

# **Saint Anthony Universal Preschool Program Handbook**

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# St. Anthony School

## Mission Statement

“Be it Known  
To all who enter here  
That Christ is the reason  
For this school,  
The unseen but ever present  
Teacher in its classes,  
The model of its faculty,  
The inspiration of its students.”

## Program Philosophy and Goals

Saint Anthony Preschool is designed to educate the whole child. In order for a child to grow into a successful adult they must be challenged spiritually, emotionally, physically, and mentally. The more a child is challenged in their environment, the easier it will be for them to grow into a self-sufficient well-rounded adult.

We believe that:

- A child benefits most from a program that addresses all of a child's developmental needs.
- A child's family, as the child's first teacher, must be directly and meaningfully involved with all areas of the program.
- The strengths and uniqueness of each child and family should be recognized and strengthened through being in our program.

A goal of Saint Anthony Preschool is to increase the child's ability to play and interact with other children. The growth of all children is improved by activities in and outside the classroom working towards the ability to think, be social, express wants and needs, and be physical and creative. The Saint Anthony Preschool experience provides an interactive learning environment that allows children to discover their interests while developing knowledge about their surroundings and social skills in relating with each other and adults.

## **Program Description**

Saint Anthony Preschool is center based which offers children a wonderful opportunity to develop socially, intellectually, physically and emotionally in a group setting. Our teacher has an early childhood degree and our teacher associate has both para educator and child development licenses as well. The entire Saint Anthony School community works as a team with families to create an integrated early childhood educational experience for children.

## **Our Curriculum and Assessment**

Our Early Childhood curriculum is literacy-based and is designed to provide young children with many ways of playing and interacting with others and the learning environment. Teachers use the Frog Street Press Pre-K curriculum, Conscious Discipline, PBIS, Scaffolding Early Literacy (SEL) and Mature Play with play plans, as well as additional research-based strategies to help us meet the needs of our diverse population. The State of Iowa has developed Early Learning Standards that provide the foundation for our programs. By following the Standards listed below, we are ensuring that all children receive a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate experience that prepares them for kindergarten. Teachers assess the progress of each child using a variety of tools. Teachers use screening tools to identify a student's interests as well as their needs. Teaching Strategies Gold is used to monitor children's progress, and the information gathered assists with planning instruction. Student portfolios are also created to show progress over time. Parents receive information about their child's progress during home visits, conferences and as needed throughout the school year. Program data is also used for future needs and improvements.

## **Iowa Early Learning Standards**

### Physical Well-Being and Motor Development

- o Healthy and Safe Living
- o Large Motor Development
- o Fine Motor Development

### Approaches to Learning

- o Curiosity and Initiative
- o Engagement and Persistence
- o Reasoning and Problem Solving

- o Play and Senses

#### Social and Emotional Development

- o Self
- o Self-Regulation
- o Relationships with Adults
- o Relationships with Children

#### Communication, Language, and Literacy

- o Language Understanding and Use
- o Early Literacy
- o Early Writing

#### Math o Comparison, Numbers, and Operations

- o Patterns
- o Shapes and Spatial Relationships
- o Measurement
- o Data analysis

#### Science

- o Scientific Reasoning
- o Scientific Investigation
- o Scientific Communication

#### Creative Arts

- o Art
- o Music, Rhythm, and Movement
- o Dramatic Play

#### Social Studies

- o Awareness of family and community

- o Awareness of culture
- o Awareness of the relationship between people and the environment in which they live
- o Awareness of the past

## **Communication**

### **Meet the Teacher**

Parents participate in a meet the teacher night at the start of each school year. The purpose of this session is to provide you with information about the program. Families will meet staff, tour the classroom, learn about the classroom's daily routine and meet other families.

### **Home/Family Visits/Conferences**

The preschool teacher will make one educational visit to your home a year. Ideally the first visit will be before the child starts school and in your home. There will also be two parent teacher conferences per year during the time other school children have their parent teacher conferences. These visits are important for the following reasons:

1. Teaching staff will share current information related to your child's growth and development.
2. Teaching staff will answer questions you may have about your child's progress or refer you to someone who can respond to your questions.
3. You may share information, strengths and concerns about your child that are helpful to the teacher and teacher associate.
4. Learning activities will be demonstrated and developed with parents.
5. Individual goal planning will be completed for your child with your input and guidance.

### **Newsletter**

A weekly newsletter is sent home to keep you informed of classroom, school and community-based activities and opportunities.

