to teaching staff, including authorized individuals, will be asked to present photo identification before a child is released to them.

The 4 yr Old Pre-K staff will record attendance at the beginning of the day. Throughout the day, each time children transition from one location to another, i.e. classroom to outdoor, the staff will be responsible for counting the number of children whenever leaving one area and when arriving at another to confirm the safe whereabouts of every child at all times.

Transportation

Transportation is provided by the Jesup Public School District school district and through other arrangements. Rules established by these agencies are to be followed as though they were rules of St. Athanasius Catholic School. A student may be suspended from bus transportation for inappropriate conduct.Transporting students to school requires the cooperation of bus drivers, students, and parents to assure that high safety standards are maintained.

Routes are set up by the Jesup Community school district. St. Athanasius students are dropped off at school from 7:45 - 8:00 a.m. each morning. At dismissal time, students are transported to the public school and will board their outbound buses there.

Parents should call the St. Athanasius School office or send a written note if a student is to be dropped off at a location different than usual. The office will then issue a permit slip to be given to the bus driver. Non-bus students who wish to ride the bus to the home of a friend will also need to bring a written permission to the office where they will be issued a permit slip to be given to the bus driver. Please also call the bus barn at 827-1700 ext. 1411 with any changes to the bus schedule

Field Trips

An important learning opportunity can take place in the form of a field trip that is relevant and reinforces what has been taught in the classroom. The Jesup Community School District buses are used for these field trips. A parent or legal guardian must sign an informed consent form for each child before each trip. Adult family members may be asked to volunteer to go on these trips to provide increased supervision and adult/child ratios. A notice posting the dates, time of departure, time of return, and the destination location will be posted prominently at least 48 hours before the field trip. Each child will be assigned to an adult for every part of the trip.

During the field trip, a first aid kit, emergency contact information, and emergency transport authorization information for the children in the group will be taken on all trips. Children will be counted every 15 minutes while on a field trip. Children may only use a public restroom if they are accompanied by a staff member. Children will never be left alone in a vehicle or unsupervised by an adult.

Attendance

Students who are enrolled for classes at St. Athanasius are expected to be in school for the full session and are expected to be punctual in their arrival and departure. Students are not expected to be absent any more than is necessary for health reasons or appointments. Irregular attendance interferes with the progress of your child and others as staff find themselves taking class time to repeat information and make adjustments for those students who have been absent. Please call the

elementary office with the reason for an absence no later than 8:30 AM at (319) 827-1314. For safety's sake, if a student is absent without notification, the school secretary/teaching staff will attempt to contact the family to verify the child's absence from school.

Ethics and Confidentiality (IQPPS 6.1B)

Staff follow an important code of ethics to guide their involvement with children and families. It is essential to protect the confidentiality of all information concerning children and their families. Maintaining a professional attitude includes being responsive to the needs of children and their families while balancing the need for confidentiality. Children are people who deserve respect. One way we demonstrate this respect is to refrain from talking about the children in their presence unless the child is part of the conversation and to refrain from labeling a child negatively or positively. No information regarding any particular child shall be shared with another child's parent. We continually strive to model such qualities as patience, tolerance, cooperation, acceptance, understanding of others, and enthusiasm for children as well as for other adults.

All staff will follow the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Code of Ethical Conduct. Annually each staff person will review and sign a Statement of Commitment to document their willingness to hold close the values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood education.

Children's Records (IQPPS 4.1, 10.8)

Student records containing personally identifiable information, except for directory information, are confidential. Only persons, including employees, who have a legitimate educational interest, are allowed to access a student's records without the parent's permission. Parents may access, request amendments to, and copy their child's records during regular school hours. Parents may also file a complaint with the United States Department of Education if they feel their rights regarding their child's records have been violated. For a complete copy of the school district's policy on student records or the procedure for filing a complaint, contact the school secretary in the office.
Parents or guardians will be asked to sign a release of information form should they or the school request information be shared with another agency, stating to whom the information is to be released, the reason or purpose for the release of information, when it expires, and ways the parents can withdraw permission if they choose to do so.

