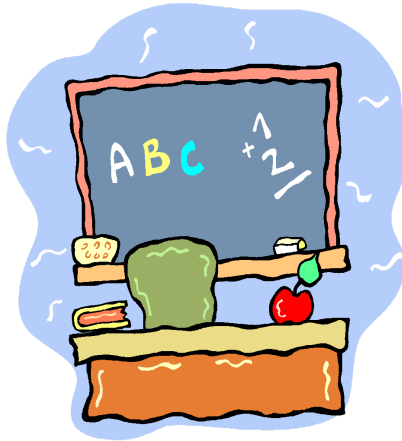


2024-2025 Early Childhood Building Handbook



Saint Joseph School

90 Pickering Street
Needham, MA 02492
781-444-4459

Early Childhood School Building

1350 Highland Avenue
Needham, MA 02492
781-444-4459

www.saintjoes.com

Welcome to Saint Joseph School

This handbook was developed by parents and the school office to address questions you may have about our school and classroom procedures. We hope you will read this handbook thoroughly and keep it for reference. Research has clearly shown that when parents are involved in their children's education, they do better academically and behaviorally. With combined efforts, we can make this a successful and exciting year for your child!

Our School Mission Statement

MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

Vision:

As a Saint Joseph School student, each child of God will be equipped with a solid academic foundation, a vibrant spiritual life, a strong moral compass, and a genuine desire to contribute meaningfully to society as the virtuous leaders of tomorrow.

Mission Statement:

Saint Joseph School, in partnership with our families, provides an exceptional traditional Roman Catholic education committed to helping each student thrive academically, spiritually, and socially. Rooted in our four pillars of Faith, Virtue, Intellect, and Stewardship, our mission is to provide an educational experience that empowers well-rounded individuals with a deep sense of faith and purpose, and a strong foundation for lifelong success.

Core Values:

Faith: We embrace and celebrate our spiritual traditions, fostering an environment where faith is not only respected but also cherished. We strive to inspire a deep connection to something greater, cultivating moral character, and encouraging students to live their lives guided by strong ethical principles.

Virtue: We believe in the power of virtuous living and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of life. Our school community promotes values such as kindness, humility, diligence, and charity. Through intentional Roman Catholic character development programs, we aim to instill virtues that will guide our students in becoming responsible, compassionate, and ethical contributors and leaders in their communities.

Intellect: We are dedicated to nurturing the intellect of every student, providing a rigorous and engaging academic curriculum that promotes critical thinking, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning. Our passionate educators employ innovative teaching methods, personalized instruction, insightful classroom discussions, and real-world applications to foster intellectual curiosity, problem-solving skills, and a deep understanding of diverse subjects.

Stewardship: We recognize our responsibility to be good stewards of the world around us. Through environmental awareness programs, community service initiatives, and Catholic social teaching, we encourage our students to actively engage in making a positive impact on their communities and the world. We instill a sense of social responsibility, empowering our students to embrace their roles as global citizens and champions of human dignity, common good, and positive change.

Please feel free to contact us:



(781) 444-4459

Mrs. Lisa O'Mara

lomara@sjs-needham.org

Mrs. Maria Banda

mbanda@sjs-needham.org

Mrs. Diana Salib

dsalib@sjs-needham.org

Mrs. Kathleen Paulino

kpaulino@sjs-needham.org

Mrs. Sarah Bracken

sbracken@sjs-needham.org

Mr. Joe Giroux

jgiroux@sjs-needham.org

Early Childhood

Administrative Asst.

Mrs. Kim O'Brien

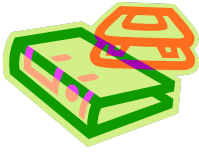
kobrien@sjs-needham.org

Interim Head of School

Mrs. Kristen Fiumara

kfiumara@sjs-needham.org

In case of an emergency if you need to reach your child or your child's teacher, call the school's main number or 781-444-4459, Early Childhood Building administrative assistant, #3.



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School Hours



Full Day Program

8:00 a.m. 2:30 p.m.

Please note, Grades K-8 in the main school building are released at 2:40 p.m. Little Sharks (2.9), preschool, pre-kindergarten children are released 10 minutes earlier to allow parents with children in the upper grades to pick up at the early childhood building first, then their older children. If your child does not arrive by 8:10 a.m. for morning prayer, he/she is marked tardy.

Early Release Days

8:00 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.



School hours on early release days are 8:00 a.m. to 12:05 p.m. Little Sharks (2.9), preschool, pre-kindergarten students are released 10 minutes earlier than grades K-8, to allow parents with children in both locations time to pick up at the early childhood building first, and then their older children at 12:15 p.m. at the main building.