### **SeeSaw**

SeeSaw is an online resource. Parents are able to access content activities and reminders. We use this platform to communicate with families. SeeSaw provides translation for many languages. Families are provided information about how to sign up at Meet the Teacher.

### **Homework**

Research shows that worksheets and other homework that is typical of older grades is not an effective way for preschoolers to learn. We do however, encourage parents to read books with their children. We know that the more time children spend looking at

books and reading with adults the more successful they tend to be when learning to read.

### **Board of Education**

The Saint Anthony Board of Education affirms its support of the school, student responsibilities, and discipline policy, its intent is to support school staff who enforce these policies, and its intent to hold school staff accountable for implementation of these policies.

The Saint Anthony Board of Education meets once a month on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. Board of Education meetings begin at 6:30 PM in the school building. Meetings are open to the public. All who are interested are encouraged to attend.

## **General Procedures and Guidelines**

### **Attendance**

Good attendance is important for school success. Your child should attend school every day, except when they are ill. It is also important for students to arrive on time each day for the following reasons:

- Children learn the routine and feel comfortable when they know what to expect daily.
- Children begin and end the day as a group. It is important to begin and end the day on a positive note.
- The teacher plans each part of your child's day. If your child is frequently tardy they will miss important learning opportunities.
- Children begin to develop good habits and a positive attitude about school attendance.

**Parents must call the classroom to report when their child will be absent.** You will receive the phone number to call to report an absence.

- If your child is absent and staff does not hear before the specified time, you will be contacted to determine the cause of the absence.
- If your child has a record of unexplained or frequent absences, your child may no longer be able to participate in the program. If your child is repeatedly tardy, leaves early or is left at the center after the program day (morning or afternoon) your child may no longer be able to participate in the program.

### **Toys from Home**

Please do not send toys to school. Everything that children need for a successful early childhood experience is provided. The school district has **a zero-tolerance policy** regarding guns, knives and other weapons, including toy weapons.

### **Pick Up Policy**

Classroom staff will release children to authorized adults only. Authorization must be given on the Emergency and Pick-Up Permission form by the parent or legal guardian. The names and telephone numbers of adults authorized to pick up your child must appear on this form. An authorized adult must sign all children in and out of the classroom. **Families must provide as many emergency contacts as possible for emergencies. Please keep these numbers updated if your phone number changes or is disconnected.**

### **School Readiness Goals**

School Readiness means that we are working to be sure that, by the end of preschool, children are ready for kindergarten. The Early Childhood department sets specific school readiness goals each year in four areas; reading, math, social skills, and attendance. Look for a poster in your child's classroom with the goals for this year.

### **Volunteering**

Parents are encouraged to participate in our program. Your participation is welcome in the following areas: • Decision-making about the design and operation of the program

- Helping in the classroom
- Preparing materials for the classroom
- Developing and participating in activities for parents

### **Discipline and Guidance**

In the St. Anthony Universal Preschool Programs, our overall goal is preparing children for kindergarten. To support this goal, we provide our students guidance and practice in developing social skills. Early Childhood teachers use the 2nd Step curriculum and PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) to teach developmentally appropriate social skills. When a child's behavior affects his/her ability to handle the classroom environment, a meeting with the center team and support staff will occur. The team may be made up of the following people: parent/guardian, teacher, teacher associate, nurse, social worker, and Special Education staff.

- ***Positive Redirection:*** For example, children are throwing toys. *Positive Redirection* means that they are given beanbags and a basket for a beanbag toss instead of throwing toys.
- ***Ignoring misbehavior when appropriate:*** Often the best way to discourage negative behavior like showing off or pouting is to ignore it. Instead pay attention and praise the child when demonstrating acceptable behavior.
- ***Choices to control the situation and not the child:*** Use choices within limits. For example, "You may sit quietly next to your friend. If you talk, then you'll have to sit in a chair where you'll be a better listener."

- **Use of natural and logical consequences:** *Natural:* “You played instead of cleaning up, therefore you used up some of your outside time.” *Logical:* “You hit a child with this toy, therefore you’re done with the toy for today.”
- **Acknowledge children’s feelings and help them solve conflicts:** By helping children recognize their own feelings and others, they have a sense of being in control and that everyone’s feelings need to be considered. Helping them solve their own conflict meets their desire for independence.
- **Individual Accommodations:** A child is provided an alternate activity.

When a child’s behavior hinders his/her ability to handle the classroom environment, a meeting with the Saint Anthony School Building Assistance Team will occur. The team may be made up of the following people: parent/guardian, teacher, teacher associate, nurse, and program director.