Grievance Policy (IQPPS 7.5)

Open and honest communication between families and the 4 Yr Old Pre-K staff is an essential component of a high-quality early childhood program. We want you to be confident that your child is being well cared for and is having a quality experience. If there is ever a time you have a concern regarding your child, we want to encourage you to address your concern to the 4 Yr Old Pre-K staff to find mutual solutions that can be incorporated into your child's day. If additional help is needed, either party may ask for the assistance from the school principal.

- If after taking your concern to the teacher(s) and the principal, and you are not satisfied with the action taken, contact the chairperson of the Parish Board of Education.
- The following policies of the Archdiocesan Board of Education should be followed when dealing with complaints-copies can be obtained from the Administrator, board of education chairperson, or the Office of Educational Services:
    - Instructional Materials and Activities, AFFC/ACSB 1312
    - Complaints Against Teacher/Employee, AFFC/ACSB 4119.4g

- Complaints Against Administrator, AFFC/ACSB 4119.4h
- Complaints Against Board Members, AFFC/ACSB 8252

This information helps us to assess how the program is meeting the needs of families and children, as well as to identify strengths and weaknesses.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT (IQPPS 7.1, 7.2)

4 yr Old Pre-K encourages families to be very involved in their child's education by observing their children during the day when possible and meeting with staff. Family members are invited to an Open House and are welcome to visit at any time during class sessions.

Staff and administrators use a variety of formal and informal (including conversations) ways to become acquainted with and learn from families about their family structure and their preferred means of childrearing practices and communication; and information about their socioeconomic, linguistic, racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds as they wish to share. Families are surveyed in enrollment paperwork and through other questionnaires during the year regarding their family, beliefs, and preferences. Teacher/class visits are made prior to the start of school. Mrs. Bader will introduce herself and engage with the students and families prior to starting in the program. Program staff communicates with families, at least on a weekly basis, regarding children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being of their children. Family teacher conferences are held in both the fall and spring semesters, as well as when either party requests. Family Night will be held at least twice a year.

4 Yr Old Pre-K values the time spent talking and interacting with families and developing strong, reciprocal relationships. As the staff learns from the families' expertise regarding their child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs, goals for your child's growth and development can be incorporated into ongoing classroom planning. Families are encouraged to share any concerns, preferences or questions with the 4 Yr Old Pre-K staff or administration at any time.

Although in-person daily contact cannot be replaced, 4 Yr Old Pre-K staff also rely on notes home, emails, phone calls, newsletters, and bulletin boards as alternative means to establish and maintain open, two-way communication.

4 Yr Old Pre-K staff invites you to become involved in one or all of the following ways, and welcomes other ideas as well.

- Support your child's daily transition to school by sharing information about your child's interests and abilities. Keeping the staff informed of changes and events that might affect your child, allows the staff to be more responsive to your child's needs.
- Attend family meetings.
- Return all forms, questionnaires, and so on, promptly.
- Attend Family/Teacher conferences in the Fall and Spring semesters.
- Take time to read the newsletters, bulletin board(s), website, and/or school Facebook page.
- Check your child's backpack each day.
- Participate in field trip activities.
- Share some of your talents in your child's class through activities such as: reading or storytelling, cooking, art, preparing visuals, music, sewing, crafts, hobbies, your profession, or artifacts from trips you have taken.

Family Involvement, continued to the next page.

- Share any of your families' cultural traditions, celebrations, or customs.
- Read all the material sent home with your child.
- Help with special events. Helping takes many different forms such as preparation of materials at home, making telephone calls, preparing or posting flyers, recruiting other volunteers, collecting donations or prizes, running errands, photography, setup before the event, or clean afterwards.

It is the policy of St. Athanasius to not discriminate against families/volunteers on the basis of family structure, socioeconomic, racial, religious and cultural backgrounds; gender; abilities; or language.

