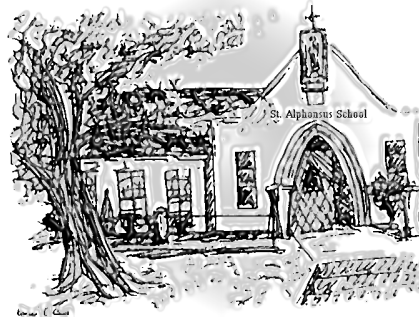


ST. ALPHONSUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL

PreK-1 & PreK-2 Handbook 2022-2023



Established 1883

***Where Faith and Knowledge Meet
The Tradition Continues***

St. Alphonsus Catholic Elementary School
504 Jackson Avenue
Ocean Springs, MS 39564
Phone: 228-875-5329 Fax: 228-875-3584
Website: www.stal.org

Principal: Eleanor Hartzog
Director: Lauren Ross
PK1 Teacher: Christina Malloch
PK1 Teacher Aide: Danielle Armatta & Kim Miller
PK2 Teacher: Janice Arceneux
PK2 Teacher Aide: Katrina Hines

DIOCESE OF BILOXI MISSION STATEMENT

The Catholic school community within the Diocese of Biloxi, a ministry of the Catholic Church, embracing the teachings and traditions of the past, accepting the challenges and opportunities of the present, and preparing for the demands of the future, provides an education based on Christ's teaching and Catholic values which focus on the formation of strong moral character, the furtherance of academic excellence, the inspiration to serve others, and the motivation to achieve God-given potential in the local and the world communities.

ST. ALPHONSUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL VISION

St. Alphonsus Catholic School in full partnership with the parish is a model Catholic school centered on God, developing children with strong moral character, outstanding academic performance, and the skills required for success in higher education and life.

ST. ALPHONSUS CATHOLIC SCHOOL MISSION

St. Alphonsus Catholic School is an educational family instilling spiritual fulfillment, academic excellence, and self-discipline forming intentional disciples of Christ.

FACILITY LICENSURE

St. Alphonsus Catholic School Pre-K1 & Pre-K2 program operates under the laws and policies outlined in the Mississippi Department of Health "Regulations Governing Licensure of Child Care Facilities."

This handbook was developed to provide information to parents of student(s) at St. Alphonsus Catholic Elementary School in Pre-K1 & Pre-K2 classes ONLY. This handbook provides the rules and regulations for Pre-K1 & Pre-K2 through the Mississippi Health Department. For other information regarding the rules and regulations, please see the Saint Alphonsus Catholic School Family Handbook. By signing the PreK-1 & PreK-2 Handbook Acknowledgement Signature Form, you indicate your willingness to abide by rules and regulations of St. Alphonsus Catholic School and the Mississippi State Department of Health.

ADMISSIONS

All students entering St. Alphonsus Catholic School must present the following information:

- Completed online application at www.stal.org
- Copy of birth certificate
- Mississippi Certificate of Immunization Compliance Form #121
- Non-refundable registration fee
- Baptismal Certificate, if Catholic

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

1. Children of St. Alphonsus Catholic School employees
2. Children who are siblings of students in attendance of St. Alphonsus Catholic School
3. Children of registered parishioners of St. Alphonsus Parish
4. Children who are Catholic who are not members of St. Alphonsus
5. Children who are non-Catholic

FEES AND TUITION

Tuition and fees are established each year. Tuition is based upon the student cost of education; Full-time (five days per week) Pre-K1 & Pre-K2 tuition for the current year is \$7,774.00. Fees include a registration fee of \$375.00 (non-refundable and payable at time of registration), a classroom resource fee of \$100.00, and a technology fee of \$150.00. Tuition may be paid in full or half payments to the school, or they may be paid monthly (10 months maximum) through FACTS Tuition Management Company. Payment method must be declared at registration.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Anyone choosing to withdraw a student must contact the office with a withdrawal date and withdrawal form. All debts must be settled at this time.

CALENDAR

School days, holidays, and any other school closures will coincide with the yearly school schedule of Saint Alphonsus Catholic School for grades Pre-K3 - 6th Grade.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Based on the school calendar, St. Alphonsus Catholic School's Pre-K1 & Pre-K2 program is open Monday-Friday from 7:40 a.m. to 3:10 p.m. Before care is available from 6:30 a.m. to 7:40 a.m. at no additional charge. Aftercare is available from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at no additional charge. After 5:30 p.m., the fee increases to \$1.00 per minute. After the third late fee, the fee will increase to \$2.00 a minute.