The team will discuss the problem behavior. A plan will be developed and used with the child for a determined amount of time and reviewed by the team. If this is unsuccessful, further strategies will be taken.

### **Dress Suggestions**

Your child should be dressed in clothing appropriate for play. It is suggested that children have an extra set of clothes. Tennis shoes or other shoes with rubber soles should be worn. Outdoor time occurs every day, weather permitting. When the weather is cold, please dress your child warmly in hat, coat, gloves and long pants. In warm weather, shorts or sun clothes should be worn. Please be sure, as the weather changes, proper clothing is worn.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are an integral and important aspect of education and will be utilized as real-life learning experiences for children. Field trips serve the educational program by utilizing those resources of the community, which cannot be brought into the classroom. Parents will be notified several days in advance of the trip. Information will be provided concerning the time, place, transportation arrangements, and cost. Signed parental permission slips for each child **must** be on file one day prior to the field trip. In some situations, a fee will be requested to compensate for travel and admission costs. Teacher and adult supervision are provided for all trips. Transportation will be by school bus if at all possible.

Due to liability and responsibility, children may not leave from field trips with parents or other non-school personnel unless the parent makes the request by the morning of the field trip.

### **Nutrition**

Nutritious meals or snacks are served to all children. Children will be served food prepared by St. Anthony employees. All food served meets the nutritional requirements of the Federal school lunch program.



- Parents are not to bring or send any food to the classroom. This includes edible birthday treats. Parents are encouraged to bring in a special book to share and read to the class.
- Let us know if your child has any food allergies or religious food preferences. If your child has a food allergy, the Diet Modification Request Form must be completed by your child's health care provider and returned to your teacher/school nurse. This form can be found at [dmschools.org](http://dmschools.org)
- We encourage children's independence and decision-making by allowing them to choose the foods and the amount they want to eat. "Clean plates" are not emphasized. Food is never used as a reward or punishment. Mealtimes are opportunities for children to practice their communication and social skills.

### **Notice of Nondiscrimination**

The Des Moines Independent Community School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, disability, religion, creed, age (for employment), marital status (for programs), sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status (for programs) in its educational programs and its employment practices. If you have questions, concerns or a complaint related to this policy, please contact Jennifer Raes, 515-243-1874. Complaints can also be directed to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission, 400 E. 14th Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-1004, (515) 281-4121, or Region VII Office for Civil Rights, Citigroup Center 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475 Chicago, IL 60661-4544.

### **Parent Involvement**

Parents are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the program. Parental input is sought in four areas:

1. In decision-making about the design and operation of the program
2. In the classroom as volunteers and/or observers
3. In developing and participating in activities for parents
4. In working with their children in cooperation with center staff

### **Special Services/Students with Special Needs**

Through the Diocesan Office of Schools, Saint Anthony School has the services of the Superintendent of Schools and two Coordinators of Schools. Through Des Moines Public Schools, the following personnel are available: psychologist, social worker, audiologist, speech therapist and educational consultant. A school nurse and social worker are provided for the school.

Saint Anthony Preschool along with Des Moines Public Schools *first* utilize a problem-solving approach if children experience difficulty at school. If necessary/applicable problem solving is unsuccessful, Saint Anthony School may also utilize the services of Des Moines Public Schools for screening of children as well as evaluation of children with parental approval. These screening and testing services are funded through taxes and available free of charge. Saint Anthony School does NOT offer a special education program.

## **Toilet Training**

- Children who are not potty trained can attend preschool. The goal of our toilet training program is to promote developmentally appropriate self- help skills and independence.
- If you child is not toilet trained teachers will ask for your help in developing a toilet training plan for your child that is appropriate to his/her needs. This plan will include full involvement of parent/guardian.
- Expectations for families may include frequent toileting of this child at home, establishing a consistent routine, providing extra clothing for use at school if needed.
- All families are encouraged to keep a change of clothes for their child at school, in case of toileting accidents, or spills.

## **Emergency Closings**

Each Catholic school in the Des Moines area is responsible for making the decision concerning late starts and early dismissals or school closings.

Late starts will be two hours, which means the first bell will ring at 10:15am and the tardy bell will ring at 10:30am.

There will be NO morning preschool if there is a late start.

The decision to have a late start or no school will be made by 6:00am.

## **Severe Weather**

During times of severe weather, it is advisable to be tuned to Channel 8 (KCCI) television and WHO radio should any emergency closing, delayed opening, or early dismissal be necessary. When the weather is threatening, please listen to the radio or watch TV instead of calling the school office. Please do not call the school in the event of a tornado warning. Your child will be well protected and will not be dismissed unless the tornado alert has been lifted.

