



# St. Albert Preschool Handbook



Licensed by the State of Ohio

# **Table of Contents**

I.	<b>Table of Contents</b>
II.	<b>Handbook Acceptance Form</b>
III.	<b>Letters from the Principal and the Pastor</b>
IV.	<b>Introduction</b>
V.	<b>Educational Philosophy</b>
VI.	<b>Admission Policy</b>
VII.	<b>Goals</b>
VIII.	<b>Arrival and Dismissal</b>
IX.	<b>Emergency School Closing and Delay</b>
X.	<b>Disaster Drills</b>
XI.	<b>Classroom Supplies</b>
XII.	<b>Daily Classroom Activities</b>
XIII.	<b>Health Issues and Concerns</b>
XIV.	<b>Dress Code</b>
XV.	<b>Behavior Management and Discipline</b>
XVI.	<b>Playground Rules</b>
XVII.	<b>Parental Visit</b>
XVIII.	<b>Transition Plan</b>

**Please sign and return to school immediately.**

Signatures of parents and/or guardians and all students are required as an indication of having read the handbook and accepted these policies and procedures as a condition for attendance at Saint Albert the Great School.

I have reviewed the School Handbook and will follow the policies herein.

---

Student Signature

date

---

Parent/Guardian Signature

date

**This form must be returned to the Preschool Director no later than ten days after the first day of school.**

# **A Letter from the Principal...**

## **WELCOME**

### **Principal Letter**

Welcome to St. Albert the Great, a community where faith, knowledge, and values come together to nurture the growth of every student. As the principal, I feel blessed to introduce you to our school, a place where we strive to inspire and guide our students to achieve academic excellence, develop strong moral character, and grow in their relationship with God.

At St. Albert the Great, we are dedicated to creating an environment that supports the holistic development of each child. Our curriculum is designed to challenge our students not only intellectually but to also foster their spiritual, emotional, and social growth. Rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church, our educational approach emphasizes compassion, integrity, and service to others.

This handbook is a vital resource for our school community, providing essential information about our policies, procedures, and expectations. It reflects our commitment to maintaining a safe, respectful, responsible and nurturing environment where every student can thrive. Please take the time to read through this handbook carefully and keep it as a reference throughout the school year.

We are blessed with a dedicated team of educators and staff who work with parents and families collaboratively to support our students' success. I encourage you to actively participate in school activities and events, as your involvement plays a crucial role in the vibrant life of our school community.

Thank you for entrusting us with the education and formation of your child. Together, let us embark on a journey of faith and learning, guiding our students to become compassionate, responsible, and knowledgeable individuals who will make a positive impact on the world.

With gratitude and blessings,

Nancy A. Hankey

# **A Letter from the Pastor...**

In unity with our faith community, I want to express our gratitude and joy to parents for choosing to send your children to our Catholic school. Our church sponsors school because we know children need to be nourished and exercised well in spirit as well as in mind. We strive for and achieve excellence in both. A Catholic education will pay amazing dividends for you and your children throughout this life and into eternity as they grow in appreciation and love of gospel values as the way to a life lived well.

All our staff and faculty, as well as all in our community, see our school ministry as a privileged gift from God and give all they can in helping to form young minds and hearts into the most beautiful, competent and caring people our Lord wills them to be. Our Lord pours out tons of grace on parents and communities through their children and our Catholic schools cooperate with that powerfully.

In all of this, we recognize how important it is to support parents. Know that we are here for you in any way that we can be of service. Likewise, we encourage you to be active members in our community, not just in school, but through your participation at Mass and your involvement in parish ministries. That will be a great source of grace for yourselves and will set a wonderful example for your children.

Prayers and blessings,

Fr. Tom Nevels

## **Introduction:**

Welcome to the St. Albert family, where we educate the whole child and create a lifelong love of learning.

### **St. Albert the Great School Vision**

Inspired by St. Albert the Great, patron of our parish and school, we will foster in our students a love for knowledge and an appreciation for the arts and sciences. With a strong Catholic identity, based upon a sound theological foundation, we will nurture a Catholic faith community in which we live, we learn and we love with God among us.

## **Educational Philosophy**

The first years of life are of vital importance to a child's growth and development. During these formative years, foundations are laid which influence the ability of a child to accept him or herself, to relate to others, and to respond positively to the environment. Family relationships can provide a young child with a positive model for developing the attitudes, values and appropriate self-control, which will last a lifetime. Interactions with other adults and children enable the young child to build upon and strengthen the lessons learned at home, while promoting positive ways for the child to relate to the world around him or her.

