

# **Seton Catholic Preschool**

## **Handbook**

### **4 and 5 Year Old**

**2024 – 2025**

**A stepping stone to guarantee success**

**Seton Catholic School**  
117 East Fourth Street  
Ottumwa, IA 52501  
**(641) 682-8826**

## **ORGANIZATION**

### **CENTRAL LEADERSHIP**

Bishop Dennis G. Walsh  
Diocesan Board of Education  
Superintendent of Schools, Lynne Devaney

### **LOCAL LEADERSHIP**

Seton Catholic Board of Education

Fr. Joseph M. Sia, Pastor  
Fr. Ben Snyder, Parochial Vicar (Associate Pastor)  
St. Patrick Church  
St. Mary of the Visitation Church

Claudia Gates  
Sandy Mottet  
Jeremy Clark

Troy Pilcher  
Adam Lunt  
De Brooke

Bronson Eick  
Angela Shultz  
Lin Drumm

James Wessling, Principal  
Ex-Officio

Preschool Staff

James Wessling, Principal

Debra Blew, Administrative Assistant

4 and 5 Year Old Program

Preschool Teacher, Brandi Benedict  
Preschool Associate, Braylen Benedict

## **Mission, Vision, Philosophy**

### **Mission of Seton Catholic**

To provide meaningful educational experiences for our preschool and elementary students in an environment integrated by Gospel values which nurtures faith, community, prayer, and service.

Therefore, we believe that:

- Seton Catholic exists to teach the Gospel message of Jesus Christ, to love God and to love neighbor.
- Parents are the child's primary educator, and Seton Catholic School is a partner with parents in the education process.
- Seton Catholic School will provide a warm, caring environment where children can develop to their full potential spiritually, academically, socially, psychologically, and physically.
- All children in Seton Catholic School will learn the value of human dignity and the concepts of peace and justice to enable them to be involved participants in a global society.
- Each child in Seton Catholic School regardless of race, cultural heritage, or gender will grow in self-esteem and discover and develop their talents, skills, and interests.

### **Vision Statement of Seton Catholic School**

The vision of Seton Catholic School is to provide a quality, Catholic Christian education that stimulates lifelong learning and nurtures responsible, productive citizens. The goal will be attained by developing an academically and spiritually enriching educational plan designed to foster individual needs through curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment tools.

### **Philosophy**

With Christ as our model, we believe in daily celebration of our Catholic Christian faith through liturgy and classroom prayer, responsiveness to one another's needs, and service to others.

We believe that each person is unique and lovable, possessing individual strengths. We believe that education is a continuous process and that the learning program should meet the needs and abilities of each child. We recognize the importance of developing in each student a wholesome self-concept.

With the cooperation of teachers, parents, and the parish community, we strive to achieve the religious and academic development of each child in a Christ-centered environment.

Through mutual communication, respect, and support, we endeavor to enhance the development of the full potential of each child. By infusing Gospel-values into the curriculum, we seek to instill lifelong decision-making skills into each child, encouraging them to be responsible for their own decisions and behavior.

## **Introduction**

Seton Preschool is committed to educating the whole child in an age appropriate manner. We believe that the child must have freedom to develop his or her physical, social, intellectual and spiritual dimensions to the fullest. We have created a stimulating educational environment which will ensure that your will build solid foundations for a lifetime. The environment will enable your child to like himself/herself; respect themselves as well as others; control their physical, emotional, and intellectual self; and most importantly, develop an eternal love for learning.

## **THE PROGRAM**

*4 and 5 year-old Program with Mrs. Benedict and Ms. Benedict*

*Half Day - Monday through Thursday 7:45am – 10:45am*

*All Day - Monday through Thursday 7:45am – 3:00pm*

*Half Day - Friday 7:45am – 9:45am*

*All Day - Friday 7:45am – 12:55pm*

### **Early Childhood Outcomes**

Children will:

- demonstrate a loving relationship with God and all of creation.
- demonstrate a positive self-concept, appropriate self-control, and a sense of belonging.
- demonstrate curiosity about the world, confidence as a learner, creativity, imagination, and personal initiative.
- demonstrate relationships of mutual trust and respect with adults and peers, understand perspectives of others, and negotiate and apply rules of group living.
- demonstrate respect for social and cultural diversity, for community and social roles.
- use language to effectively communicate and gain satisfaction through reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
- represent ideas and feelings through creative play, drama, dance, movement, music, and art.
- think critically, reason, and solve problems.
- develop understanding of relationships among objects, people, and events such as classifying, ordering, number, space, and time.
- explore their physical world by manipulating real objects to learn cause and effect relationships.
- demonstrate appreciation for the fine arts, humanities, and sciences.
- become competent in management of their bodies using both gross and fine motor skills.
- demonstrate knowledge about the care of their bodies and maintain a desirable level of health and fitness.

### **Program Expectations**

The content offered is age and developmentally appropriate and reflects the purpose of the preschool.

Our program is based on the following foundational premises:

- Each child is a unique and special child of God.
  - Seton’s Preschool program provides unique opportunities to enhance the development of the whole child in a setting which models Christian values and beliefs.
  - Child-centered and developmentally appropriate experiences enable each child to foster feelings of self-worth, self-respect, and love for others.
  - A cooperative and supportive teaching partnership between family and school is essential in providing a positive and enriching early childhood experience
  - The teacher's role is to facilitate the child's experiential learning process by providing an integrated and multi-sensory environment which uses a variety of materials and modes.
  - The young child needs a flexible environment which offers the security of definite limits while providing freedom and flexibility so that each child can grow in self-expression and non-competitiveness.
3. Our program provides appropriate developmental Christian Faith Formation experiences which enable the child to:
- Learn about God by discovering his/her own giftedness
  - Learn about God by cultivating a sense of wonder and of ritual through celebrating
  - Learn about God by developing an attitude of love and respect for self and others
  - Learn about God by developing an understanding of what makes a peaceful and just society
  - Learn about God by developing an awareness of the presence of God in the world
  - Learn about God through his/her relationship with Jesus.
4. Our program provides appropriate developmental aesthetic and artistic experiences which enable the child to:
- Develop enthusiasm for the arts
  - Imagine and visualize through the arts
  - Respond, interpret, and create through the arts
  - Appreciate the arts
5. Our program provides appropriate developmental intellectual experiences which enable the child to:
- Sustain and extend natural curiosity
  - Develop thinking through meaningful learning experiences
  - Use language to facilitate thinking and learning
  - Use language to communicate effectively
  - Develop and integrate the attitudes, skills, and knowledge of the fine arts, humanities, practical arts, and sciences