VISITORS/PARENTS

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

INTAKE AND DISMISSAL

INTAKE / DROP-OFF		
Grade Level	Time	Entrance via:
PK-1/PK-2	7:40 – 7:50 a.m.	North Hall Doors (doors immediately adjacent to the PK-1 and PK-2 classrooms)
PK-3	7:40 – 7:50 a.m.	Main Doors (office glass doors)
PK-4	7:40 – 7:50 a.m.	Cloister Entrance (covered double doors between school and church)
K-6 *	7:40 – 7:50 a.m.	Gym Hall Door (door in back of building at top of ramp)
*Students in grades K-6 with siblings in Pre-K can be dropped off at the front of the school with their siblings.		

DISMISSAL			
Grade Level	Time	Regular Departure via:	Rainy Day:
PK-1/PK-2	3:10 p.m.	North Hall Doors	Same
PK-3	3:10 p.m.	Main Doors	Same
PK-4	3:10 p.m.	Cloister Entrance	Same
K – 6 *	3:10	Release students to gym; car line begins at gym entrance	Same
*Students in grades K-6 with siblings in Pre-K can be picked up at the front of the school.			

All students must be signed in upon arrival to school and signed out when they depart school by an authorized individual. Children will only be dismissed to someone on their “pick-up” list unless written notification is given. If a person is not recognizable, identification must be presented to confirm consent. We do this for your child’s safety. Please notify us if any of this information needs to be changed at any time or if there is a change in your child’s afternoon routine.

Morning Dropoff: For intake, the PK-1/PK-2 teacher or assistant will greet parents at the double-blue doors on the north side of the school from 7:40 a.m. to 7:50 a.m. All students must be signed in. Upon arrival, the physical condition of each child will be observed for possible signs of illness, infection, bruises, or injuries. If something is observed, it will be documented. Documentation will include an explanation from the parent or person dropping off the child.

Afternoon Pick Up: For dismissal, the PK-1/PK-2 teacher or assistant will greet parents at the double-blue doors on the north side of the school from 3:10 p.m. to 3:20 p.m. Any student not picked up at this time will remain in aftercare. Aftercare closes at 5:30 p.m. Please be prompt to pick up your child to avoid late fees. All students must be signed out.

COMMUNICATION

Each child will receive a communication folder. Please check this folder daily. All communication from the office and class, as well as your child's work, will be sent through this folder. The school keeps parents informed of all activities and events through multiple portals (social media, email, FACTS, newsletters, etc.). The faculty and staff can be contacted directly through email. The address is the person's first initial and last name @stal.org. (example: jarceneaux@stal.org). Teachers check their email each morning and afternoon before leaving for the day.

For more information check:

Website: www.stal.org

Facebook Page: St. Alphonsus Catholic School

FACTS Family Portal: STA-MS

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT AND DISCIPLINE POLICY

St. Alphonsus Catholic School expects a high standard of discipline from all students. Parents and teachers are called to guide students in developing a sense of personal and social responsibility through self-discipline. Students are called to be respectful and to demonstrate Christian character and Catholic virtues. We believe that children can be taught self-discipline skills as a part of the total school curriculum. St. Alphonsus Catholic School implements self-discipline skills based on the philosophies and teachings of St. John Bosco. The two goals of discipline, according to this philosophy, are to maintain safety and order within the community, and to identify, teach, and practice the skills necessary to be self-disciplined. Discipline is seen as an opportunity for faith development rather than a punishment.

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

The Difference Between Discipline and Punishment

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

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

Communicating with Parents about Children's Behaviors

Our Pre-K1 and Pre-K2 teachers will be in communication with their students' parents daily through drop-off and/or pick-up chats, telephone calls or texts, email, or daily notes in the students' communication folders. The teachers will keep parents informed of their child's appropriate and inappropriate behavior. If a child's misbehavior becomes a problem, a conference with the parents will be scheduled with the teachers, director, and principal. Discussions will center around what is causing the misbehavior, how to teach the child more appropriate behaviors, and logical consequences for continued misbehavior. If a child's behavior is harmful,

professional guidance may be sought for direction or required for a child to remain enrolled. If a child's behavior becomes threatening to other children or staff members, permanent dismissal from school may be a last option.