St. Albert the Great Catholic School strives to provide creative learning environments, which support the young child's family life, while enriching the educational experience of the child. Interaction with other children and adults in the atmosphere of Christian love and concern promotes the healthy development of each child. Carefully planned, developmentally appropriate learning experiences and play activities encourage spiritual, cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development.

As a Catholic preschool operating within an active, caring parish school community, St. Albert Preschool provides continuity for the child, fosters a smooth transition to kindergarten, and enhances parish family life.

As a member of a class at St. Albert Preschool, your child will benefit from a whole range of interesting and fun activities planned by teachers certified in Early Childhood Education and implemented specifically to enhance your child's individual development. Your child will quickly see that his or her teachers view him or her as a special, unique person, about whom they care very deeply.

Since the teachers view each child as an individual, the preschool program at St. Albert follows developmentally appropriate practices. This means that each child is allowed to develop at his or her own pace, selecting activities and learning experiences, which are interesting to the child. Allowing children to make these decisions within a nurturing, structured environment fosters the development of responsibility, self-esteem, independence, and self-confidence in the child while allowing him or her to experience an important sense of control over the environment.

Young children are very active learners who learn by doing and through play. Children at St. Albert Preschool are given ample opportunities to discover, to explore and to set their own learning tasks. Their play is extremely important, and is nurtured and encouraged in a creative, loving, Christian environment.

The entire St. Albert Preschool experience is designed as the groundwork of your child's Catholic education. We are committed to teaching and living Catholic values, building personal character, and achieving academic excellence. (For further information, consult the St. Albert Handbook or SAH under **Mission Statement**.)

## **Admission Policy**

Students who are three years old on or before August 1st, may attend the Preschool program. Students, who are four years old on or before August 1st, may attend the Pre-K program. (For further information, consult SAH under **Admission Policy**.)

## **Goals**

To create an atmosphere in which growth is most likely to occur, we strive to provide a program that involves the child exercising self-encouraging guidance.

The St. Albert the Great Preschool program will help the preschool child develop:

1. Increase independence and self-confidence
2. Social skills and appropriate conduct and communication
3. The ability to enjoy being part of a group
4. The ability to respect the rights of others
5. An awareness of being a child of God

6. An appreciation of the beauty and wonder of Nature
7. Good health habits
8. A positive attitude toward school

## **Arrival and Dismissal**

The morning begins at 7:50 a.m. and ends at 11:00 a.m. The classroom door opens at 7:30 a.m. Students who stay for our all day program will begin class at 7:50 a.m. and will be dismissed at 2:50 p.m. Preschool students (3-4 year olds) may register three half/full days or five half/full days. Pre-k students (4-5 year olds) may register five half/full days.

Teachers will be ready to receive students in the car line at 7:30. The car line is how we enter the building, students are not walked in by parents. We have found that this is a much easier way for kids to start the day. It allows them a clean break from mom and dad, eliminates the just one more hug, and allows us to start on time to maximize school time.

Teachers will return to classrooms at 8am. If you arrive after 8am please call or text Ms Hicks. Prompt arrival will be important as we will have to stop teaching to come out and get your student. Picking your child up on time is also very important. Again, we will be returning to class and will have to interrupt the activities of others to dismiss your child. . Each child is given two car tags. We ask that you please put these in your windows for pickup to help us move the line faster. In the rare event that you are late, please call the preschool classroom at 293-9452 ext. 236 so that the teacher can reassure your child that someone is on his way. Please strive to pick your child up on time so that he does not become upset. If repeated tardiness occurs, the parent will be charged a late fee.

Dismissal procedure is the reverse of arrival. Students will be held in the classroom until it is your turn in the car line. Staff will then bring your child to you. Please have your child's name sign in the window and follow all safety rules and signs.

## **Emergency School Closing and Delay**

When an adverse weather condition exists, and school is closed or delayed, information can be obtained through:

- STAG one call system
- Local radio or television station
- School website

If St. Albert the Great School is on a two hour delay, morning preschool will be closed for that day.

(For additional information, consult SAH under **Emergency School Closing and Delay.**)

## **Disaster Drills**

All disaster drills are very important and should be taken seriously at all times. All drills are conducted in silence. Each disaster drill has its own procedure.

## **Fire Drill**

Fire drills are held monthly throughout the school year to practice rapid safe exiting from the building. Students and staff will exit through their assigned evacuation points.

