



SAINT JAMES
CATHOLIC SCHOOL

FAITH • EXCELLENCE • DISCIPLINE • FAMILY

Pre-K2 and Pre-K3

Handbook

2026 - 2027

St. James Catholic School
603 West Avenue
Gulfport, MS 39507
(228) 896-6631
www.stjamesgulfport.com

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DIOCESE OF BILOXI MISSION

The Catholic schools of the Diocese of Biloxi will provide an education grounded in the moral teachings of the Catholic Faith, fostering Intentional Disciples of Jesus Christ, and ensuring academic excellence.

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC SCHOOL MISSION

The mission of St. James Catholic School is to form intentional disciples of Jesus Christ by nurturing each student's God-given gifts through Catholic faith formation and academic excellence.

ST. JAMES CATHOLIC SCHOOL VISION

St. James Catholic School envisions a vibrant Catholic learning community where Christ is the cornerstone of our faith and every student is inspired to discover, develop, and joyfully share their God-given gifts in service to God and others. In partnership with parents, the primary educators of their children, and our parish community, we are committed to educating the whole child—spiritually, intellectually, morally, emotionally, socially, and physically—so that each student may discover and fulfill God's purpose for his or her life.

We envision graduates who are faithful and intentional disciples of Jesus Christ, living lives rooted in integrity, compassion, humility, and respect for the dignity of every person. They pursue excellence with curiosity and perseverance, lead with courage and self-discipline, and serve others with joy. Guided by faith, nourished by the Parish's Eucharistic devotion, inspired by hope, and strengthened by love, they seek truth and justice and leave St. James prepared to make a meaningful difference in their families, the Church, their communities, and the world.

ST. JAMES PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The philosophy of St. James Catholic School, inspired by the Sisters of Mercy, is rooted in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teaching mission of the Catholic Church. Guided by Sacred Scripture, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the teachings of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the rich tradition of Catholic education, we are committed to forming students in faith, knowledge, and virtue.

We believe that parents are the primary educators of their children and that the school and parish share in this sacred responsibility through a partnership founded on faith, mutual respect, and open communication. Together, we seek to help every child discover, develop, and joyfully share their God-given gifts while fostering the growth of the whole person—, spiritually, intellectually morally, emotionally, socially, and physically.

We believe every child is created in the image and likeness of God and possesses unique gifts, inherent dignity, and a God-given purpose. Therefore, we strive to provide a safe,

welcoming, and academically challenging environment where students are encouraged to pursue excellence, think critically, act ethically, and grow in wisdom and faith.

We believe that Catholic education extends beyond academic achievement. Our goal is to form intentional disciples of Jesus Christ who embrace Gospel values, respect the sanctity of all human life, demonstrate compassion and integrity, seek truth and justice, and joyfully serve others. Through prayer, liturgical worship, nourishment by the Eucharist, service, and daily witness, students are invited to deepen their relationship with Christ and actively participate in the life and mission of the Church.

We believe that our faculty and staff are called not only to teach but also to model Christian discipleship. By fostering a faith-filled community grounded in love, respect, collaboration, and service, we seek to reflect the presence of Christ in every aspect of school life. As the saying reminds us, "Jesus is the unseen yet ever-present Teacher in our school."

We believe our ultimate purpose is to prepare students to become lifelong learners, responsible citizens, compassionate servant leaders, and faithful Catholics who discover, develop, and joyfully share their God-given gifts to build the Kingdom of God and positively impact the world.

FACILITY LICENSURE

St. James Catholic School Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 programs operate under the laws and policies outlined in the Mississippi Department of Health "Regulations Governing Licensure of Child Care Facilities." It can be accessed online at <https://msdh.ms.gov/page/resources/78.pdf>. Our local licensing official is Amanda Smith.

HANDBOOK DISCLOSURE

This handbook was developed to provide information to parents of student(s) at St. James Catholic Elementary School in Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 classes ONLY. This handbook provides the rules and regulations for Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 through the Mississippi State Health Department. For other information regarding the rules and regulations, please see the St. James Catholic School Family Handbook. By signing the Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 Handbook Acknowledgement Signature Form, you indicate your willingness to abide by rules and regulations of St. James Catholic School and the Mississippi State Department of Health.

FACILITY STAFF

Principal: Lauren Ross

Preschool Director: Stacey Cox

Pre-K2-1 Teacher: Ashleigh Smith • **Assistants:** Logan Hartley and Shirley Morgan

Pre-K2-2 Teacher: Ahna Carswell • **Assistants:** Kayla Grice and Kaleigh Powers

Pre-K3-1 Teacher: Daria Sharp • **Assistant:** Melissa Bryant

Pre-K3-2 Teacher: Shannon Sharp • **Assistant:** Jill Brooks

Pre-K3-3 Teacher: McRae Ross • **Assistant:** Tiffany Skinner

ADMISSIONS

All Students entering St. James Catholic School must present the following information:
Completed Online Application at www.stjamesgulfport.com

- Signed Tuition Agreement
- Copy of Birth Certificate
- Mississippi Certificate of Immunization Compliance Form #121
- Copy of Social Security Card
- Non-refundable Registration Fee
- Baptismal Certificate, if Catholic

Priority for admission will be given to those students who meet following requirements:

1. Children of SJCS employees
2. Children who are siblings of students in attendance of SJCS
3. Children of registered parishioners of St. James Catholic Church, St. Joseph Catholic Church, St. Theresa, and St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church.
4. Children who are Catholic who are not members of one of these four parishes
5. Children who are non-Catholic

Children entering PreK-2 should be two (2) years old by September 1 of that school year. Children entering PreK-3 should be three (3) years old by September 1 of that school year. Admission of children under two (2) years old by September 1st of the applicable school year may be admitted with the written approval of the Principal.