- Become an independent lifelong learner.
6. Our program provides appropriate developmental experiences in the development of responsibility which enable the child to:
- Value and respect individual contributions
  - Value, respect, and appreciate cultural identity and heritage
  - Accept and demonstrate empathy
  - Establish a collaborative environment and acquire cooperative and independent social skills
  - Respect and care for the environment
  - Adapt to a changing world.
7. Our program provides appropriate developmental emotional and social experiences which enable the child to:
- Develop a positive, realistic self-concept
  - Develop interdependence
  - Set appropriate goals and feel satisfaction in accomplishments and efforts
  - Cope with change
  - Share and cooperate
  - Develop friendships
  - Learn from others
  - Enjoy living and learning.
8. Our program provide appropriate developmental physical development experiences which enable the child to:
- Learn and practice safety procedures
  - Take care of and respect his/her body
  - Develop awareness of good nutrition
  - Develop motor skills while maintaining physical fitness
  - Develop an appreciation and enjoyment of human movement
  - Learn social skills in a physical activity setting.

## **OUR SCHEDULE**

A balance between free choice, teacher-directed activities, group and individual activities, and active and inactive experiences is the goal of the daily schedule. Although the schedule is flexible, following a daily routine provides the preschooler with a sense of security and develops order to the program.

**Sharing Time:** This includes showing and telling things of interest to the child and the group. Children are encouraged to bring things that pertain to the season or theme being discussed. An occasional toy is permissible. This experience provides opportunities to develop self-confidence and the ability to speak to a group of his/her peers.

**Organized Play:** Through games the child develops habits of fair play and good sportsmanship, develops large and small motor coordination, poise, posture, and good health, establishes confidence and self control, cooperates and becomes an important part of the group, and enjoys self.

**Story Time:** The children learn to respect and appreciate children's literature. A good listening vocabulary gives a student a strong foundation for kindergarten and lifelong enjoyment in reading.

**Work Period:** This helps the child learn to work with others, to share, to follow directions and to find satisfaction in achievement.

**Break:** The children will have a drink of milk or juice and a nutritious snack or treat.

**Free Choice:** During this time, the child may choose his/her own activity and enjoy the fun of spontaneous play. This also provides an opportunity for the adults to study and interact with each child.

**Music Period:** Children enjoy music and finger plays. They learn not only songs and body rhythms, but also to listen to and enjoy good music. Music is also used in the teaching of colors, numbers, alphabet concepts and following directions.

**Preschool Supplies:** Supplies used at preschool are supplied by the school.

**Field Trips:** Field trips are a valuable part of the curriculum offered at the Preschool. Permission slips will be required in advance of any field trip.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **Non-Discrimination Statement**

The program shall not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, political party affiliation, or actual or potential parental, family or marital status in its programs, activities, or employment practices as required by the Iowa Code sections 216.9 and 256.10(2), Titles VI and VII and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d and 2000e).

### **Equal Opportunity**

It is the policy of the Diocese of Davenport to provide equal employment and educational opportunities and not to discriminate.

The educational system of the Diocese of Davenport is committed to equal opportunities to the extent required by law, and does not discriminate on the basis on age, color, creed, national origin, race, religion marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical attributes, physical or mental ability or disability, ancestry, political party preference, political belief, socioeconomic status, or familial status in educational program or activities which it operates. As a religious institution, we affirm the right to consider creed a bona fide qualification in certain cases. The educational system policy is not to discriminate in educational programs and activities extends to the employment in, and admission to, such programs, activities, and services. It does not discriminate in the administration of its educational policies, employment policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school and parish administered programs.

Further, the Board affirms the right of all persons to be treated with respect and to be protected from intimidation, discrimination, physical harm and harassment, thereby meeting the



requirements of Title VI and VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments and the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Code of Iowa.

### **Sexual Harassment**

All educational programs at Seton Catholic School maintain a learning and working environment free from sexual harassment. All instances of sexual harassment are to be immediately reported to the principal.

### **Safe Environment Program**

In 2003 the Diocese of Davenport implemented the Safe Environment Program which includes Protecting God's Children, VIRTUS, Background Checks and the Circle of Grace Curriculum by the bishop for schools and religious education. We require all our clergy, seminarians, deacons, employees, teachers, coaches, scout leaders and volunteers to complete all the requirements of the diocese before they can be employed or volunteer with our children or vulnerable adults. We are very passionate about this program and feel it is very important.