## **Lock Down Drill / Tornado Drill**

Security lock down drills will be conducted in the fall/spring of each year. All preschool children will be taken to their “safe spot”. Students and staff will follow procedures set in place by our safety team. During a tornado, students and staff will report to their assigned safe areas.

## **Classroom Supplies**

Students are supplied with a list of needed supplies for the school year. Children are NOT TO BRING TOYS from home unless specifically for Show and Tell. Children are also not to bring food or candy to share unless he/she has been given permission by the teacher in advance. Party invitations, thank you notes, or gifts for other students are NOT TO BE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL unless everyone in the class is included. Please conduct ALL social arrangements outside of the classroom. It is hurtful for a child to see and hear party arrangements being made when he is not going to be included.

## **Nap**

Each child will be provided a cot and sheet for nap time. All day students will rest/nap from 12:30-2 each day. Our bodies need time to rest and our brains need time to be calm to allow for optimal learning opportunities. Each child will need to bring their own sleeping mat or bag. Bedding is brought in on Mondays and returned to you on Fridays to be washed over the weekend. If your child has an accident during rest time, their soiled bedding will be sent home with them to be washed and returned the next day. On Fridays teachers will take home all sheets to wash them for the next week.

## **Daily Classroom Activities**

Students will experience a variety of activities throughout the day. Free play, socialization, center activities, small and large group activities, outdoor play, special classes such as gym and much much more.

## **Reports and Inspections**

If you wish to receive a copy of the school inspection report, please visit the ODE website or call (937)264-5910 for more information. To report a complaint, please visit the ODE website.

## **Health Issues and Concerns**

In the event that your child would become ill or injured during the school day, we have a School Nurse on staff and our teachers are trained in first aid and in recognition of communicable diseases. Every effort is made to immediately contact the parent and it is for this reason that two copies of the emergency forms are required; one for the School Office, and one for the classroom.

All allergies and/or medical conditions must be noted on the health forms and should be verbally communicated to the Preschool Director. Medication can only be administered at school with proper forms filled out by a licensed physician and with the School Nurse's acknowledgement. Children are never to bring any topical creams to school.

St. Albert Preschool fully complies with the State of Ohio's policies concerning the management of Communicable Diseases.

## Management of Communicable Diseases

All staff members are trained in first aid, communicable diseases, and child abuse as required by the Department of Human Services. Courses will include signs and symptoms of disease as well as proper hand washing and disinfecting procedures.

1. A person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease or other illness shall observe each child daily as he enters a group. A “person trained to recognize the common signs of communicable disease” means any person trained in prevention, recognition and management of communicable diseases as required by paragraph (D) of Rule 3301-37-07 of the Administrative Code.
2. The following cautions shall be taken for children suspected of having a communicable disease:

The program shall immediately notify the parent or guardian of the child’s condition when a child has been observed with signs or symptoms of illness.

- Diarrhea ( more than one abnormally loose stool within a twenty-four-hour period)
  - Severe coughing, causing the child to become red or blue in the face or make a whooping sound
  - Difficult or rapid breathing
  - Yellowish skin or eyes
  - Conjunctivitis
  - Temperature of one hundred degrees Fahrenheit taken by auxiliary method in combination with other signs of illness
  - Untreated infected skin patch(es)
  - Unusually dark urine and /or grey or white stool
  - Stiff neck
  - Evidence of lice, scabies or other parasitic infestation
3. A child with any of the following signs or symptoms of illness shall be immediately isolated from other children. Decisions regarding whether the child should be discharged immediately or at some other time during the day shall be determined by the director and the parent or guardian. The child, while isolated at the program, shall be carefully watched for symptoms listed in paragraph (B)(2) of the Rule as well as the following:
    - Unusual spots or rashes
    - Sore throat or difficulty in swallowing
    - Elevated temperature
    - Vomiting

4. Program shall follow the Department of Health “child day care communicable disease chart” for appropriate management of suspected illnesses.
5. A child isolated due to suspected communicable disease shall be:
  - Cared for in a room not being used in the preschool program
  - Within sight and hearing of an adult at all times. No child shall ever be left alone or unsupervised.
  - Made comfortable and provided with a cot. All linens and blankets used by the ill child shall be laundered before being used by another child. After use, the cots shall be disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent, or, if soiled with blood, feces, vomitus or other body fluids, the cots shall be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected with an appropriate germicidal agent.
  - Observed carefully for worsening condition
  - Discharged to parent, guardian, or person designated by the parent or guardian as soon as practical.