IMMUNIZATION

Immunization Law

Mississippi Law (Senate Bill 2650) states, “It shall be unlawful for any child to attend school, kindergarten, or similar type facility intended for the instruction of children either public or private unless they shall first have been vaccinated against those diseases specified by the State Health Officer.” A Certificate of Compliance is required from a private physician or a Mississippi county health department prior to attending St. James Catholic School.

The Diocese of Biloxi requires all students of Catholic schools to receive the immunizations mandated by the State of Mississippi for entry school unless a student is entitled to a medical exemption. A medical exemption is allowed when a child has a medical condition that prevents the child from receiving a vaccine. No other exemptions will be allowed. The purpose of this policy is to fulfill Christ’s commandment to “love one another” and uphold the sanctity of life by endeavoring to protect our students and families through immunization.

Please make sure that your child’s Mississippi Certificate of Immunization Compliance Form 121 is up to date, not expired. You will be notified by Mrs. Whiteside if your child’s 121 Form is expired or will be expiring soon. 121 Forms should be dropped off at the front office or sent via e-mail to Mrs. Whiteside at twhiteside@stjamesgulfport.com.

FEES AND TUITION

Pre-K2 Tuition and Fees	
1 Child	2026-27 Yearly Rate
Full-time 5 days	\$6,715.00
Part-time 5 days	\$4,430.00
Lunch Fee Part-time & Full-time	\$400.00

Pre-K3 Tuition and Fees	
1 Child	2026-27 Yearly Rate
Full-time 5 days	\$6,715.00
Part-time 5 days	\$4,430.00

Registration	
Registration on or before March 31	\$300.00 per child
Registration after March 31	\$350.00 per child

Financing Options	
FACTS Annual or Semi-Annual	FACTS annual or semi-annual automatic bank payment plans will be charged a \$25.00 enrollment/re-enrollment fee and will be deducted by FACTS.
FACTS 10-month plan	FACTS 10-month plan (includes tuition, book fee, and Blue and Gold*) automatic bank payments through FACTS over 10 months July-April. A \$55.00 enrollment/re-enrollment fee will be deducted by FACTS.
FACTS MasterCard or Discover	FACTS payments via credit card or debit card will be charged a 3.05% service fee.

Fees and tuition are non-refundable in the event of a withdrawal except in the case of employment relocation, illness, or other reason deemed eligible by administration.

CLASS PLACEMENT POLICY

St. James Catholic School is committed to creating balanced, supportive, and effective classroom environments in which every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Class Placement

Class placements are determined through a thoughtful and comprehensive process.

Students must have completed the registration process before a class placement can be assigned and a class placement letter issued.

School administration and teachers consider a variety of factors when creating class lists, including:

- Academic needs and learning styles
- Social and emotional considerations
- Student relationships and peer dynamics
- Classroom balance
- Gender balance
- Student behavior and classroom needs
- Teacher strengths and teaching styles
- The overall needs of each class

Our goal is to create balanced classrooms that provide each student with the best possible opportunity for success.

Teacher Requests

St. James Catholic School does **not accept requests for specific teachers**. Teacher assignments are made based on the overall needs of the students and the balanced composition of each classroom.

We recognize that families may have positive experiences with particular teachers; however, making individual teacher assignments based on parent requests would make it difficult to create balanced classrooms and would not allow us to consider the needs of the entire school community.

All of our teachers are highly qualified, dedicated educators who care deeply about their students. Each teacher brings unique strengths, gifts, and talents to the classroom, and the administration has confidence in every member of our faculty.

Sibling Placement

St. James Catholic School does **not have a "follow the sibling" rule** for class placement. Siblings may be placed with the same teacher in some years and with different teachers in other years.

When determining class placements, the needs and overall balance of each grade level are considered rather than automatically placing siblings with the same teacher.

Friend Requests

Students and families may have preferences regarding which friends they would like to be placed with. While friendships and peer relationships may be considered as one factor in creating balanced classrooms, the school cannot guarantee that students will be placed with particular friends or groups of friends.

We encourage students to view a new class placement as an opportunity to develop new friendships, strengthen existing relationships, and grow in confidence and independence.

Final Class Assignments

Class placements are carefully considered and finalized by the school administration. Once class lists have been finalized, changes will not generally be made based on parent or student preference.

The school reserves the right to make changes to class assignments when necessary to address enrollment, staffing, student needs, or other circumstances affecting the operation of the school.

We ask families to support their children by approaching their class placement with a positive attitude and encouraging them to be open to new experiences, friendships, and relationships with their teachers.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Parents/guardians wishing to withdraw their child from St. James Catholic School should notify the school office with a withdrawal date. All tuition, fees, cafeteria fees and fines must be brought current as part of the withdrawal process.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you should move to a new address during the school year, please inform the school of your new address and telephone number.