**Priests · Deacons · Candidates for Ordination · Seminarians · Deacon Formation Aspirants · All parish and school employees · Pastoral Associates · Principals · Administrators · All Teachers · DREs · Youth Ministers · Catechists All Coaches · School Aides left alone with minors · MFP Participants · Host Parents · Overnight Function Volunteers · Scout Leaders if troop or pack is chartered by parish or parish school · Scout Volunteers if alone with children · Volunteers working unsupervised (alone) with minors:**

- Register with VIRTUS
- Complete Protecting God's Children program training online at hiring/engagement and annual recertification
- Background check online – at hiring/engagement and every 5 years
- Acknowledge Diocesan Policies online – at hiring/engagement and every 5 years

**Employees and Volunteers for Department of Human Services sponsored programs such as: Daycare, Preschools, Before and After School Care:**

- Register with VIRTUS
- Complete Protecting God's Children program training online at hiring/engagement and annual recertification
- Acknowledge diocesan policies – at hiring/engagement and every 5 years
- Background check online with ESR – at hiring/engagement and every 5 years

**Volunteers working with minors but supervised in the same room with a VIRTUS trained and background check cleared person:**

- Does not need to comply with Safe Environment Program requirements unless required by the parish/school.
- Cannot be left alone with minors

**Minor volunteers working with minors (cannot be left alone with minors):**

- Register with VIRTUS

- Complete online Protecting God’s Children program training online (It is recommended that they sit with a parent or with parental permission) - at engagement and annual recertification
- Acknowledge Diocesan Policies – at engagement and every 5 years
- Background checks cannot be conducted on minors under 18 unless they are working under DHS. A copy of a completed DHS Verification form is required to be sent to the diocese to be put into the individual’s record.

**Drivers for school or any parish function:**

- Complete driver/vehicle form (annually)
- Provide a current copy of their driver’s license (annually)
- Provide a current copy of their vehicle insurance declaration that shows insurance coverage (annually)
- Register with VIRTUS
- Complete Protecting God’s Children program training online at hiring/engagement and every 5 years
- Complete 1 year Re-Certification when assigned
- Background check online – at hiring/engagement and every 5 years
- Acknowledge Diocesan Policies online – at hiring/engagement and every 5 years
- Avoid situations where you are alone with a student if at all possible

**Smoke-Free**

Seton Catholic School is a smoke-free environment.

**Right-to-Know (Hazardous Chemicals)**

The Iowa Hazardous Chemicals Risks Right to Know Act was passed by the legislature in 1984 and is currently in Chapter 455E Code of Iowa. There are three main parts to the law:

1. Worker right to know (5-25-86)
2. Community right to know (7-1-86)
3. Public Safety/Emergency response right to know (11-1-86)

**Blood Borne Pathogens**

The Diocese of Davenport and Seton Catholic School have an established exposure control plan. Employees are provided an annual in-service in the fall and are required to abide by the plan.

**Asbestos**

In 1986 Congress passed the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA). This law requires all schools kindergarten through twelfth grade to be inspected for asbestos containing materials and subsequently develop a management plan outlining a program to control and/or abate such material.

In order to bring our building in compliance with these regulations, Seton Catholic School contracted Ecosphere Environmental Services, Inc. to inspect the building. Based upon the inspection and the laboratory analysis of samples taken, a management plan was written which outlines our intent for controlling and abating any asbestos containing materials. This

management plan is filed in the office on the first floor of Seton Catholic School. It is available for you to look at any time during office hours.

In the summer of 1987 all asbestos covered pipes, that there was knowledge of at that time, were removed by a State and Federal approved company. This inspection is also on file at the Seton Catholic School office. We started our three-year re-inspection program as required by AHERA. However, during our June 15 1992 re-inspection, we found additional pipe coverings containing asbestos fibers concealed in a confined area in the building. This area is periodically being monitored pursuant to our building management plan. A comprehensive periodic surveillance is performed to determine and record any changes that may have occurred in the condition of the material. Documentation of this surveillance can also be found in our management plan.

As required by AHERA, we will continue to send annual notification to parents and employees. This is the Seton Catholic School annual report for school year 2023-2024.

### **Radon Testing**

During 1989, all schools of the Davenport Diocese were tested for radon. The test results indicated the rooms were below the established safety levels. Based upon these results and the rules of the Iowa Department of Public Health no additional testing for radon needs to be done at this time. However, to ensure the safety of our students, radon testing was done in the summer of 2022 and we were well below the established safety levels.

### **Enrollment**

The Preschool Program shall allow for an enrollment of 20 students per class as space allows with one teacher and one associate. Birth date restrictions shall be compatible with those required for elementary age children.

To enroll a child, the following must be completed prior to admission:

- Application form
- A physical exam form completed and signed by a physician including a record of immunization.
- Medical consent form in the event of illness or emergencies
- Permission slip allowing the child to participate in field trips and to be photographed while at the preschool.
- Listing of adults who have permission to transport the child

### **Managing Enrollment**

When limiting enrollment in educational programs of the Diocese of Davenport (school, day care, after-school/wraparound, preschool), the following priorities shall be used by local boards and administrators.

When limiting enrollment in educational programs of the Diocese of Davenport (school, day care, after-school/wraparound, preschool), the following priorities shall be used by local boards and administrators.

1. Currently enrolled students and siblings (in good standing)
2. New students: from supporting parish(es) (in good standing)
3. New students: non-parishioner Catholic (in good standing)
4. New students: everybody else (in good standing)

## Definitions:

**Good Standing:** It is the expectation that all families attending a Catholic School of the Diocese of Davenport will agree to, and remain in good standing for continued enrollment in the Catholic school. This includes agreement and acknowledgement of the Covenant of Trust between Parents and Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Davenport.

**Supporting Parish(es):** Supporting parishes refer to either 1) the single or 2) interparishes which directly contribute to the spiritual, worship and financial needs of the school.

**Affiliated Parish(es):** Affiliated parishes refer to Catholic parishes which are not directly contribute to the spiritual, worship or financial support of the school. these have families who do not have access to a PreK-12 Catholic program but wish their children to experience the Catholic mission of message, community and service.

**Non-Parishioners Catholic:** community members not affiliated with the Catholic Church but support the Catholic mission of message, community and service.