Each program shall have a written policy concerning the management of communicable disease. The policy shall include, at minimum:

1. The program’s means of training all preschool staff in signs and symptoms of illness and in hand washing and disinfection procedures
2. Procedures for isolating and discharging an ill child and policy for readmitting such child
3. Procedure for notifying the parent or guardian immediately when a child is exhibiting signs or symptoms of illness or has been exposed to communicable disease
4. Procedures regarding the care of the mildly ill child. “Mildly ill child” means a child who is experiencing minor common cold symptoms, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in paragraph(B) in this Rule or a child who does not feel well enough to participate in activities, but who is not exhibiting any of the symptoms specified in paragraph (B) of this Rule.
5. Procedures for notifying all parents of enrolled children when children are exposed to diagnosed communicable disease such as pink eye, ringworm, chicken pox or lice.

(For additional health information, consult SAH under **Health**.)

In order for a child to return to school, they must be symptom free (fever, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, etc) **WITHOUT MEDICATION** for 24 hours prior to their return.

## **Dress Code**

When dressing your child for school, please keep in mind his need for freedom and safety of movement. Gym shoes should be worn and fitted properly and should never be slippery or high-heeled. We skip, sing, dance, climb, and therefore, all preschool students need

to move about unencumbered by restrictive clothing. It is not safe to send children in open sandals or flip-flops. Your child's safety and dignity are of utmost importance. Parents, please have the girls wear shorts under their dresses or skirts. Belts are difficult to handle and discourage your child's independence in the bathroom. Please keep a change of clothes in a plastic bag inside your child's book bag. In the event that a child soils himself in some way, he is made as clean and as comfortable as possible. Then, the parent is notified. Repeated soiling sometimes indicates illness or uneasiness to be in a group/school situation. **ALL STUDENTS OF OUR PRESCHOOL MUST BE TOILET TRAINED AND ABLE TO USE THE TOILET INDEPENDENTLY.** Pull ups may not be worn at school.

## **Behavior Management and Discipline**

The teachers at St. Albert the Great Preschool follow well researched and developmentally appropriate assertive discipline techniques, thereby maintaining a positive approach to fostering the development of desired behavior.

This approach is built on the understanding that young children are natural learners. Their curious, inquisitive spirit is fostered and encouraged through carefully planned activities and opportunities for exploration and discovery provided by the teachers at St. Albert Preschool. As a natural extension of their normal experience of the world around them, preschool children also explore the acceptable limits of behavior, discovering what is expected and permitted in different situations.

Research in Early Childhood Development shows us that young children need to know the acceptable limits of their behavior, to discover where the "boundaries" are. At St. Albert Preschool, we recognize that young children sometimes need to test these boundaries, as part of natural developmental processes. As teachers, we believe we are most effective in helping children learn and develop self control when we provide clear expectations for behavior within a friendly, warm, and nurturing environment where praise and encouragement are offered generously.

First and foremost, teachers at St. Albert Preschool set examples for expected behavior and explain behavioral expectations to our children in a clear, positive and developmentally appropriate manner. We demonstrate respect for others by showing our respect for each child. We demonstrate the expectation of listening to each other during "circle" time by carefully listening to each child without interrupting. When we use the "lights out—hands on head"

signal to get the children's attention, we too, place our hands on our head. In this way, we can demonstrate our understanding that our children learn by what they see, and what they see in school is expected behavior being demonstrated by their teachers over and over again.

When necessary for safety and orderliness, children are reminded of behavioral expectations in a pleasant, matter-of-fact, and non-judgmental way. Children might be reminded to "use their walking feet" if running in school, or "keep your feet on the floor" if sitting on a table or kneeling on a chair. Preschool children respond very well to these techniques in school, and further teacher action is rarely required.

A preschool child's undesirable behavior can often be handled through simple redirection of behavior. A child who runs through the room during free play needs a teacher's help in finding and becoming engaged in an interesting activity. The teachers at St. Albert Preschool will provide that redirection, and ensure that the child uses his or her time in a way that is fun, interesting, constructive, and above all, safe.

The teachers of St. Albert the Great Preschool know that children will respond to a happy, supportive, and caring environment in which each person is highly valued and respected. We strive to provide that kind of environment, one in which your child is secure to explore, develop and learn.