CALENDAR

School days, holidays, and any other school closures will coincide with the yearly school schedule of St. James Catholic School for Grades Pre-K4 - 6. The 2026-2027 School Year Calendar is posted on the website at www.stjamesgulfport.com.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Based on the school calendar, St. James Catholic School's Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 program is open Monday-Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

For Pre-K3 students, before care is available from 7:00 a.m. to 7:40 a.m. in the school cafeteria at no additional charge. After School Care is available from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. for all students.

VISITORS/PARENTS

All outside doors are locked throughout the school day. Visitors and parents entering the school are to sign in at the front office for Pre-K3 and Parish Center for Pre-K2. A visitor's sticker should be worn throughout the stay. All recurring visitors and chaperones, who interact with the children, must have a current completed and verified background check through VIRTUS on file in the school office. While some parents are more familiar with school staff than others, all should adhere to the visitor policy for safety and continuity. Please do not ask students or teachers to open locked doors for you and help monitor this system by reporting strangers to the office.

DROP-OFF AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Before School Care for Pre-K3 Students (7:00 a.m. – 7:40 a.m.)

Before School Care is free of charge for students in Pre-K3 through 6th grade. Before School Care opens at 7:00 a.m. and ends at 7:40 a.m. Parents will use the front of the school carline to drop their children off by the cafeteria door. Parents/Guardians of Pre-K3 students must walk their child in to the cafeteria and sign them in. Please do not drop off children unattended in the front of the school before 7:00 a.m.

Pre-K2 Morning Drop-off (7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.)

Pre-K2 students may be dropped off at the Parish Center between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. All Pre-K2 students must be signed in daily. School starts promptly at 8:00 a.m. so please make sure your child is on time. You can park in the parking lot of the Parish Center while dropping off your child. You must walk your child to the Parish Center door to drop them off. If you are late dropping your child off, please ring the bell at the front of the Parish Center entrance and a staff member will meet you at the door to check in your child.

Pre-K3 Morning Drop-off (7:40 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.)

Pre-K3 students must use the front of the school carline and drop their children off at the front of the school. All Pre-K3 students must be signed in every morning. Please display your orange printed name strips on the passenger side dashboard so that the teacher on duty can identify that your Pre-K3 child needs to be signed in.

Parents/guardians will be able to walk their children to their classroom during the first week of school only. After that time period, students will be dropped off in carline or walked to the front door of the school. Good byes should be said at the front door or in the lobby of the school. We have staff members and Spirit Movers (6th grade students) who will walk the younger students to their classrooms. If you need to carry something to the classroom for a birthday celebration, please get approval from the administration or teacher on duty.

Afternoon Dismissal (2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.)

Children will only be dismissed to someone on their "pick-up" list unless written notification is given. If a person is not recognizable, identification must be presented to confirm consent. We do this for your child's safety. Please notify us if any of this

information needs to be changed at any time or if there is a change in your child's afternoon routine.

Parents should put their pre-printed name strip in the right corner of the car dashboard so that the teachers can read the name easily and get the children promptly. You will receive your name card at the beginning of the year. Please notify us if you need a new sign.

Dismissal Procedures

- All students will be dismissed at 2:45 p.m.
- Students in grades Pre-K2, Pre-K3, and their older siblings will be picked up at the Parish Hall by the Pre-K2 classrooms. Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 students must be signed out daily.
- Any student not picked up by 3:00 p.m. in carline will be sent to After School Care.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

After School Care is available from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Any child in Pre-K2 through 6th grade who attends St. James School is eligible to attend. Pre-K2 After School Care will be in Pre-K2 classrooms in the Parish Center. Pre-K2 students must be signed out by their parents. Pre-K3 through 6th grade After School Care will be in the school cafeteria. Pre-K3 students must be signed out by their parents. More information is available in the school office. A snack and drink are served daily. **After School Care charges must be paid within 30 days or students will be denied participation in the program and a parent or guardian will be called for the student(s).**

On Staff Development days, students attending After School Care need to bring a sack lunch and a drink.

Children must be picked up by 5:30 p.m. After 5:30 p.m., a late fee of \$1.00 per minute, per child, will be assessed. ASC statements will be emailed each month. These charges can be viewed and paid through your Family Portal. Click on the Financial Tab, then on Balances. The ASC balance will be listed under Incidental Expenses.

After School Care Charges

Number of Children attending	Regular Hourly Rates Per Child	Regular Daily Total 3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.	Late Fee Rates Per Minute after 5:30 p.m. (In Addition to Regular Rates)
1	\$5.00	\$12.50	\$1.00
2	\$4.50 each	\$22.50	\$1.00 each
3	\$4.25 each	\$31.88	\$1.00 each
4 or more	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00

Staff Development Days and Noon Dismissal Days Daily Rates not to exceed	
1 Child	\$20.00
2 Children	\$32.00
3 Children	\$46.00

Please sign your signature legibly with your full first and last name when you sign your child in and out daily. This is very important for the safety of your child and is required by the State Department of Health.