## Assessment Plan

**Teaching Strategies Gold** - The primary assessment program that our preschool program utilizes is Teaching Strategies Gold. Iowa Code section 279.60 requires preschool programs under the authority of the Iowa Department of Education (Department) to administer Teaching Strategies GOLD™ (GOLD). This is an online, ongoing, portfolio-based assessment system for children from birth to grade three. GOLD blends portfolio-based assessment for all areas of development and learning with performance tasks to predict school success across developmental areas. Specifically, the developmental domains on GOLD are: social-emotional, physical, language, cognitive, literacy, mathematics, social studies, science and technology, and the arts. Documentation for each child is also collected on an ongoing basis across areas of development and examined regularly to assist teachers in completing progress checkpoints. Three times a year, teachers complete a progress checkpoint for each child across the required developmental domains based on analysis of portfolio evidence. Levels used to indicate how a child is doing at a checkpoint are based on widely held expectations for child development.

**Project Approach** - Seton is also utilizing The Project Approach, the method of teaching children through project investigations. Because project work follows an unpredictable path based on the interests of particular children, a flexible framework to support teachers has been developed. This framework makes the inquiry more manageable: it shapes the development of the area of investigation. Teachers guide children through a three phase process from the beginning of a project to its conclusion.

**Phase 1:** In the beginning of a project, the teacher builds interest in the topic through encouraging the children to share relevant personal stories of experience. As the children represent their current understanding of the topic; the river, cars, or dogs, for example, the teacher assesses the children's vocabulary, their individual interests, misconceptions or gaps in current knowledge, and helps them formulate questions which they can investigate.

**Phase 2:** As the inquiry begins in earnest, teachers enable the children go on field visits, interview adults who are experts, such as waiters, farmers, or nurses, for example, according to the topic of study. Children also look at books, internet sites, videos, and so on. As they learn more about the topic they use many forms of representation to illustrate what they have learned and to share new knowledge with their classmates.

**Phase 3:** Finally, the teacher guides the conclusion of the study and helps the children review their achievements. The children share their work with parents, another class, or members of the local community who have helped them in the process of the

investigation. This final phase of the work includes the assessment by teachers of what the children have learned through the project. All children will have learned basic facts about the topic. Some children will have learned more about certain aspects of the topic such as the role of the adults, or the steps or materials used in the manufacture of an important item. There will be times when one child may have achieved individual learning goals such as developing confidence in a particular personal strength or learning to collaborate effectively with other classmates.

These two assessments serve multiple purposes. Teachers utilize the data to arrange developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment. They use them to identify children's interests and needs. They can be used to describe the developmental progress and learning of children. They are used to improve curriculum and adapt teaching practices and the environment. They aid in planning program improvement and communicating with families.

### **Student Privacy Act**

In conformity with the Student Privacy Act, Seton Preschool does not send out student information to any outside organizations without written authorization of the parent/guardian.

### **Volunteers/Student Teachers/Practicum Students**

Occasionally, volunteers will assist the preschool staff. Students from the colleges, as well as other community members, will be helping out from time to time. Each has been screened before receiving permission to volunteer.

## **Sessions**

The all-day program class at Seton meets at 7:45a.m. - 3:10p.m. Lunches may be purchased at the office.

The half-day programs:

Morning Session is 7:45a.m. to 10:45a.m.

Afternoon Session is 12:15p.m. to 3:15p.m.

## **Tuition/Fees**

Students who qualify for the Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program (SWVPP) are not assessed a registration fee. In the Half Day Preschool Class, no tuition is charged. Students who qualify for the SWVPP, and attend All Day Preschool are assessed tuition at a rate of \$120 per month for 9 months.

Students who do not qualify for the SWVPP are assessed a registration fee of \$100. In the Half Day Preschool Class, tuition of \$150 per month for 9 months. Students who do not qualify for the SWVPP, and attend All Day Preschool are assessed tuition at a rate of \$270 per month for 9 months.

Students who turn 4 years-old by September 15 in the year that they enroll are eligible for the Iowa Preschool Grant. This grant will pay tuition for ½ day.

Monthly payments are due on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) day of every month. If tuition is not paid by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, the child will not be allowed to continue in the program. If hardship situations arise in regards to making payments, please contact the principal *immediately*. Special arrangements can be discussed.

## **Withdrawal**

To withdraw a child from the preschool, a written notice must be submitted to the school office or preschool teacher with a minimum of one week's notice of the last day of attendance. Without such written notification, a new student cannot be enrolled to fill the vacancy. Therefore, the tuition fee will be charged until the written notice is received.

## **Change of address**

Parents are asked to notify the preschool personnel immediately if there is a change of address or telephone number. This information must be kept up to date, particularly in the case of an emergency.

## **Dual Parent Reporting**

According to Diocesan policy, in the case of a child whose parents' marriage has been dissolved or a separation of a parent from the home, the name and address of BOTH parents should be on file.

Unless otherwise decreed by a court order, information commonly made available to parents of any child will be made available to both parents.

## **Statement of Health**

Physical examinations are required by the state of Iowa upon admission to Seton Preschool. A health record must be submitted prior to being admitted and it needs to be signed by a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, physician's assistant or advanced registered nurse practitioner. The date of the physical examination shall be no more than three months prior to the first day of attendance at Seton. The written report shall include past health history, status of present health, including allergies, medications and acute or chronic conditions and recommendations for continued care when necessary. Annually thereafter, a statement of health condition, signed by a licensed medical doctor, doctor of osteopathy, physician's assistant or advanced registered nurse practitioner shall be submitted that includes any change in functioning, allergies, medications or acute or chronic conditions. A completed immunization card must show proof of at least one dose of the HIB vaccine, given on or after the child is fifteen months old. To be considered a valid certificate, state regulations require that the immunization cards on file at the school must include the child's birthday and they must list the required immunizations, name of the administering personnel and the date administered. Cards must be signed by an MD, DO, RN, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, county public health nurse, school nurse or an official of the local health department. Parents are encouraged, but not required, to sign the certificate. The immunization card must be an official Iowa Immunization Card. The chart below lists the immunizations and the ages they should be given:

- DTAP Provides protection against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and tetanus.
- OPV/IPV Polio protection either by injection or given orally. Your physician or clinic will determine which is recommended.
- HIB Provides protection against the HIB (Haemophiles influenzae type b) bacteria, which can lead to several serious infectious diseases.  
MMR An injection to protect against measles, mumps and rubella.
- Hepatitis B Helps guard against the Hepatitis B virus.
- Varicella Provides protection against the chickenpox virus.