Please provide only a snack for your child on early release days.



Attendance

The school must be notified if a child is to be absent. There are two ways you may go about reporting your child(ren) absence, you may either send an email or leave a voicemail. The email address is: attendance@sjs-needham.org or please call the office by 8:00 a.m. to report your child's absence. Parents should notify the teacher in writing if you know of an absence in advance.

Early Childhood Building:

Early Childhood Building administrative assistant at 781-444-4459, press #3.



Health Services

Nursing services are provided to Saint Joseph School by a full-time registered nurse. If your child requires medicine during the school day, either regularly or on occasion, consent forms must be filled out and on file in the school office in the main building on Pickering Street. These forms may be obtained from the health office. In some cases, it may be required that a signed medication order from your child's physician is on file. For field trips, the school will delegate and train an appropriate person to administer the medication.

Children should be symptom-free (i.e. fevers, conjunctivitis, stomach ailments) for at least 24 hours prior to returning to school after an illness-related absence.



School Complex

The main entrance to the **Early Childhood School Building** is located on Highland Avenue to the left of the church. There is a doorbell and intercom/buzzer system with a camera. The two side doors are locked during the day.

The main entrance to **Saint Joseph School** (Grades K-8) is located at 90 Pickering Street. It is the 2nd door from the left end of the building. There is a doorbell and buzzer system. All doors are locked. The school office is located inside the main entrance (first office on the right).

The “**Kennedy Center**”, where the September Back to School Night and various other events are held, is also the Lower School gym. It is accessed either by the main school door, the double doors facing Pickering Street, or from the back parking lot.

The entrance to the school’s main **Parking Lot** is off Highland Avenue beside the rectory. It exits onto Pickering Street. There is no parking allowed during the day because recess is held there. There is a small school/church parking lot behind the Early Childhood School Building which is accessed from Oakland Ave. This is a parking lot for **staff only**. There is plenty of parking available around the neighborhood. Please pay attention to all the parking signs.



Before Care Program

There is no classroom supervision for students who arrive before 8:00 a.m.

We offer a teacher supervised Before Care Program between 7:15 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. in the Lower School Cafeteria. Any student arriving before 8:00 a.m. must participate in the program. The cost is **\$4.00** day/per student.

In the event of a delayed opening, the Before Care Program **WILL NOT** be available.



After-Care Program

Our Saint Joseph School Aftercare Program has two options: 2:30 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.- 5:30 p.m. in the Early Childhood School Building. Please check our website for specific forms and costs related to this

program.



Dismissal Changes

If your child's dismissal will be changing on any given day, we ask that you follow this procedure:

- Please email your child's teacher as well as the Early Childhood School Building administrative assistant with the dismissal plans for that day.
- The administrative assistant and the teacher will send you back a confirmation email that they have received the new plans and will make the changes.
- If you do **NOT** receive back a confirmation email, then you will need to call the administrative assistant at 781-444-4459 and speak with her directly.
- If you are unable to reach the administrative assistant, then you should call the main office and speak with someone there that may relay the message.
- If we do **NOT** receive an email or a phone call with any changes, your child will be dismissed as usual.



Drop off/ Pick up

Morning DropOff: Please be aware of the many no parking zones.

Parking is very limited. You are allowed to park on:

- ☐ May Street along the side of the church
- ☐ Oakland Avenue on the nonresidential side of the street
- ☐ The Funeral Home lot across the street on Highland Avenue

Parking is strictly prohibited on:

- ☐ Highland Avenue in front of the church & Early Childhood Building;
- ☐ The parking lot behind the school administration building off Oakland Avenue;
- ☐ The residential side of Oakland Avenue
- ☐ Either side of Pickering Street

Building Entrances:

The Little Sharks (2.9) children will be walked in by a parent at the door closest to the parking lot, with the number one on it. The preschool children will enter the building at the front door, with the number three on it. The pre-kindergarten children will enter the building at the side door, closest to the toy shed, with the number two on it.

Afternoon Pick-Up:

Little Sharks (2.9), preschool, pre-kindergarten children are dismissed at 2:30 p.m. (10 minutes earlier than grades K-8) to allow parents with children in the upper grades to pick up at the Early Childhood School Building, and then pick up their older children at the main building.

Afternoon pick-up happens in the back parking lot of the Early Childhood Building. The preschool children will be dismissed at the side door, closest to the toy shed, with the number two on it. The pre-kindergarten teachers will bring their class to the black gate and once there is contact with the parent or approved pick up person, the student will be released.