The school district will, to the extent possible, provide full opportunities for meaningful participation of the families with children with limited English proficiency, families with children with disabilities, including providing information and school reports in an understandable and uniform format and, including alternative formats on request, and, to the extent possible, in a language families understand.

The school district believes that families should make the primary decisions about services that their children may need. The teaching staff will support these decisions by providing information to families about available community resources and assisting as requested in helping the family make connections.

Teacher Visits

Teacher/class visits are made prior to the start of school. Mrs. Bader will introduce herself and engage with the students and families prior to starting in the program. This is an opportunity for the 4 Yr Old Pre-K staff to get to know you, your child, and your family and for you to begin to create a partnership between home and school in order to best meet your child's needs. It also allows your child to become familiar and comfortable with his/her 4 Yr Old Pre-K teacher and have any questions you may have answered. This is a great time for you to share what makes your family unique, how you prefer to communicate with the teacher, and share your knowledge about your child's interests, approaches to learning, and developmental needs. You can help the teacher understand what your goals are for your child and whether you have any concerns you'd like addressed. Parents are encouraged to share these preferences, concerns, and questions at any time with the classroom teacher or administrator.

Family Teacher Conferences

The 4 Yr Old Pre-K program will have formal family teacher conferences at the same time as the elementary school - fall and spring. During the conference you may be asked to consider what new skills you see your child developing at home or in the community, to think about what you'd like more information about the classroom, and whether you have new or different goals for your child. During the conference the teacher will share results of classroom assessments and samples of your child's work. Together you can make a plan to continue to encourage your child's growth and development.

Transitions (IQPPS 7.7)

Home to school connections are crucial to the transition to kindergarten or any other program. The child's family provides the constancy and continuity necessary for a young child to be successful. The children and families in the Schools are invited to a Backpack Night before school begins in the fall. They meet the staff and see their classroom. Making a change from one program to another can sometimes be difficult for a young child. The staff will partner with the family to make transitions as smooth as possible by connecting family members with the next program's staff including special education programs. 4 Yr Old Pre-K staff will help to provide information about enrollment policies and procedures, program options, and answer other questions as they are able. Also, Kindergarten Roundup is held annually in the spring. 4 Yr Old Pre-K staff attend this event to support children and their families as they prepare to transition to Kindergarten.

4 Yr Old Pre-K is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.

Health and Immunization Certificates (IQPPS 10.5)

Before a child begins the program, health records that document the dates of service shall be submitted that show the child is current for routine screening tests and immunizations according to the schedule recommended and published by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

When a child is overdue for any routine health services, parents, legal guardians, or both provide evidence of an appointment for those services before the child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunization for which parents are using religious exemption. Documentation of a valid Certificate of Immunization Exemption (Religious or Medical) or Provisional Certificate of Immunization may be submitted in lieu of a Certificate of Immunization.

Health and Safety Records (IQPPS 10.8)

Health and safety information collected from families will be maintained on file for each child in the school office. Files are kept current by updating as needed, but at least quarterly. The content of the file is confidential, but is immediately available to administrators or staff who have consent from a parent or legal guardian for access to records; the child's parent or legal guardian; and regulatory authorities, upon request.

Child Health and Safety Records will include:

- Current information about any health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency;
- Results of health examination, showing up-to-date immunizations and screening tests with an indication of normal or abnormal results and any follow-up required for abnormal results.
- Current emergency contact information for each child, that is kept up to date through parent communications as needed and/or parent review during conferences.
- Names of individuals listed on the Permission Form authorized by the family to have access to health information about the child.

- Instructions for any of the child's special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness (e.g., asthma, hearing or vision impairments, feeding needs, neuromuscular conditions, urinary or other ongoing health problems, seizures, diabetes).
- Individual emergency care plans for children with known medical or developmental problems or other conditions that might require special care in an emergency (allergy, asthma, seizures, orthopedic or sensory problems, and other chronic conditions; conditions that require regular medication or technology support) and •
- Supporting evidence for cases in which a child is under-immunized because of a medical condition (documented by a licensed health professional) or the family's beliefs. Staff implement a plan to exclude the child promptly if a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the program.