When your child is overdue for any routine health services, evidence of an appointment for those services must be provided before your child's entry into the program and as a condition of remaining enrolled in the program, except for immunization for which you are using religious exemption.

## **Health Records**

Prior to entering your child into the preschool program, you must fill out the Parental Emergency Medical Consent form at the back of this handbook. Please fill out the form in its entirety including:

- Health insurance coverage required for treatment in an emergency
- Current emergency contact information for each child which will be updated annually, or when there is a change to the current information
- Be sure to list the names of those individuals authorized by you to have access to health information about your child
- Complete the instructions for any special health needs such as allergies or chronic illness

Your health record will also include your Immunization Record, Doctor's Physical Examination, Dental, Vision and Hearing Screening.

### **When to keep your child at home**

Parents need to exercise caution and use your best judgment in not sending a child to school that might have a communicable disease. The start of a cold, for instance, is the most contagious period. If you notice cold or flu symptoms in your child, prevent the exposure of the whole class by keeping your child home for a day of rest.

### **Communicable Diseases**

Please notify the director of any communicable disease at once. A child may attend school after exposure to a communicable disease, but should be watched closely for symptoms during the incubation period and kept at home if any suspicious symptoms develop. For the comfort of the child and the health of the other students, the teacher may ask a parent to pick up his/her child during the class if there are signs of fatigue or illness. Notice of a communicable disease, symptoms and when the child may return to school, will be posted by the entrance door.

### **Common Communicable Diseases and Their Incubation Periods**

1. Chicken pox – 7 to 21 days
2. Fifth disease – 10 to 14 days
3. Hand, foot & mouth disease – 3 to 6 days
4. Impetigo (strep) – 2 to 5 days
5. Lice – 7 days
6. Measles – 10 to 12 days
7. Mumps – 16 to 18 days
8. Pinkeye – 1 to 7 days
9. Ringworm – 10 to 14 days
10. Roseola – 10 to 15 days
11. Rubella – 14 to 21 days

### **Absences**

If a child will not be attending class for any reason, parents are asked to contact the school office in advance if possible. No refunds or credits will be given for absences. In the event of a long-term absence due to illness, possible adjustments to tuition/fees must be discussed with the principal. If the child has an illness listed below, he/she should not attend class. Should a child become ill while at Preschool, the parent will be notified.

The preschool staff needs to be informed of any changes in a child's health status and/or eating habits (i.e., a child who develops an allergy).

**Colds:** If in respiratory distress or if the child has an elevated temperature (unless temperature elevation is due to recent immunization), the child shall not be brought to the Preschool. This shall also be the case if the child makes high-pitched croupy or whooping sound when he/she coughs.

**Diarrhea and Vomiting:** If there is any diarrhea or vomiting, the child should not be brought to the Preschool. If the child has any loose stools or if the child vomits at the Preschool, he/she will be sent home. The child may return to the Preschool if he/she has been free from diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours. If there is diarrhea for several days, a physician should be notified.

**Eye Infection:** If a child has eyes that are mattering or draining, the child shall not be brought to the Preschool. The child may return after he/she is on antibiotic ointment for 24 hours or the eyes have shown marked improvement.



**Impetigo:** A child with impetigo shall be excluded from the Preschool for 24 hours after treatment has begun. The return shall depend upon the location of the infected area and if the area is dried and healing well.

**Ear Infection:** If purulent drainage, the child shall not be at the Preschool. (Exception: If the child has tubes and has been on an antibiotic for 24 hours.) A child with a diagnosed ear infection with no drainage must be on medication or a release must be obtained from a physician stating that the child is free of communicable disease.

**Lice:** A child will not be excluded from school or a particular setting on the day head lice are detected, but must be treated before returning the next day.

**Pinworms:** When pinworms are diagnosed in a child, the child shall be restricted from the Preschool. All clothing worn by the child prior to treatment should be laundered. It is advisable that family members also be treated.

**Scabies and/or Pediculosis:** When scabies or pediculosis is suspected in a child, the child shall be restricted from the Preschool until after initial treatment with appropriate medication. It is advisable that family members also be treated.

**Sore Throat:** A child with a sore throat may be restricted from the Preschool. If strep is suspected, the child should be seen by a physician.

**Fever:** If a child has a temperature of 100 degrees F. and/or exhibits any of the above conditions, the child will be sent home.

### **Accidents/Emergencies**

Incidents or accidents resulting in injury to a child will be reported on the day of the accident. The written report will be prepared by the staff person who observed the incident or accident and shall include a general description of the incident and of the action taken, if any, by the staff at the Preschool. If a child is hurt more severely, the staff will transport the child as quickly as possible to the Emergency Room and contact the parents.

### **Safety**

The physical safety of the children is very important. The school staff is trained in Pediatric first aid and CPR. They are also trained in infectious disease control, as set out by DHS. A first aid kit is present in the classroom and is taken to the playground and on all field trips. If an accident should occur, a staff member will administer simple first aid. In the event of a more serious injury, an emergency vehicle will be called and the child will be taken to the doctor or hospital designated on the enrollment forms. A parent (or emergency contact if no parent can be reached) will be contacted immediately thereafter. After an injury is treated, an accident report will be written up to explain what happened and what treatment was performed. A copy of the report will be sent home with the injured child.

The school has also developed a series of procedures in the event of a fire, tornado, natural disaster or other catastrophe. The director goes over these policies with staff members during staff orientation and also at other times during the year. Anyone wishing to view these policies may obtain a copy from the director. In the event that the school should ever need to be evacuated, the children would go over to St. Mary's Church with the rest of the Seton students.