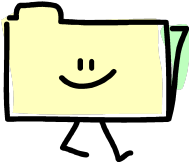
****Little Sharks (2.9) pickup will be in the same room that they were dropped off in the morning. Please enter via the front door, door number three.**

As with morning drop off, parking is *strictly prohibited* on Highland Avenue in front of the church and Early Childhood Building, in the school administration parking lot, on the residential side of Oakland Avenue, and on either side of Pickering Street.

Teachers must be notified in writing of any changes to your child's transportation arrangements.

Please send an email if your child is going home with another child for a play date.

School - Home Communications



You will receive an email from your child's teacher bi-weekly called a "**biweekly blast**". This will highlight news, activities, and curriculum that their class covered that week. The teachers will also share pictures periodically.

The **school newsletter**, called **Saint Joe's Scoop**, includes important information from the Head of School, details about upcoming school events and meetings, and classroom news. The newsletter is distributed via email and may also be accessed on the school's website.

Check Out Our Website!

For announcements & updates during the school year

www.saintjoes.com



School Calendar

All dates for the 2024-2025 school year are posted on our school website. Any changes to this calendar will be noted in the Saint Joe's Scoop and on the monthly calendar on the website. Newsletters will be e-mailed and posted on the school website: www.saintjoes.com.

Curriculum



The preschool and pre-kindergarten curriculums consist of instruction in religion, reading readiness, mathematics, social studies, and science. These subjects are reinforced by having our students do “hands on” activities in small groups. In addition, students attend music, library, Spanish, art, and gym classes once a week.

****Little sharks (2.9) - curriculum consists of play based learning and will focus on basic skills as well as social emotional learning.**

A schedule of Specialist Classes will be announced in September.



Uniforms

Little Sharks, Preschool and Pre-kindergarten

Little Sharks, preschool and pre-kindergarten students wear the school gym uniform daily. This consists of navy blue shorts or sweatpants with school logo, and t-shirt and/or sweatshirt with logo. Sneakers are worn year round.

PLEASE LABEL ALL UNIFORMS.

Gym Uniform:

- ☐ Navy blue shorts with school logo
- ☐ Navy blue sweatpants with school logo
- ☐ A Saint Joseph School gray tee shirt with school logo
- ☐ A navy sweatshirt with school logo

Regarding **jewelry**, pierced earring studs only and one chain necklace may be worn. Long necklaces, layers of necklaces, or layers of bracelets may **NOT** be worn. Long drop earrings or loop earrings may **NOT** be worn.

Nail Polish is **NOT** allowed.

Uniforms may be purchased at:

Dennis Uniform - Our preferred school number is DDC010
<https://www.dennisuniform.com>

Volunteer Opportunities

Classroom visits are encouraged but must be scheduled in advance with your child's teacher. There are many opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom.

All volunteers must have attended the VIRTUS Training class and have completed an annual CORI background check prior to assisting at school in any capacity.



Classroom volunteer opportunities include recess duty, reading to the class, and chaperoning a field trip. In addition, designated Room Parents (1-2 per classroom) function as liaisons between the teacher and other parents regarding nonacademic activities in the classroom (i.e.; holiday parties).

Visit the school website (www.saintjoes.com). Then:

- ☐ Go to the Community Tab
- ☐ Choose Volunteer Now
- ☐ Scroll down until you get to the classroom you are looking to volunteer for.

The links provided will lead you to full descriptions of volunteer opportunities, and by entering your name and email address, you will receive confirmation and reminders of your selections.

Lunch/Snack



Please make sure your child's snack/lunch box is clearly marked with his/her name.

You will need to provide a snack as well as lunch for your child. Children will eat their snack and lunch in their classroom.

We do offer a lunch program called Lunch Boxes (ezschoolapps.com) - that you can order lunch for your child. Pizza is offered for lunch on Fridays for students for a nominal fee. You should include a beverage in your child's lunchbox for lunch as well as a beverage for snack time.

Please be sensitive to children with food allergies. If there is a child in your classroom with a severe food allergy, all parents will be notified by the school nurse.

The Early Childhood School Building follows the "green" policy of the school in encouraging parents to send snacks, lunches, and drinks in reusable containers. This policy has two main goals: to reduce the amount of trash we generate as a school and, to allow parents to observe what their children are eating. Messy items, such as partially consumed yogurts, puddings, applesauce, or juice boxes, will be thrown away at school.



Birthdays

In order to make each child's birthday special we celebrate birthdays by having parents come in and read to the class. Uniforms do not have to be worn, and each child will get to hear his/her name announced to the whole school after morning prayers. We do **NOT** allow celebration with **food or goody bags**. If your child's birthday is during the summer months please arrange an alternate date with your child's teacher.