*** Children will only be dismissed to someone on their “pick-up” list, unless written notification is given. If a person is not recognizable, identification must be presented in order to confirm consent. We do this for your child’s safety. Please notify us if any of this information needs to be changed at any time or if there is a change in your child’s afternoon routine.*

COMMUNICATION

The school keeps parents informed of all activities and events through multiple portals (social media, email, FACTS, newsletters, etc.). The faculty and staff can be contacted directly by email. The address is the person’s first initial and last name @stjamesgulfport.com. (example: lross@stjamesgulfport.com). Teachers check their email each morning and afternoon before leaving for the day.

Each teacher communicates directly through FACTS and other approved platforms. Each teacher sends home a weekly newsletter to keep parents aware of classroom news, assignments, reminders, and school activities. These newsletters are posted by Monday morning in the FACTS Family Portal and go home in print that afternoon.

Flyers and other important school information will be sent home in the white St. James folders on Wednesdays

Daily Reports are sent home with all PreK-2 students in their daily communication folder. The daily written reports include the child’s disposition, diaper changes, eating and sleeping patterns, items needed, and additional notes.

For current school information check:
 Website: www.stjamesgulfport.com
 Facebook Page: St. James Catholic School
 Instagram Page: saintjamescatholicschool
 FACTS Family Portal: SJC-MS

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE POLICY

St. James Catholic School expects a high standard of discipline from all students. Parents and teachers are called to guide students in developing a sense of personal and social responsibility through self-discipline. Students are called to be respectful and to demonstrate Christian character and Catholic virtues. We believe that children can be taught self-discipline skills as a part of the total school curriculum.

We expect students to conduct themselves in a manner that is becoming of a Catholic student and always exhibit self-disciplined behavior, on or off campus, in conformity with the norms of our school handbook. Our educators teach and model desired behavioral traits regularly and lovingly encourage children to meet these goals and behavioral outcomes each day. Teachers communicate with parents the expectation of conduct that exhibits our Catholic values. The principal is the final recourse in all disciplinary situations. In the absence of the principal or director, the director designee or other staff member deemed by administration will act on the principal/director's behalf.

The Difference Between Discipline and Punishment

Oftentimes the words "discipline" and "punishment" are used interchangeably to mean the same thing, however, they are very different concepts. Discipline means teaching children acceptable behavior through positive guidance. Through discipline, children are taught the appropriate behavior, the reasons the behavior is appropriate, and how to behave in everyday situations. When children are taught how to behave properly, they learn how to control their own behavior. Teaching children appropriate behavior and the reasons behind it takes time. Learning self-control will not happen overnight.

On the other hand, punishment refers to inflicting negative consequences to control behavior through fear and intimidation such as spanking and yelling. Punishment causes poor self-esteem and does not teach children acceptable behaviors or self-control. It may stop the behavior, but the children do not have the knowledge of how to handle the same situation in the future. It is very important to separate discipline from punishment when caring for young children.

Communicating with Parents about Children's Behaviors

Our Pre-K 2 and Pre-K3 teachers will be in communication with their students' parents daily through drop-off and/or pick-up chats, telephone calls or texts, email, or daily notes in the students' communication folders. The teachers will keep parents informed of their child's appropriate and inappropriate behavior. If a child's misbehavior becomes a problem, a conference with the parents will be scheduled with the teachers, director, and principal. Discussions will center around what is causing the misbehavior, how to teach the child more appropriate behaviors, and logical consequences for continued misbehavior. If a child's behavior is harmful, professional guidance may be sought for direction or required for a child to remain enrolled. If a child's behavior becomes threatening to other children or staff members, permanent dismissal from school may be a last option.

Appropriate Techniques for Discipline

- Keep the rules simple and few.
- Divert, redirect, or distract inappropriate behavior.
- Minor infractions need to be overlooked.
- Expect toddler and two-year-old behavior. For example: dumping out toys and putting them back into the container endlessly.
- Be consistent and do not change the rules from one day to the next.
- Give explanations to help the children learn and develop language skills.
- Acknowledge toddler and two-year-old feelings and provide them with avenues to express them in an appropriate manner.
- Give children two acceptable choices.
- Time-out is not an appropriate punishment for toddlers and two-year-olds because it is beyond their comprehension.
- Have a positive attitude and a good sense of humor.

Types of Punishments Not Allowed

The following behaviors are not allowed by staff, parents, or other adults due to licensure regulations, liability factors, or the Code of Ethics for Early Childhood Education:

- Corporal punishment, including hitting of any kind, shaking, pinching, biting back, or other measures that produce physical pain
- Withdrawal or the threat of withdrawal of food, rest, or bathroom opportunities
- Abusive or profane language
- Any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment
- Any form of emotional abuse, including rejecting, terrorizing, ignoring, isolating, or corrupting a child
- Using any food product or medication in any manner or for any purpose other than that for which it was intended
- Inappropriate disciplinary behavior, which includes but is not limited to, putting soap or pepper in a child's mouth
- Isolation out of the view of a caregiver
- Forcing children to sit at a table or in highchairs for long periods of time
- Telling parents to punish children at home for misbehavior that occurred at school

Staff Training on Discipline Issues

Two and three-year-olds need caregivers that are trained to handle their distinctive developmental and discipline issues. It is essential that our caregivers are periodically trained in discipline issues. The following types of training are offered to our teachers and staff:

- Annual staff orientation to discuss the handbook and discipline policy
- In-service training focusing on a variety of approaches to help caregivers learn how to use appropriate guidance techniques
- Monthly staff meetings with brainstorming and sharing ideas
- Webinars, Workshops, and Conferences
- Visits to other centers to observe
- Books, professional literature, and videos

UNIFORM DRESS CODE POLICY

All students in Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 are required to wear the prescribed St. James Catholic School uniform on regular school days, St. James Catholic School-approved t-shirts on Thursdays, and appropriate attire on announced free-dress days. As representatives of St. James Catholic School, students are expected to wear their uniforms in a manner that reflects good character, virtue, and respect for themselves and others while consistently adhering to the school's dress code. The Principal reserves the right to make the final determination regarding all uniform and grooming questions, whether specifically addressed in this uniform dress code or not.