General Health and Safety Guidelines (IQPPS 5.2, 5.19)

- All staff must be alert to the health of each child, known allergies, or special medical conditions.
- All staff must be alert to the whereabouts of all children. Systems are in place for accounting for children at regular intervals, especially during periods of transition.
- All staff are to follow proper procedures for hand washing, using disinfectant, and following universal precautions to prevent infections.
- All staff are familiar with evacuation routes and procedures.
- All staff complete "Occupational Exposure to Bloodborne Pathogens" training as required for employment with the School District.
- All staff members have a certificate of satisfactory completion of pediatric first-aid training, including managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing for infants and children, and are always present with each group of children. When a child in the group has a special health condition that might require CPR, one staff person who has successfully completed training in CPR is present in the program at all times.

Toileting Learning (IQPPS 5.5)

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the following procedures are in place.

- Change of bottoms (underwear and pants) will only be done in the classroom bathroom. Food handling will not be permitted in the classroom bathroom.
- Staff will follow all guidelines set forth in the Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards: Standard 5, Criteria 5:

For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently, the program makes sure that:

- Clothes that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag (without rinsing or avoidable handling) and sent home that day for laundering.
- At least every two hours when children are awake and when children awaken students will use the bathroom.

Illness Policy and Exclusion of Sick Children (IQPPS 5.3)

For the health and safety of all the children, it is mandatory that sick children not be brought to school. **If your child has any of the following symptoms during the night, he or she will not be admitted the following morning for the safety of the other children.**

- fever greater than 100.4 degrees F
- vomiting
- diarrhea
- pink eyes with drainage
- cough with congestion and excessive nasal discharge

The school's established policy for an ill child's return:

- Fever free for 24 hours without medication
- Chicken pox one week after onset (or when lesions are crusted)
- Strep: 24 hours after initial medication
- Vomiting/Diarrhea: 24 hours after last episode
- Conjunctivitis: 24 hours after initial medication or when without drainage

Upon arrival at school, each child is observed by the staff for signs of illness or injury that could affect the child's ability to participate comfortably in the daily activities. Children will be excluded when a child is not able to participate comfortably; if the illness requires more care than staff are able to provide without compromising the needs of the other children in the group; or if keeping the child at school poses an increased risk to the child or to other children or adults with whom the child will come in contact.

When a child develops signs of an illness during their day at 4 Yr Old Pre-K, parents, legal guardians, or other persons authorized by the parent will be notified immediately by the office/nurse to pick up the child. For this reason, please be sure that the office has current, accurate phone numbers for you, your authorized emergency contact person and your child's pediatrician. In the meantime, we will provide the child a place to rest under the supervision of someone familiar with the child until the parent, legal guardian or designated person arrives.

Reporting Communicable Diseases (IQPPS 5.3)

Staff provide information to families verbally or in writing about any unusual level or type of communicable disease to which their child was exposed, signs and symptoms of the disease, mode of transmission, period of communicability, and control measures that are being implemented at the program and that the families should implement at home. The program has documentation that it has cooperative arrangements with local health authorities and has, at least annually, contacted those authorities to keep current on relevant health information and to arrange for obtaining advice when outbreaks of communicable disease occur.

Medication Policies and Procedures (IQPPS 5.8)

Policy: The school nurse or personnel certified in Medication Administration will administer medication to children with written approval of the parent and an order from a health provider for a specific child. Because administration of medication in the school is a safety hazard, medication administration will be limited to situations where an agreement to give medicine outside 4 Yr Old Pre-K hours cannot be made. Whenever possible, the first dose of medication should be given at home to see if the child has any type of reaction.