When school or parish activities are cancelled due to inclement weather, all extracurricular activities held at Saint Anthony are also cancelled.

## **HEALTH**

### **Accident or Illness**

- Parents will be contacted immediately in case of serious illness or accident. Preschool staff provides written incident reports to parents when there are minor injuries, minor changes in health status, or behavioral concerns. Accident reports will be completed by the school nurse.
- Please notify the classroom if your emergency contact numbers change, so we can contact you in case of illness or emergency.
  - Parents who are working or going to school are encouraged to have a “back-up” plan for a sick child.
  - Everyone must wash their hands when entering the classroom.

## Physical Examination, Dental Examination and Immunization

- Children are required to have a current physical and valid certificate of immunization on file at all times. Physicals are due within 30 days of enrollment.
- A dental examination is required within 90 days of enrollment.
- If your child does not have a doctor or dentist, a list of providers can be provided upon request.

## Screenings

- Screenings provide important information about your child's health. Each child will have a vision, hearing, growth, dental, speech, and developmental screening. If you do not want your child to participate, please notify the school nurse in writing.

## Medicine

Children may be required to take medication during the school day. Medication is administered by the school nurse, or in the nurse's absence, by a person who has successfully completed an administration of medication course reviewed by the Board of Pharmacy Examiners. The principal will maintain a record of course completion.

St. Anthony's medication policy is as follows:

- Only nurses and other trained staff will give medicine to a child at school
- The parent and guardian must sign the request for giving medication as school
- The parent must personally deliver the medication in its original pharmacy container to the teacher or school nurse.
- No over the counter medications will be given without a doctor's order.

## Head Lice

If your child has head lice, you may be asked to pick up your child from school and begin to treat the lice. The school nurse can provide additional information upon request.

## WHEN SHOULD YOUR CHILD STAY HOME?

The following are public health recommendations when deciding whether or not to send a child to school due to possible illness:

**Diarrhea/Vomiting** – within 24 hours. Keep child home.

**Fever** – 100 degrees or greater: Keep child home until fever-free at least 24 hours.

**Runny Nose** – **1)** due to allergies: send child to school; **2)** due to the cold virus with other symptoms such as cough, sore throat, headache, yellow/green drainage from nose: Keep child home.

**Strep Throat** – highly contagious bacterial infection, sore throat, fever, aches. Diagnosis is made by a throat culture: Child needs to be on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours and symptoms subsiding before returning to school.

**Pinkeye** – highly contagious and presents itself with burning, itching red eyes with yellow drainage. Child should be seen by a physician and should be on medication for at least 24 hours and symptoms subsiding before returning to school.

**Chickenpox** – symptoms include low-grade fever and distinctive rash. The rash causes itching and may be severe. Children must be excluded from school until all blisters have scabs. This usually takes 5 days or more.

**Impetigo** – this usually begins as red spots which fill with fluid (blisters). The blisters rupture easily and the fluid dries and forms a honey-colored crust. The areas most affected are the hands and face, especially around the nose and mouth. A physician must start the child on antibiotics before returning to school. Any draining lesions must be covered when in school.

**Rash** – may be due to many different illnesses and may be contagious. A physical should be contacted for a diagnosis and permission for your child to return to school.

**Scabies** – this involves microscopic mites under the skin that present as tiny reddish pimples usually between fingers, wrists, elbows, armpits, and beltline. Scabies causes severe itching and is contagious. The student will be excluded until after treatment by a physician.

**Physicians' notes are required for:**

1. If a student is absent from school for more than three consecutive days.
2. If a student needs to stay in from recess for more than one day following an illness. Recess is an important part of the school day and we want students to be well enough to participate when they return to school.

**Mental Health**

Partners with DMPS Early Childhood Programs recognize the importance of mental wellness in our children and our families. Our goal is to assure that each child and family is supported in handling life's challenges in effective ways. Building support staff, community agencies and resources are available to our families and children.

**Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting**

All classroom teachers are mandatory reporters as required by local and state law. If you suspect a child under the age of 18 is being abused or neglected please call: The child abuse hotline at 1-800-362-2178 (available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Please be ready to provide identifying information and the whereabouts of the child. You may remain anonymous unless you are making a report as a mandatory reporter. If you are making a report as a mandatory reporter, you must leave your name and contact information.

If you believe the child is in imminent danger, CALL 911 immediately.