Students not in proper uniform will be handled in a consistent but sensitive manner depending on the student's grade level. A note or a phone call will be made to the parent/guardian to discuss the best way to handle the breach in the uniform code. Parents are asked to cooperate with school personnel when asked to assist with correcting improper uniform dress.

Uniforms should be clean, neat, in good condition, and appropriately fitted. As a Catholic school, we strive to foster an environment that reflects the values of modesty, respect, and dignity. Therefore, skorts, skirts, jumpers, and dresses should be of an appropriate and modest length. Skorts, skirts, jumpers, and dresses may be no more than 4 inches from the floor when kneeling. Playground shorts must be worn under all skirts, jumpers, and dresses. White short-sleeved t-shirts may be worn underneath school uniform shirts. Students should wear shoes that are appropriate for school activities and physical education.

Only official St. James outerwear may be worn inside the school building. Students may wear a navy cardigan, navy sweatshirt, or navy fleece embroidered with the St. James crest. During cold weather, students may wear a solid navy jacket/coat outdoors - no logos are allowed, only the school crest. If the temperature falls below 32°F, students may wear a heavier non-uniform coat outside only. All jackets, sweaters, sweatshirts, and outerwear should be clearly labeled with the student's name. To help identify misplaced items, school personnel may write the student's name on the tag of any unlabeled item.

Diocesan policy prohibits watches that can send or receive text messages, emails, or phone calls. Apple Watches, Fitbits, and similar smart devices are not permitted. Traditional watches are allowed.

The official school emblem or logos may not be reproduced without permission from school administration, nor applied to an unapproved article of clothing. Uniforms can be purchased at our school-approved vendor, Educate and Celebrate. They are located at 8829 Lorraine Road (Suite 101), Gulfport, MS 39503. Their phone number is (228) 206-1901, and their email address is sales@educateandcelebrate.com. To view the uniform options or to shop online, visit www.shopeducateandcelebrate.com.

St. James Girls' School Uniform:

- A light blue polo style knit shirt (long or short sleeves) with a school crest.
- Light blue long or short sleeve blouse with a rounded Peter Pan collar. – *optional*
- The school plaid skort. Skorts and dresses can be no shorter than 4" from the floor when the student is kneeling. Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 students have the option to purchase a school plaid dress or a light blue or navy pique polo dress.
- Navy blue uniform shorts or slacks. (must be uniform material, no knit, cargo or sweatpants)
- Solid navy, black or white tights under skorts, shorts, uniform dress, pique polo dress, or jumper are acceptable.
- No footless leggings.
- Solid white, black, or navy socks to be worn at all times, unless tights are worn. Logos or designs are **not** permitted on socks or tights.
- Black, navy, white, or gray athletic shoes. No high tops, cleats, high heels, or boots.
- Black, navy, white, or brown leather shoes. No lights, bells, rollers, or shoe accessories.
- Velcro shoes are highly recommended for preschool students for safety reasons. They are required for PK2 students.
- Hair ribbons and bows must be navy, light blue, yellow, red, white or the official school plaid.
- No make-up, tattoos, or artificial nails.
- Light-colored and neutral-colored nail polish only.
- No jewelry allowed, except stud earrings.
- Hair should be neatly groomed, out of the eyes, and free from excessive hairstyles.

St. James Boys' School Uniform:

- A light blue uniform shirt with a school crest.
- Only white short sleeve t-shirts are allowed under school uniform shirts.
- Navy blue walking shorts or slacks (must be uniform material, no knit shorts, no cargo type shorts, no sweatpants)
- Black, navy, white, or gray athletic shoes. No high tops or cleats.
- Black, navy, white, or brown leather shoes
- No lights, bells, rollers, or other shoe accessories
- Velcro shoes are highly recommended for preschool students for safety reasons. They are required for PK2 students.
- No jewelry is allowed. No tattoos.
- Hair should be neatly groomed and out of the eyes. Hair must remain above the eyebrows, above the shirt collar, and no longer than mid-ear on the sides.
- No excessive hairstyles, rat tails, hair wraps, or similar fads.

General rules that apply to both boys and girls.

Only white short sleeve t-shirts are allowed under school uniform shirts.

All Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 students should wear Velcro shoes, no laces or ties.

Students may wear a navy cardigan, navy sweatshirt, navy pullover or navy fleece inside the school buildings, as long as it is adorned with the St. James crest. Cold weather jackets/coats for outside must be solid navy (no logos, other than school crest). If the

temperature is below 32 degrees, students may wear a heavy non-uniform jacket outside only. Please write names in all outerwear.

*Clean, gently-worn uniforms are also available free, through the school office.