Procedure: The school nurse or personnel certified in Medication Administration administers medication during school hours only if the parent or legal guardian has provided written consent and the medication is available in an original labeled prescription or manufacturer's container that is child-resistant. Any other person who would administer medication has specific training and a written performance evaluation, updated annually by a health professional on the practice of the five right practices of medication administration verifying that the :
(1) right child receives the
(2) right medication
(3) in the right dose
(4) at the right time
(5) by the right method with documentation of each right each time the medication is given.

Medication errors will be controlled by checking and recording these five right practices each time medication is given. Should a medication error occur, the Regional Poison Control Center and the child's parents will be contacted immediately. The incident will be documented in the child's record at the school.

For prescription medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the school with the medication in the original, child- resistant container that is labeled by a pharmacist with the child's name, the name and strength of the medication; the date the prescription was filled; the name of the health care provider who wrote the prescription; the medication's expiration date; and administration, storage, and disposal instructions.

For over-the-counter medications, parents or legal guardians will provide the medication in a child-resistant container. The medication will be labeled with the child's first and last names; specific, legible instructions for administration and storage supplied by the manufacturer; and the name of the health care provider who recommended the medication for the child.

Instructions for the dose, time, method to be used, and duration of administration will be provided to the staff in writing (by a signed note or a prescription label) or dictated over the telephone by a physician or other person legally authorized to prescribe medication. This requirement applies both to prescription and over-the-counter medications.

Medications will be kept at the temperature recommended for that type of medication, in a sturdy, child-resistant container that is locked and prevents spillage.

Medication will not be used beyond the date of expiration on the container or beyond any expiration of the instructions provided by the physician or other person legally permitted to prescribe medication. Instructions which state that the medication may be used whenever needed will be renewed by the physician at least annually.

A medication log will be maintained by the school nurse or personnel certified in Medication Administration to record the instructions for giving the medication, consent obtained from the parent or legal guardian, amount, the time of administration, and the person who administered each dose of medication. Spills, reactions, and refusal to take medication will be noted on this log.

Hand Washing Practices (IQPPS 5.6)

Frequent hand washing is key to preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Staff teach children how to wash their hands effectively. Posters of children using proper hand washing procedures are placed by each sink. The program follows these practices regarding hand washing:

- Staff members and those children who are developmentally able to learn personal hygiene are taught hand- washing procedures and are periodically monitored.
- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers, and children when hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.
- Staff assist children with hand washing as needed to successfully complete the task.

Children and adults wash their hands:

- upon arrival for the day
- after using the toilet
- after handling body fluids (e.g., blowing or wiping a nose, coughing on a hand, or any touching of mucus, blood or vomit);
- before meals and snacks, preparing or serving food, or handling any raw food that requires cooking (e.g., meat, eggs, poultry);
- after playing in water that is shared by two or more people;
- after handling pets and other animals or any materials such as sand, dirt, or surfaces that might be contaminated by contact with animals including after daily outside time.

Adults also wash their hands:

- before and after feeding a child;
- before and after administering medication;
- after assisting a child with toileting
- after handling garbage or cleaning.

Proper hand-washing procedures are followed by adults and children and include

- using liquid soap and running water;
- rubbing hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, including back of hands, wrists, between fingers, under and around any jewelry, and under fingernails; rinsing well; drying hands with a paper towel, or a dryer; and avoiding touching the faucet with just-washed hands (e.g., by using a paper towel to turn off water).
- Except when handling blood or body fluids that might contain blood (when wearing gloves is required), wearing gloves is an optional supplement, but not a substitute, for hand washing in any situation listed above.
- Staff must wear gloves when contamination with blood may occur.
- Staff do not use hand-washing sinks for bathing children or removing smeared fecal material.
- In situations where sinks are used for both food preparation and other purposes, staff clean and sanitize the sinks before using them to prepare food.