## **Environmental Safety**

- Teachers and school staff are responsible for the supervision, guidance and safety of children throughout the school day.
- Parents and guardians have unrestricted access to their own child (except during a building lock-down.)
- The school district has written emergency plans for fire, tornado, flood, intruders, intoxicated parent, lost or abducted children, power failures, bomb threats, chemical spills, earthquakes, and blizzards. These plans include evacuation sites. Emergency evacuation plans are posted at all exits. Emergency numbers for police, fire department, Poison Control Center and ambulance service are posted by all phones. Children's emergency information is accessible to staff. The DMPS safety brochure is available in the school office.
- All full-time teachers have current First Aid and CPR certification.
- No smoking is allowed within the facility, or on the playground.
- First aid kits are clearly labeled and available within the center and in the outdoor play area.
- All classrooms clean and sanitize surfaces as indicated in the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table. Please contact the classroom teacher for a copy of the table.
- All staff are certified in Universal Precautions to protect against the spread of potentially infectious body fluids. Please contact the school nurse for detailed information.

## **Lock-Down**

A lock-down is a safety measure we take in response to a threat directly to the school or in the surrounding neighborhood. As a part of the Schools Emergency Response Plan, all school buildings hold lock-down drills, just as we do fire and tornado drills. The teachers talk with students and read a story about lockdown drills prior to the first drill.

During a lock-down:

- All school activities are moved indoors.
- Exterior doors and classroom doors are locked.
- No one is allowed to enter or exit the building. Parents may not enter or exit the school during a lock-down. This is for your safety and the safety of your child.

Parents: Please be sure that the teacher has your most up-to-date emergency contact information. In the event of a lock-down or other emergency, school staff will use that information to contact you.

Following a lock-down, parents will be informed that the school was placed on lock-down, the nature of the incident, and how long the lock-down was in place.

## **FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS and FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

The St. Anthony's Preschool Programs work with each family to create the best possible experiences for their child's growth and social development. We believe that:

- You are your child's first and best teacher.
- Children do best when parents and classroom teachers work together.
- Parents who support and extend their child's learning contribute to their child's success both in school and in life.
- Parent input is vital to program improvement. Input can be provided through parent surveys, participation in monthly policy committee meetings, and monthly early childhood advisory committee meetings.

### **State of Iowa Annual Notice**

#### **Notice: Corporal Punishment, Restraint, and Physical Confinement and Detention**

State law forbids school employees from using corporal punishment against any student. Certain actions by school employees are not considered corporal punishment. Additionally, school employees may use "reasonable and necessary force, not designed or intended to cause pain" to do certain things, such as prevent harm to persons or property.

State law also places limits on school employees' abilities to restrain or confine and detain any student. The law limits why, how, where, and for how long a school employee may restrain or confine and detain a child. If a child is restrained or confined and detained, the school must maintain documentation and must provide certain types of notice to the child's parent.

If you have any questions about this state law, please contact your school. The complete text of the law and additional information is available on the Iowa Department of Education's website: [www.iowa.gov/educate](http://www.iowa.gov/educate) .

### **Cleaning and Sanitation Practices**

To ensure the classroom is properly cleaned and sanitized, all classrooms use the Monthly Cleaning and Sanitizing Frequency Table. Staff will complete each item on the Monthly Cleaning Checklist; initialing and dating as completed daily. The current month's Cleaning Checklist may be posted in an area accessible to staff, and placed in the Classroom Monitoring Binder upon completion, at the end of each month. Completed Monthly Cleaning Checklists will be filed in the Classroom Monitoring Binder for one program year.

To promote indoor air quality, aerosol, spray or other air fresheners, sanitizers or perfumes cannot be used in child occupied/used areas. Chemical air fresheners and sanitizers may cause nausea and an allergic response in some children. Odors should be controlled by ventilation and appropriate cleaning and disinfection. DMPS is a fragrance/scent safe environment.

### **Transition to Kindergarten**

One of the goals of the Early Childhood programs is to assist children and families to successfully move from preschool to kindergarten. Families are encouraged to be actively engaged in helping to prepare children for kindergarten by participating in a variety of

different activities including home visits, conferences, Family Events, and related learning and reading activities in the home.

During the spring months,

- For children who are 5 years old on or before September 15th, parents will receive information regarding the neighborhood school for kindergarten along with enrollment/registration information.
- For children who will not be 5 years old by September 15th, parents will receive information about continuing preschool next year.
- For identified students with IEPs, a transition meeting with parents will be scheduled.