SNACK/LUNCH

Pre-K2 students will be provided with two snacks and lunch from the cafeteria daily. This is included in your fees. Snacks will be served at approximately 8:30 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. Lunch will be served at 11:30 a.m. Water is always accessible to the children. Water, juice, or milk will be served during eating times. Current lunch menus are posted monthly by the Pre-K2 classrooms. If your child has food allergies or dietary restrictions, a doctor's note must be provided.

Pre-K3 students should send in healthy snacks on Monday for the entire week in a Ziploc bag with your child's name on it. On Friday's, the teachers will send the snack bag home again to be refilled. Pre-K3 students may bring their own lunch from home or may purchase a lunch (\$5.00) from the cafeteria each day. Water, juice, or milk will be served during eating times. Lunch menus for Pre-K3 - 6 will be sent home by the classroom teacher and can be found on the school website.

SUPPLIES/BACKPACKS

The supply list can be found on the school website (www.stjamesgulfport.com). School supply items must be brought in by the first day of school. Our Meet the Teacher event before the beginning of the school year is a great opportunity to bring in school supplies. Teachers may ask for additional supplies throughout the school year, depending on the needs and usage of the students.

Parents will be responsible for providing two full changes of clothing including socks, and diapers/pull ups (if not potty trained). Reminders will be sent when items are running low. A nap mat (plastic or cloth) and a small blanket must also be provided. A backpack large enough to fit a communications folder, changes of clothing, and a refillable water bottle are also required.

LABELS

Please label ALL clothing, shoes, bookbags, and other personal items.

MONEY

Please send in ALL money in a sealed envelope with your child's name, teacher's name, and purpose. Anything that needs to go to the office will be delivered that day by the teacher.

TOILET TRAINING POLICY

Teachers in Pre-K2 will assist children in the potty-training process at some point in the school year. Toilet training conferences will be required before beginning. Children generally achieve potty training between the ages of 2 ½ to 3 years of age. Parents must begin potty training at home before the teacher starts at school. We will go with a “cold turkey” effect of potty training, so if the teacher, parent and child are all working together, training should go easily. Extra clothes and underwear will need to be provided for accidents. If an accident happens at school, all soiled clothing/bedding will be sent home for washing.

All children entering Pre-K3 must be potty trained before the school year begins. Children who are having accidents daily are not considered potty trained. Children must be able to complete toileting activities independently by pulling up/down clothes and wiping themselves. Children should be dressed in clothing that he/she can easily manage independently. Children must be wearing underwear, not pull-ups. There are strict standards for changing and disposing of pull-ups and our Pre-K3 classrooms are not equipped for changing and disposing of diapers/pull-ups. When a teacher is busy changing a child’s soiled clothing, it is taking away from the learning time for all students and it removes one adult from the direct supervision of and interaction with the rest of class.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully potty trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. The children should have a complete change of clothes appropriate for the season in case of an accident. Parents will be notified if their child has a toileting accident. If the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents and reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child at such time.

A Pre-K3 child will not be considered toilet trained for our preschool program if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first 4 weeks of school. A Pre-K4 child will not be considered toilet trained for our preschool program if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first 2 weeks of school. After the first 2/4 weeks of school, the following policies will be in place for children who have accidents:

- If one or two accidents occur in one week, the parents will be notified with the understanding that the issue needs to be addressed and corrected.
- If three or more accidents occur in one week, the parent will be notified with the understanding that if the issue is not corrected by the end of the second week the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until he/she is completely potty trained.
- If multiple accidents occur in one day, the parent will be notified on that day; and if not corrected by day three, the child will have to stay at home at least one week or longer until he/she is completely potty trained.

NAPTIME

Naptime is from approximately 12:15-2:15 p.m. Children will sleep on nap mats with a pillow and blanket sent from home. Children may bring a nap time security item that fits in their cubby, such as a stuffed animal, but the item must be left at school for the week until they are sent home for cleaning. These items will ONLY be used during naptime. Nap mats/Nap mat covers and blankets will be sent home on Fridays for washing. Please send them back to school on Monday or the first day of the following week.

BITING POLICY

Biting is a typical behavior that is often seen in toddlers and 2-year-old children. The need for one child to bite another is part of some children's development. We understand that this is a difficult situation for parents whether it is your child that has bitten or your child that has been responsible for biting others. The good news is that as children mature, gain self-control, and develop problem-solving skills, they will usually outgrow this behavior.

We know that biting can be harmful, and the safety of our children is our primary concern. We will help the children who are bitten feel better by giving them care and support, and we will teach the children who bite more appropriate behaviors. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten will be contacted. The names of the children will not be divulged to either parent. We aim to handle any biting incident with respect and sensitivity for all involved. This policy has been created to help prepare our staff, caregivers, and parents for a potential biting incident, as well as a guide for when a biting incident occurs.

Reasons Children Bite

Children bite for many different reasons. It is our job to take the time to observe and understand why a particular child is biting.

- Expressions of frustration, hunger, and fatigue - They are not able to say, "Leave me alone," "I want that toy," "I am hungry," or "I am tired."
- Not enough personal space - There are too many children in close proximity, or a child does not want another child invading his/her space while playing with toys.
- Seeking attention - They want attention from their caregivers, even if it is negative.
- Relief from teething - Swelling gums can be painful and cause discomfort.
- Lack of or limited social skills - They cannot talk with the other children about their problems or feelings.
- Physical exploration - They explore the world around them by using their senses. Young children do not always know the difference between gnawing on a toy and biting someone.