The Birthday Book Program is the primary source of funding to purchase new books and replace old books for the school library. Parents are invited to donate a fixed fee to celebrate their child's birthday or other special event and a bookplate commemorating the event is placed in the book. The birthday child may select a book from the book cart in the library and be the first to take it out. There are two ways to donate – prepay at the beginning of the school year (form is online) or receive an email at the beginning of the child's birthday month. The librarians or parent coordinators are always available to answer questions or to take special requests. We have an incredible collection of books and other media thanks to this important program!

September Back to School Night



On **September 25, 2024**, the school will hold a Back to School Night in the “Kennedy Center, for preschool through forth grade. Enter through the double doors facing Pickering Street or from the back parking lot. This is an important evening to attend. The Head of School addresses all parents and then you have an opportunity to meet with your child’s teacher to hear about the year ahead in your child’s classroom.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Formal conferences will be held on **October 24 and 25, 2024** and again on **April 4, 2025**. You will be notified in advance of the time of your conference. The conferences cover information regarding your child's adjustment to school, his/her academic progress, strengths, and areas for improvement. In addition to attending these formal conferences, you should feel free to contact your child's teacher at any time with questions or concerns.



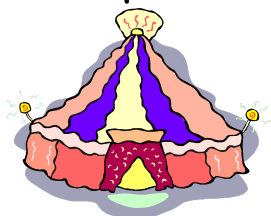
Supplies

Every child is asked to bring in the following items clearly labeled for their cubbies:

1. An art smock (oversized t-shirt works best: adult size)
2. A change of clothing (blue sweat pants and gray shirt) including socks and underwear in a big zip lock bag with their name on it. Please replenish as needed.

Your child will also need to bring a backpack and lunchbox to school every day. The backpack should be able to hold a lunchbox, folders and other items. **Please make sure both are clearly marked with his/her name.**

Field Trips



You will receive consent forms in advance of any field trips, which must be signed and returned to the school. A specific number of parent chaperones are required for each field trip. Parents who are not officially class chaperones on a particular field trip are strongly discouraged from meeting the group on site.

****All chaperones need to have a current CORI form on file, as well as VIRTUS Training on file.****



First Friday Mass

Every other Friday the school children sponsor and attend the 9:00 a.m. Mass in the Upper Church. Pre-kindergarten children will join later in the school year. Parents, siblings, and other family members are welcome to attend. Please check the school calendar for the Mass schedule as the Masses have been divided into Upper and Lower School.



Snow Days

Saint Joseph School follows the Town of Needham school closing announcements. If a two hour delay is announced, school will start at 10:00 a.m.

In the event NPS does not cancel and the Saint Joseph School Administration determines that weather conditions make traveling unsafe, we will notify parents and guardians of our decision to close school via:

1. A text message to your cell phone through our emergency contact system. The school will use this system in case of emergency and/or to remind families of important events.
2. A No-School Announcement posting on our website.

Watch the local TV news channels for closings and delays.

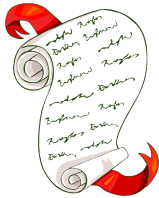
In the event of a delayed opening, the Before Care Program **WILL NOT** be available.

Snow closures will be announced individually based on conditions for the Aftercare Program.

Special Events School-Wide

There are many special events that little sharks, preschool, and pre-kindergarten children are welcome to participate in. Details are published in the school newsletter, **Saint Joe's Scoop**.

Halloween Party/ Trunk or Treat: It's loud, but the kids love it! This will be held on **October 25, 2024**.



Santa's Workshop: On **December 17 & 18, 2024**, students have the opportunity to visit "Santa's Workshop" during school hours and purchase inexpensive presents for family and friends.

Grandparents and Special People Day: This will be held on **May 2, 2025**. Children's grandparents or other special people in their lives (another relative, a family friend) are invited to attend Mass, enjoy refreshments, attend a school-wide assembly, and visit the children's classrooms.

Field Day: **June 9, 2025**, a fun team building experience.

End of the Year Party: **June 11, 2025**, a night to celebrate a wonderful school year.

Parent School Association (PSA)

Chairs: Ali Mazza, Azi Griffin, and Jen Soivilien

There are over 20 PSA committees providing a wide variety of volunteer opportunities, from helping with the Halloween Party to coordinating the annual Field Day in June. There are plenty of opportunities for both stay-at-home and working parents to get involved. Please help out! If you have questions regarding the online volunteer opportunities, which provides information on all committees, please contact PSA@sjs-needham.org

In addition to managing school-related volunteerism, the PSA enhances school-parent communication and organizes parent enrichment programs. PSA meetings are held monthly; check the school newsletter for exact dates. Attending PSA meetings are a great way to learn about school issues, offer suggestions and ideas, and become involved. Feel free to bring your young children to meetings.

Cherish this Wonderful Year!