## **Medication**

Safeguards are used with all medications for children. Staff administer both prescription and over-the-counter medications to a child only if the child's record documents that the parent or legal guardian has given our preschool program written permission. The child's record includes instructions for from the licensed health provider who has prescribed or recommended the medication for that child. Any administrator or teaching staff who administers medication has specific training and annual certification for Medication Administration Skills Competency. All medication is labeled with the child's first and last names, the date that either the prescription was filled or the recommendation was obtained from the child's licensed health care provider, the name of the medication, or the period of use of the medication, the manufacturer's instruction or the original prescription label that details the name and strength of the medication, and instructions on how to administer and store it. All medications are kept in a locked container.

## **Special Health Care / Food Allergies**

For each child with special health care needs or food allergies or special nutritional needs, the child's health provider will submit the to the program an individualized care plan that is prepared in consultation with family members and specialists involved in the child's care.

Seton preschool program protects children with food allergies to give consent for posting information about that child's food allergy and, if consent is given, then posts that information in the food preparation area and in the areas of the facility the child uses so it is a visual reminder to all those who interact with the child during program day.

## **Maintaining a Healthful Environment**

The cleaning and sanitizing of all surfaces and in the facility is as indicated in the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table. Proper ventilation and sanitation control odors in inhabited areas of the facility and custodial closets.

Our program follows the procedures for standard precautions including the following:

- a. Surfaces that may come in contact with potentially infectious body fluids must be disposable or made of a material that can be sanitized.
- b. Staff use barriers and techniques that minimize contact of mucous membranes or of openings in skin with potentially infectious body fluids and reduce the spread of infectious disease.
- c. When spills of body fluids occur, staff clean them up immediately with detergent followed water rinsing.
- d. After cleaning, staff sanitize nonporous surfaces by using the procedure for sanitizing designated changing surfaces described in the Cleaning and Sanitation Frequency Table.
- e. Staff clean rugs and carpeting by blotting, spot cleaning with a detergent-disinfectant, and shampooing or steam cleaning.
- f. Staff dispose of contaminated materials and diapers in a plastic bag with a secure tie that is placed in a closed container.

There are times when children are unable to use the toilet consistently. In instances when children are required to wear cloth diapers, the staff ensures that it has an absorbent inner lining completely contained within an outer covering made of waterproof material that prevents the escape of feces and urine. Both the diaper and outer covering are changed as a unit.

Staff check children for signs that diapers or pullups are wet or contain feces at least every two hours when children are awake and when they have awakened from nap. Diapers or soiled

underwear are changed when wet or soiled in the designated changing areas. The changing area is separated completely from the classroom. At all times, caregivers have a hand on the child when being changed on an elevated surface. Staff follow the changing procedures posted in the changing area, and are used to evaluate staff. Surfaces used for changing and on which changing materials are placed are not used for other purposes, including temporary placement of other objects, and especially not for any object involved with food or feeding. Containers that hold soiled diapers and diapering materials have a lid that opens and closes tightly using a hands free device. Containers are kept closed and are not accessible to children. Food service workers do not change diapers until their food preparation duties are completed for the day.

### **Mandatory Reporting**

The staff is required to report any suspicions of child abuse and neglect to the Department of Human Services (DHS). If, in the course of working with a child, a teacher has reason to believe that a child has suffered sexual, physical or emotional abuse, that person must make a report to DHS. This report must be both oral and written. Under this same rule, in the unlikely event that any founded act of abuse would occur while the child is at the school, DHS would contact every family who has a child presently enrolled at the school. The procedures to be followed are posted by the entrance door.

### **Parent Conferences and Observations**

Close cooperation between the director and parents is absolutely necessary to ensure the maximum benefit of the child. The successful development of the child is the business of both Seton Preschool and the parents. Honest communication about how this can best be achieved is essential. There will be two scheduled conferences during the school year. Additional conferences may also be scheduled when necessary. Observations are also encouraged. Appointments may be made for anytime after the third week in September by calling or asking the director. Parents are welcome to visit anytime during the session.

### **Parent-Teacher Communication**

The school strives for excellent communication among parents, teachers, staff and the Preschool Committee. Parents are encouraged to visit with the teachers and staff regularly. Parents should feel free to initiate questions and express concerns at any time, no matter how “unimportant” they may seem. **Parents are welcome to visit briefly ten minutes before or after class for this purpose.** A newsletter is sent home weekly detailing school events and class activities. The teachers are available to speak with parents by phone during non-class hours. Parents should arrange to speak with the teachers at a mutually convenient time. If you need to convey special information to the teachers (e.g. different arrangements as to who will be picking up the child, or the parent is out of town), a note should be written and given to the teachers.

### **Drop-off and Pick-Up Procedures**

The teachers will not release a child to someone unless they know the password. They will also not release a child to someone that is not on the pick up authorization form. Parents need to send a signed note in order to add or drop someone from the pick up form.

It is very important that parents do not bring their children to school more than 10 minutes before class begins or return for them after the pick-up time. This causes unnecessary delay in the pick-up and drop-off process. If a parent is delayed in picking up, please call the school and let them know ASAP. The children attending 4 year-old half day preschool should always be dropped off at the front door of Seton Catholic School, and picked up at the east door of the preschool room.

Children attending preschool at the annex should always be dropped off and picked up at the double doors on the east side of the First United Methodist Church.

### **Field Trips**

We generally take a few field trips around the Ottumwa area during the year. These trips are included as a part of the regular class period. Parents are sometimes asked to chaperone. Parents are always notified in advance of a field trip and they are always welcome to participate in these special trips. A list of our field trip rules will be sent home prior to our first field trip. These are very important for the parents to read and also to go over with their children. A permission requesting parental permission for field trips is included with the paperwork packet that is sent out during the summer months.

### **Show and Tell**

Sharing is an important concept for life. We incorporate this into our program everyday as a part of learning. A share bag is sent home the night before a child's snack day. The child may bring something from nature, a favorite book, or something that currently interests the child. Parents are reminded to help their child choose objects that are not valuable or out of place at preschool. Toys that encourage violence, such as guns, are not allowed at preschool. Please limit the number of items in the share bag to 5 or less. A live item can be accommodated on any day with prior notice to the director.