**St. Albert Preschool fully complies with the State of Ohio's policies concerning behavior management and discipline. (Rule 3301-37-10 of the Administrative Code)**

1. A preschool staff member in charge of a child or a group of children shall be responsible for their discipline.
2. The center shall have a written discipline policy describing the center's philosophy of discipline and the specific methods of discipline used at the center. This written policy shall be on file at the center for review. Constructive, developmentally appropriate child guidance and management techniques are used at all times and shall include such measures as redirection, separation from problem situations, talking with the child about the situation and praise for appropriate behavior.
3. The center's actual methods of discipline shall apply to all persons on the premises and shall be restricted as follows:
  - There shall be no cruel, harsh corporal punishment or any unusual punishments such as, but not limited to, punching, shaking, spanking or biting.

- No physical restraints shall be used to confine a child by any means other than holding a child for a short period of time, such as a protective hug, so the child may regain control.
  - No child should be placed in a locked room or confined in an enclosed area such as a closet, a box, or a similar cubicle.
  - No child shall be subjected to profane language, threats, derogatory remarks about himself or his family or other verbal abuse.
  - Discipline shall not be imposed on a child for failure to eat, or for toileting accidents.
  - Techniques of discipline shall not humiliate shame or frighten a child.
  - Discipline shall not include withholding food, rest or toilet use.
  - Separation, when used as discipline, shall be brief in duration and appropriate to the child's age and developmental ability and the child shall be within sight and hearing of a preschool staff member in a safe, lighted and well ventilated space.
  - The center shall not abuse or neglect children and shall protect children from child abuse and neglect while in attendance in the preschool program.
4. The parent of a child enrolled in a center shall receive the center's written policy.
  5. All preschool staff members shall receive a copy of the center's discipline policy for review upon employment.

St. Albert Preschool also recognizes that it is part of a larger community. The Preschool, along with St. Albert the Great Parish, recognizes, supports, and incorporates the Code for Everyday Living. (For further information, consult SAH under **Behavior**.)

## **Playground Rules for Preschool**

Outside activity is an important part of the physical and emotional development of all preschoolers. To help insure their safety, a specific time is designated for preschool play. The purpose of the following rules is to provide a safe environment during outdoor play. All children must:

- Stay inside the fenced-in area
- Slide down the slides
- Make sure no one is on the slide before going down
- Understand that no tag should be played on the equipment
- Listen to whistle commands

First whistle means to freeze.

Second whistle means to line up

(For further information, consult SAH under **Recess, Playground.**)

## **Parental School Visits**

You have the right to visit the center and your child's room at any time while your child is present. When a parent wants to observe his child, it is a common occurrence that the child behaves differently. To get an accurate observation, it is best not to let your child know of your presence. It is appropriate for a parent to let the teachers know of his or her presence, but to stay in the area outside the classroom door and to observe unobtrusively from the area. It is imperative that the teacher be informed of your presence and that you have a visitor's pass from the Office.

St. Albert operates in accordance with the Ohio School Safety Procedure, and therefore NO ONE is permitted to enter the school without official permission. The Visitor's Pass is required for anyone who is to be in the building. In accordance with proper safety procedure, the door in our classroom, which leads outside (East side of Room 2), is for exit only.

Any discussion relating to a child's academic progress, classroom behavior or to a situation requiring privacy should be conducted between the teacher and parent outside of the time allotted for arrival and dismissal. Parent/Teacher scheduled conferences will be held twice each year. Please feel free to call 293-9452 ex 236 or email your child's teacher.

## **Volunteers**

We welcome volunteers in the classroom, however you must be safe parish trained. This includes helping with parties, pto events, and classroom help.

## **Transition Plan for Preschool Students**

During the school year students will make progress in their learning through social skills and academics. Each child will progress at their own pace. Sometimes we need to transition a child in or out of the program or at the end of the school year. If a family knows they will be leaving the program please give us plenty of notice to make the transition smooth.

St. Albert the Great operates during the school year from September through May. Our transition plan is as follows for different scenarios:

**Students leaving in the middle of the year.**

- 1) Meet with parents to ensure records will be transferred to the new school and complete an exit interview.
- 2) Celebrate the child by coloring pictures for the student from the students in the class.

**Student transitioning to PreK class.**

- 1) Meet with parents and present how the Pre-k program works.
- 2) Introduce teachers to students at the end of the preschool program.

**Student transitioning to Kindergarten.**

- 1) Meet with parents and present how the Kindergarten program works for their child.
- 2) Have the children meet the Kindergarten teachers at the end of the school year.
- 3) Have the Pre-K work in a Kindergarten room for a day.
- 4) Attend school mass
- 5) Eat lunch in the cafeteria

Please see Ms. Hicks with any questions or concerns.