When Biting Occurs

The following procedures will be followed when a biting incident occurs:

- The caregiver will focus their attention on the victim, not on the child who bit. This will avoid reinforcing negative behavior with attention.
- The caregiver will clean the bite with soap and water, even if the bite does not break the skin. An ice pack can also be applied to the bite.
- The caregiver will allow the biter to gently stroke the victim to teach the children appropriate ways to touch and interact with each other.
- Parents will be notified if the bite has broken the skin or is in a prominent place, such as the cheek.
- The caregiver will make a notation of the incident in a logbook citing the time of day, area of the classroom/playground, and children who were involved.
- An injury report will be filled out on every bite.
- If a child's biting is out of control, the parents will be asked to attend a conference to discuss appropriate ways to deal with the problem.

Ways to Prevent Biting

Our caregivers will take several steps to prevent biting:

- Communicate with all the parents and let them know that biting will happen and why it will happen.
- The children need to have appropriate toys that they can bite, such as teethers.
- Caregivers will work with the children to give them the words to express their frustration such as, "I don't like that!"
- Children who tend to bite can be "shadowed" by a caregiver who can intervene before a biting incident occurs.
- Frequent biters can have a teether safely attached to their clothing and the caregiver can remind the child to bite the teether when frustrated, instead of another child.

Actions a Caregiver Will Not Take When a Child Bites

- The child who bites will never be physically punished by our caregivers.
- Our caregivers will not put a child who has bitten in isolation or withhold anything from them.
- Our caregivers and director will never tell the parents who bit their child due to confidentiality issues.

Every biting incident is different, but there may be a time when the director or principal decides that a biting child cannot remain at school or should be taken out temporarily. We will do everything we can to communicate and work together to find strategies and solutions to stop a child from excessive biting. Removing a biter from our school will be the last resort after all strategies have been exhausted.

OUTSIDE TIME

Weather permitting, we will go outside and play on the playground daily for 30-75+ minutes.

TOYS FROM HOME

We discourage children from bringing toys and treasures from home because of the potential for loss and breakage. We are not responsible for lost, stolen or broken toys.

SICK POLICY

If your child is sick, please keep them at home! Our primary goal is to provide a healthy environment by controlling the spread of contagious diseases. Small children who are cared for in out-of-home group settings are at a greater risk of acquiring and spreading a contagious disease. Small children are highly susceptible to contagious diseases since most of them have not been exposed to many of the most common germs and therefore do not have any immunity to them. Young children also have certain habits such as putting fingers and other objects in their mouths that can easily spread germs. Even though contagious diseases /conditions are inevitable in a child care setting, we do our best to prevent and control the spread of disease. A child may not attend school with any of the following symptoms: fever, undiagnosed rash, vomiting, lice, diarrhea, inflamed eyes, and a severe cold or sore throat. A student must be symptom/fever-free for 24 hours without preventative medication before returning to school.

The following conditions require exclusion from child care as stated in the Communicable Diseases/Conditions and Return to Child Care Guidelines published by the Mississippi Department of Health:

Fever: Defined as 100°F or higher taken under the arm, 101°F taken orally, or 102°F taken rectally. A reading of 100.4°F on a no-touch thermometer is a fever.

Diarrhea: Frequent (3 or more episodes in a 24-hour period) runny, water, or bloody stools. According to the CDC recommendations, a child who is not toilet trained and has diarrhea should be excluded from child care settings regardless of the cause.

Vomiting: Two or more times in a 24-hour period

Rash: Body rash with a fever

Sore Throat: Sore throat with fever and swollen glands

Severe coughing: The child gets red or blue in the face or makes high-pitched whooping sound after coughing

Eye discharge: Thick mucus or pus draining from the eye

Irritability: Continuous irritability and crying

Parents are to notify the office if their child contracts a contagious disease diagnosed by a physician so that others can be notified of their child's exposure. Some common communicable diseases may require absence from school for a period of time. We follow the Communicable Diseases/Conditions and Return to Child Care Guidelines recommended by the Mississippi State Department of Health. The guidelines are included in the Regulations Governing Licensure of Child Care Facilities under Appendix-I on the Mississippi State Department of Health website. The direct link is:
<https://msdh.ms.gov/page/resources/78.pdf>.

If your child is running a fever (100.4° F or above), is vomiting, has diarrhea, eye discharge, body rash with fever, sore throat with fever, severe coughing (whooping), communicable diseases, or contagious disease during the school day you will be notified. The child will be isolated from other students until picked up. If parents cannot be reached, the staff will attempt to contact other individuals listed on the emergency contact list.

BIRTHDAYS AND INVITATIONS

A special treat/snack may be sent in for your child's birthday. If party invitations are sent, they MUST be sent home with EVERY child or with ALL boys or ALL girls.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Students in Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 will participate in the following enrichment activities:

- Music/Art
- Storytime in Library
- Spanish/Language for Little Learners
- P.E. (only Pre-K3)

INSURANCE POLICY

Each student who is enrolled at St. James Catholic School is automatically covered by a secondary insurance policy that covers the child for accident or injury within normal school hours on school property. St. James Catholic School maintains liability insurance.