### **Snacks**

Seton Preschool follows healthy snack guidelines. Suggestions include fruits, vegetables, cheese/yogurt and other milk products, fruit snacks, etc. Exceptions are made for birthday treats (cupcakes, cookies, bars, etc.) For safety reasons Seton provides snacks that are purchased premade or produced in a commercial kitchen. The children at Seton Preschool will be asked to try all snacks and will not receive a replacement unless previous arrangements have been made with the teachers. (e.g. allergies, medical conditions, religion, etc.) Parents must provide information required to make arrangements for these exceptions on the personal information form. A snack calendar is sent home each month.

### **Birthdays**

Special recognition is given to the birthday child. It is nice to have a special day just for one person and a child's birthday is a great day to do so. It is a time when they learn to give, as well as, receive. The teachers encourage the child to bring a special snack for the whole class to enjoy. It is important to note two things in regards to birthday treats: 1) The NO PEANUT rule must be strictly followed, and 2) NO homemade snacks may be brought to school. Baked goods purchased from a bakery are acceptable, however. Those with summer birthdays will have the opportunity to celebrate their half birthdays. In the past, some parents have chosen to send take-home treats or small gifts for the other children on their child's birthday. Another way to celebrate this special day is to donate a book to our classroom in your child's name. You may feel free to give a small gift or donation anytime during the school year. Many parents in the past have given something to our school during the Christmas season. A wish list is sent home in December to help assist parents in knowing what our school needs. All gifts and donations to our school are greatly needed and appreciated.

### **Clothing**

Students should be dressed in simple play clothes when they come to preschool. The children work with clay, water, paint, brass cleaner, etc., so it is better to not dress up. Jewelry is discouraged because it can become lost and it is distracting. The school is not responsible for

lost or broken items. Names in and on **all** personal items help prevent confusion and loss. Each child needs to bring a complete change of clothing in a shoebox labeled with his/her name on the end of the box. These will be kept at the school in case they are needed and will be returned at the end of the year.

### **Lost and Found**

The Lost and Found box is located in the classroom. Articles that can be easily lost should be marked with the child's whole name rather than using initials or first name.

### **Toys**

If a child brings something from home to show the other children, it must remain in the child's backpack and the teacher will allow him/her to take it out at the appropriate time.

The Preschool cannot be responsible for lost or broken toys.

### **Discipline**

Discipline is essential for learning. We have a great respect for the child and their work and attempt to reinforce positive behavior at all times. Ground rules, which require that a child be considerate of others, allow for the birth of order and freedom for all in the classroom.

During their early years of education, children are just beginning to learn how to get along with others. They need a lot of direction and guidance from adults to learn how to work things out for themselves. It is the responsibility of the school to provide a safe and comfortable environment to help the children develop self-control, cooperation skills and consideration of others. The teachers have developed guidelines for acceptable student behavior.

These guidelines use redirection, problem solving and positive reinforcement. Occasionally, some children repeatedly break the rules and are hurtful to others. The teachers work diligently with these children to encourage them to choose appropriate behaviors. When necessary, parents will be notified of problematic behaviors so that the teachers and parents can work together to help the student act appropriately.

Regarding the disciplining of children, the Iowa Department of Human Services mandates that all licensed facilities utilize the following policies. Seton Preschool abides by the following:

1. Corporal punishment, including spanking, shaking and slapping will not be used.
2. Punishment that is humiliating, frightening or causes pain or discomfort to the child will not be used.
3. Punishment shall not be administered or even the threat of punishment with regard to food or rest.
4. No child will be subjected to abuse, threats or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family.

### **Basic Conduct Guidelines**

This list of basic procedures followed at Seton Preschool may give parents a better understanding of the school's operations and expectations.

#### **Outdoor rules:**

1. The teacher-pupil ratio is the same outside as it is inside.
2. Any type of hurtful behavior is not acceptable, whether it is physical, verbal or emotional.
3. Inappropriate language is not acceptable. Politeness and courtesy are encouraged.
4. Children are not permitted to use sticks, rocks or other hazardous items in harmful ways.
5. Sandbox toys and sand stay in the sandbox. The children are not permitted to throw sand.
6. Children are not permitted to climb the fence.

7. Only one child at a time may go into the building to use the restroom.
8. Coats must be worn if the temperature is below 50 degrees.

**Classroom rules:**

1. The students and adults speak in conversational voices. Shouting and yelling are not allowed in the classroom.
2. The children are asked to walk in the classroom.
3. All children are free to work with any material in the classroom, as long as it is used appropriately. The children may not harm the materials, themselves or others.
4. A child may work with their materials at a table or on a rug. The children may not work on the display shelves, as this would obstruct the others from getting access to the shelves.
5. The students are responsible for their own work, including taking work out, working with it and putting it away.
6. During individual work time, the students work independently or with one other student. If three students wish to work together, permission must be obtained from the teacher.
7. Children are free to “do nothing” as long as they do not disturb the work of others. In truth, they may be learning by observing others or they may be simply thinking or relaxing.
8. Only one child may use the restroom at a time.
9. The children must use “quiet voices and walking feet” when walking in the hallways at Seton Catholic School, as the older children are having classes.

As children mature and develop, it is not unusual for them to exhibit behaviors that may be improper and/or disrespectful. These occasional misbehaviors, while certainly not condoned, are often a normal part of the process of a child’s development. As noted above, the school’s policy is to redirect the child’s behavior and to explain to him/her of other ways to communicate or to voice frustrations.

If rules in the classroom or on the playground are not followed and attempts at redirecting the child are not successful, the child will be asked to sit in the “cool down” seat for the number of minutes corresponding to his/her age in years. The teacher will explain to the child why he/she is sitting in the chair. This gives the child a chance to be removed from the situation and to think about the choices he/she has made.