First Aid Kit (IQPPS 9.12)

It is inaccessible to children, but readily available for adult use. It is fully equipped according to guidance from Healthy Child Care Iowa. Following each use of the First Aid kit, the contents will be inspected and missing or used items replaced immediately. The First Aid kit will be inspected monthly. The first aid kit is taken to the outdoor play areas as well as on field trips and outings away from the site.

Cleaning and Sanitization (IQPPS 5.18, 5.19)

The facility will be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition. When a spill occurs, the area will be made inaccessible to children and the area will be cleaned immediately.

Toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion will be removed immediately and sanitized after they are cleaned with soap and water. This also applies to other surfaces in the classroom. Toys and surfaces will be sanitized using a non-toxic solution of one-fourth tablespoon household bleach to one quart of tap water made fresh daily. Surfaces will be disinfected using one tablespoon of bleach to one quart of tap water and sprayed until glossy. The bleach solution will be left on for at least two minutes before it is wiped off with a clean paper towel, or it may be allowed to air dry. Machine washable cloth toys that have been placed in a child's mouth or that are otherwise contaminated by body secretion or excretion must be laundered before another child's use. Toys that cannot be cleaned and sanitized will not be used.

Staff are trained annually in cleaning techniques, handwashing, proper use of protective barriers such as gloves, proper handling and disposal of contaminated materials, and information required by the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration about the use of any chemical agents.

Rugs/carpets are cleaned by the custodial staff. Facility cleaning, also done by custodial staff and, requiring potentially hazardous chemicals will be scheduled when children are not present to minimize exposure to the children. All cleaning products will be used as directed by the manufacturer's label. Non Toxic substances will be used whenever possible. Odors will be controlled by sanitation and ventilation.

Protection from Hazards and Environmental Health (IQPPS 9.11,10.5)

Program staff protect children and adults from hazards, including electrical shock, burns, or scalding, slipping, tripping, or falling. Floor coverings are secured to keep staff and children from tripping or slipping.

The 4 yr old pre-k classroom has been tested for lead, radon, radiation, asbestos, fiberglass, and other hazards that could impact children's health with documentation on file. Custodial staff maintain the building's heating, cooling, and ventilation systems in compliance with national standards for facility use by children.

The program maintains facilities so they are free from harmful animals, insect pests, and poisonous plants. Pesticides and herbicides, if used, are applied according to the manufacturer's instructions when children are not at the facility and in a manner that prevents skin contact, inhalation, and other exposure to children. The program uses the techniques known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) so that the least hazardous means are used to control pests and unwanted vegetation.

Smoke Free Facility (IQPPS 9.15)

In compliance with the Iowa Smoke Free Air Act of 2008, School buildings and grounds are smoke free. A “No Smoking” sign meeting the law’s requirements is posted at the entrances to the school buildings to inform people that they are entering a non-smoking place. No smoking is allowed on the school grounds or within sight of any children.

Fire Safety (IQPPS 9.13, 10.10)

Fire extinguishers are installed in the 4 Yr Old Pre-K classrooms with a tag indicating annual service dates. The fire alarm system is serviced annually. Smoke detectors, fire alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors are tested monthly. A written log of testing dates and battery changes is maintained and available upon request. The program has written and posted disaster preparedness and emergency evacuation policies and procedures. According to district policy, fire and severe weather drills are conducted twice each semester or Monthly and recorded on a log.

Child Protection Policies (IQPPS 10.6,10.7)

The health and well-being of every child in our care is of the utmost importance and the protection of children is our responsibility. An applicant or volunteer for temporary or permanent employment with the 4 Yr Old Pre-K program involving direct interaction with or the opportunity to interact and associate with children must follow the policy and submit an affidavit of clearance from any and all crimes against a child or family. In addition no person with a substantiated report of child abuse or neglect will come in contact with children in the program or have responsibility for children.