SAFETY AND EVACUATION PLANS

Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 will follow safety and evacuations plans that are included in our St. James Catholic School Crisis Plan. Fire drills, tornado drills, and lockdown drills are held throughout the school year to acquaint your child with these procedures. Monthly fire drills are required by the Mississippi Department of Health.

In the event we are required to evacuate the building, teachers will transport the children in staff autos and/or bus. Parents will be notified via Parent Alert (FACTS) of where their child will be taken. In the event of an off-site evacuation, students will be transported to St. Patrick Catholic High School. A copy of the evacuation plan is available in the classroom.

MEDICATION

Only medicine authorized by a parent/guardian will be administered at school. If your child requires medication for any reason(s), you will need to sign a medication log authorizing the school to administer. If this is not possible, you may check in through the office and we will bring your child to you for their medication dosage.

If your child has a diaper rash, cream may be provided, and teachers will apply it during diaper changing.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

Should your child become sick or need medical assistance, we will contact the parents first. If we are unable to reach a parent, we will call an emergency contact. Should your child need immediate medical treatment, 911 will be called.

CHILD ABUSE

Any person who knows or has reason to suspect abuse or neglect of a child by a parent, legal custodian, caregiver, or other person(s) responsible for the child's care, is required by law to make a report to the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services. The Mississippi Abuse Hotline is 1-800-222-8000.

ALCOHOL, SMOKING, ILLEGAL DRUGS

The use of alcohol, smoking, or the use of tobacco products and/or illegal drugs is strictly prohibited on and around the St. James Catholic School campus.

Mississippi Adult Tobacco Use on Educational Property Act of 2000

97-32-27. (1) "Adult" means any natural person at least eighteen (18) years old. (2) "Minor" means any natural person under the age of eighteen (18) years. (3) "Person" means any natural person. (4) "Tobacco product" means any substance that contains tobacco including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, smoking tobacco or smokeless tobacco. (5) "Educational property" means any public school building or bus, public school campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field, or other property owned, used or operated by any local school board, school, or directors for the administration of any public educational institution or during a school-related activity; provided, however, that the term "educational property" shall not include any sixteenth section school land or lieu land on which is not located a public school building, public school campus, public school recreational area or public school athletic field. Educational property shall not include property owned or operated by the state institutions of higher learning, the public community and junior colleges, or vocational-technical complexes where only adult students are in attendance. SECTION 3. The following provision shall be codified as Section 97-32-29, Mississippi Code of 1972: 97-32-29. No person shall use any tobacco product on any educational property as defined in Section 2 of this act. Any adult who violates this section shall be subject to a fine and shall be liable as follows: (a) for a first conviction, a warning; (b) for a second conviction, a fine of Seventy-five Dollars (\$75.00); and (c) for all subsequent convictions, a fine not to exceed One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00) shall be imposed. Any adult found in violation of this section shall be issued a citation by a law enforcement officer, which citation shall include notice of the date, time and location for hearing before the justice court having jurisdiction where the violation is alleged to have occurred. For the purposes of this section, "subsequent convictions" are for violations committed on any educational property within the State of Mississippi. Anyone convicted under this act shall be recorded as being fined for a civil violation of the act and not for violating a criminal statute. It is the responsibility of all law enforcement officers and law enforcement agencies of this state to ensure that the

provisions of this act are enforced. SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2000.

WEAPONS

Firearms and other dangerous weapons are strictly prohibited on the St. James Catholic School campus and at all school-sponsored activities.

PROHIBITION OF WEAPONS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY MS Code 97-37-17 (Senate Bill 3349)

"EDUCATIONAL PROPERTY" A public or private school building, bus, campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field or other property owned or actually used or operated for school purposes.

"STUDENT" A minor or adult enrolled in or suspended or expelled within the last 5 years from a public or private school, college or university.

FELONY \$5,000 and/or 3 years for possession of a gun, rifle, pistol, other firearm, dynamite cartridge, bomb, grenade, mine, powerful explosive, or causing, encouraging or aiding a minor to possess same.

MISDEMEANOR \$1,000 and/or 6 months for possession of a BB gun, air rifle, air pistol, bowie knife, dirk, dagger, slingshot, leaded cane, switchblade, blackjack, metallic knuckles, razors and razor blades (except for shaving), any sharp-pointed or edged instrument (except instruction supplies, unaltered nail files and clips and tools used only to prepare food, instruction and maintenance of school property), or to causing, encouraging or aiding a minor to possess same.



REVISED: August 22, 2026

The administration reserves the right to amend this handbook as needed. Amended copies of the handbook will be distributed electronically and posted online (www.stjamesgulfport.com) as appropriate.

Completion of online school registration by parents denotes understanding and acceptance of all policies outlined in this handbook. Inquiries about policies and procedures should be directed to the director or the principal.



**SAINT JAMES
CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

**Pre-K2 & Pre-K3 Handbook and
Child Care Regulations Summary
Parents Acknowledgement Signature Form**

I have read and understand the entire St. James School Pre-K2 and Pre-K3 Handbook and the Child Care Regulations Summary for Parents. I, also, understand that the handbook is subject to change and if I have any concerns or questions, I will contact my child's teacher, the director, or the principal.

Child's Name: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____