On the other hand, if a particular child exhibits chronically disruptive behavior, the issue must be addressed. Any of the following may be considered to be disruptive behavior:

1. Any behavior that requires constant attention from the staff.
2. Any behavior that inflicts physical or emotional harm on themselves, other students or the staff.
3. Any behavior that conflicts with the rules of the classroom or the playground.

The following are the series of steps that will be taken in dealing with this type of behavior.

1. The child’s parents will be contacted regarding the situation. The teacher will discuss the problem with the parents in order to appraise the situation. The teacher will keep up verbal communication about the child’s behavior, along with incident reports in writing.
2. If repetitive disruptive behavior continues on a regular basis and affects classroom operation, a parent-teacher conference will be scheduled. At this meeting, the teacher

will explain to the parents what options are available and a plan will be formulated to resolve the problem.

3. If for any reason it is determined by the teacher that a student may need to be removed from the school, a special confidential conference shall be arranged by the teacher, the principal of Seton Catholic School and the parents or guardians of the child. Upon completion of this conference, action will be determined. The final decision in the matter will rest with the principal. The school reserves the right to dismiss a child who does not fit into our program.

The teachers and staff at Seton Preschool are committed to working closely with parents in the area of discipline. Please contact the teachers with any concerns, questions or insights.

### **Feedback**

Seton strives to be the best preschool program available in our community, and we seek your input on how we can make that happen. Please respond to any and all communication from the school where you can assist in making decisions to our program. We send home newsletters, surveys, emails, and text messages to gather this information.

### **Program Evaluation, Accountability and Continuous Improvement**

Seton offers staff and families opportunities to assist in making decisions to improve the program. Collaborative and shared decision making is essential to building trust and enthusiasm for making program changes. Seton meets several times during the year to consult on program planning and ongoing program operations. Please check with your teacher for dates and times during the school year.

## **PAYMENT POLICY**

1. A \$100.00 registration fee is charged and must accompany the completed application for each year for children who do not qualify for the SWVPP. The registration fee is not refundable.
2. Annual tuition (\$1,080.00 for half day 4 year olds) is based on a full school year from September through May. You may pay the entire amount at the beginning of the school year or you may make nine (9) equal monthly payments (\$120.00 for half day 4 year olds, due on the first (1) day of the month, beginning August 1<sup>st</sup> and commencing on April 1<sup>st</sup>.
3. Monthly payments are due on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) day of every month. If tuition is not paid by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, the child will not be allowed to continue in the program. If hardship situations arise in regard to making payments, please contact the principal immediately. Special arrangements can be discussed.
4. Payments made by check must be made out to SETON PRESCHOOL. The payments should be sent to Seton Catholic School, 117 East Fourth Street, Ottumwa, IA 52501. Payments may also be dropped off at the office at Seton Catholic School.
5. There is no reduction in fees because of absence or illness. If your child must be withdrawn from school, a 30-day written notice is required. You are responsible for payment up to and including those 30 days.
6. If the parent or guardian withdraws the child from Seton Preschool, whether for sickness, injury or any reason, including dissatisfaction with Seton Preschool, its curriculum, methods, staff or otherwise, the tuition paid shall be forfeited to and retained by Seton Preschool. It is understood that in accepting a child, the budget and planning for staff, supplies and other expenses is directly tied to and dependent upon the total enrollment

and the tuition derived there from. If your child must be withdrawn from school, a 30-day written notice is required. You are responsible for payment up to and including those 30 days.

## **Teaching Children To Pray**

We firmly believe that the relationship of little children to God is very deep and important and influences the rest of their lives precisely because it is so simple. It is natural for little children to want to pray; as Paul says, “His Spirit speaks in our spirit.” The spirits of little children are very open to contact with the Divine Spirit. All we have to do is to elicit this contact gently and freely. We would like to present here a few guidelines for teaching preschoolers to pray. We believe these guidelines have implications for teaching prayer to school-age children at home and in the classroom.

### **Be open to recognizing God’s presence in your children.**

Sometimes you can feel it just by looking into your children’s eyes; sometimes you can sense it when you are finally able to look at your children from a distance, as it were, and be amazed at the mystery of their existence; sometimes it could just be the way one of your children looks at a crucifix or reacts when you say the word Jesus.

### **Pray affectionately and tenderly with your children.**

Particularly if you are open to God’s presence in your children, then the times you do choose to pray with them can be very special. Parents should not be afraid to hold their children’s hands, touch their foreheads, and so on while praying with them or over them. Prayer together should be a spontaneous flow of affection for one another as you rejoice in God’s presence, letting God know your concerns and needs, and praying for others you feel close to.

### **Be aware of the importance of ritual in a child’s life.**

Once you find the right time and place to pray with your children, stick with it, and you will soon find that your children will remind you, if you ever forget, because prayer can become a healthy part of their emotional security.

### **Formal prayers should be attempted but not forced.**

Variety in prayer is the “spice of life.”

Informal prayer, formal prayer, guitar prayer, and Bible story prayer can all have their place within children’s framework of ritual.

### **Children need to be continually encouraged to pray for what is important to them. Don't use prayer to moralize.**

### **Be open to special events in the family and to peak experiences in daily life as experiences of God for yourself and your children.**

When there is an effort on the part of the parents to see in everything a sacrament of God’s presence, then this attitude flows out to the children. And it is this attitude that will be more important than all the formal prayers they will ever learn and more important than all the phases they will go through about going or not going to church on Sundays. It is this attitude that more than anything else will encourage our children to “lift up their minds and hearts to God.”



### Reflection Starters

Have you ever felt you recognized God's presence by looking into the eyes of your children? If so, relive such a time.

If you are unable to pray with your children, reflect on the kind of prayer you would like to have with them.

Recall the most memorable occasion of prayer with your children.

Try to imagine praying with your children in as many ways as possible.