The program follows written school board policy for reporting child abuse and neglect as well as procedures in place that comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws. The policy includes requirements for staff to report all suspected incidents of child abuse, neglect, or both by families, staff, volunteers, or others to the appropriate local agencies. Staff who report suspicions of child abuse or neglect where they work are immune from discharge, retaliation, or other disciplinary action for that reason alone unless it is proven that the report is malicious. All staff complete “Mandatory Reporter: Child and Dependent Adult Abuse” at least every five years and in accordance with policy.

Substance Abuse

Persons under the influence of drugs or alcohol will not be permitted on the premises of the Community School District. At no time will children be released to a person under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

STAFF (IQPPS 10.11, 10.13)

General Information

St. Athanasius has written personnel policies that define the roles and responsibilities, qualifications, and specialized training required of staff and volunteer positions. The policies outline nondiscriminatory hiring procedures and policies for staff evaluation. Policies detail job descriptions for each position, including reporting relationships; salary scales with increments based on professional qualification, length of employment, and performance evaluation; benefits; and resignation, termination, and grievance procedures. Personnel policies provide for incentives based on participation in professional/educational development opportunities. The policies are provided to each employee upon hiring.

Staff, continued

Hiring procedures include completion of the following checks: criminal-record check, free from history of substantiated child abuse or neglect check, education credentials, verification of age, completion of high school or GED, personal references and a current health assessment.

Confidential personnel files, including applications with record of experience, transcripts of education, health-assessment records, documentation of ongoing professional development, and results of performance evaluation, are kept in a locked filing cabinet in the Principal's office.

Staff Orientation & Professional Learning (IQPPS 6.1, 6.4, 6.5)

St. Athanasius employees will be required to participate in an orientation program that introduces them to fundamental aspects of district operations including, but not limited to:

- Program philosophy, mission, and goals
- Expectations for ethical conduct
- Health, safety and emergency procedures
- Individual needs of children they will be teaching or caring for
- Accepted guidance and classroom management techniques
- Daily activities and routines of the program
- Program curriculum, assessment procedures and interpretation training
- Child abuse and neglect reporting procedures
- Program policies and procedures
- Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards and Criteria
- Regulatory requirements.
- Follow-up training expands on the initial orientations.
- Monthly Professional Development throughout the year

The employee's administrative supervisor will provide the employee with a review of the employee's responsibilities and duties. Payroll procedures, employee benefit programs and accompanying forms will be explained to the employee by human resources staff at the Administrative Center.

Staffing patterns and schedule (IQPPS 10.4,10.13)

The 4 Yr Old Pre-K program is in compliance with staff regulations and certification requirements. Our program follows Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards requirements for staffing maintaining an adult/child ratio of at least 1:10 at all times. The program administrator will maintain lists of current substitutes for both the 4 Yr Old Pre-K teacher and the paraprofessional in case of absence. Staff are provided space and time away from children during the day. If one of the teaching staff needs to temporarily leave the classroom, the person will call the elementary office to arrange for coverage in order to maintain the adult/child ratio.

Staff development activities (IQPPS 6.4,6.5, 8.4)

St. Athanasius Teacher Contracts and Support Staff Contracts provide incentives based on participation in professional/educational development opportunities. All staff continuously strengthen their leadership skills and relationships with others and work to improve the conditions of children and families within their programs, the local community, and beyond. Staff are encouraged to participate in informal and formal ways in local, state, or regional public-awareness activities. They may join an early childhood group or organization, attend meetings, or share information with others both at and outside the program.

Staff will be informed of professional development activities by district staff, the Child Care Resource and Referral, the local Empowerment areas, and the area education agency. Staff are expected to attend all staff training and meetings throughout the year. Training will focus on early childhood topics relevant to the program and community.

Staff Evaluation and Professional Growth Plan

All staff are evaluated at least annually by an appropriate supervisor or, in the case of the program administrator, by the Superintendent. Staff also evaluate and improve their own performance based on ongoing reflections and feedback from supervisors, peers, and families. From this, they develop an annual individualized professional development plan with their supervisor and use it to inform their continuous professional development.