Appropriate Techniques for Discipline

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

Types of Punishments Not Allowed

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

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

Staff Training on Discipline Issues

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

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

SNACK/LUNCH

Students will be provided with two snacks from the cafeteria daily at no additional charge. Snacks will be served at approximately 8:15 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Lunch may be purchased daily (\$4.25) and will be served at 10:50 a.m. Water is always accessible to the children. Water, juice, or milk will be served during eating times.

SUPPLIES/BOOK BAGS

The supply list can be found on the school website (www.stal.org). School supply items must be brought in by the first day of school. Teachers may ask for additional supplies throughout the school year, depending on the needs and usage by the students.

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

LABELS

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

MONEY

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

POTTY TRAINING

Teachers in Pre-K2 will assist children in the potty-training process at some point in the school year. Toilet training conferences will be held by parent request. Children generally achieve potty training between the ages of 2 ½ to 3 years of age. Extra clothes and underwear will need to be provided for accidents. If an accident happens at school, all soiled clothing/bedding will be sent home for washing.

NAPTIME

Naptime is from approximately 12:00-2:00 p.m. Children will sleep on nap mats with a pillow and blanket sent from home. Children may bring a nap time security item such as a stuffed animal, but the item must be left at school for the week until sent home for cleaning.

BITING POLICY

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

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

This policy has been created to help prepare our staff, caregivers, and parents for a potential biting incident, as well as a guide for when a biting incident occurs.

Reasons Children Bite

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

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

When Biting Occurs

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

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

Ways to Prevent Biting

Our caregivers will take several steps to prevent biting:

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

Actions a Caregiver Will Not Take When a Child Bites

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

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

OUTSIDE TIME

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

SICK POLICY

If your child is sick, please keep them home! Our primary goal is to provide a healthy environment by controlling the spread of the disease. If your child is running a fever (100.4° F or above), is vomiting, has diarrhea, eye discharge, body rash with fever, sore throat with fever, severe coughing (whooping), communicable diseases, or contagious disease you will be notified.

A student must be symptom/fever free for 24 hours without preventative medication before returning to school. Parents are to notify the office if their child contracts a contagious disease so that others can be notified of their child's exposure.

BIRTHDAYS/INVITATIONS

A special treat/snack may be sent in for your child's birthday. All snacks must be commercially made. No homemade snacks are permitted as required by the MSDH regulations. Please let us know ahead of time if you plan to send in invitations for a party. If party invitations are sent, they MUST be sent home with EVERY child or with ALL boys or ALL girls.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

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

- Music
- P.E.
- Spanish
- Library

INSURANCE POLICY

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

SAFETY AND EVACUATION PLANS

Pre-K1/Pre-K2 will follow safety and evacuations plans that are included in our St. Alphonsus Catholic School Crisis Plan. Fire drills, tornado drills, and lockdown drills are held throughout the school year to acquaint your child with these procedures.

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

MEDICATION

To avoid any mishaps, we will not administer any medication at school. If your child requires medication for any reason(s), you will need to work out a schedule for your child to take this medicine before and/or after school. If this is not possible, you may check in through the office and we will bring your child to you for their medication dosage.

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

EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT

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

CHILD ABUSE

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

ALCOHOL, SMOKING, ILLEGAL DRUGS

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

Mississippi Adult Tobacco Use on Educational Property Act of 2000

97-32-27. (1) "Adult" means any natural person at least eighteen (18) years old. (2) "Minor" means any natural person under the age of eighteen (18) years. (3) "Person" means any natural person. (4) "Tobacco product" means any substance that contains tobacco including, but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff, smoking tobacco or smokeless tobacco. (5) "Educational property" means any public school building or bus, public school campus, grounds, recreational area, athletic field, or other property owned, used or operated by any local school board, school, or directors for the administration of any public educational institution or during a school-related activity; provided, however, that the term "educational property" shall not include any sixteenth section school land or lieu land on which is not located a public school building, public school campus, public school recreational area or public school athletic field. Educational property shall not include property owned or operated by the state institutions of higher learning, the public community and junior colleges, or vocational-technical complexes where only adult students are in attendance. SECTION 3. The following provision shall be codified as Section 97-32-29, Mississippi Code of 1972: 97-32-29. No person shall use any tobacco product on any educational property as defined in Section 2 of this act. Any adult who violates this section shall be subject to a fine and shall be liable as follows: (a) for a first conviction, a warning; (b) for a second conviction, a fine of Seventy-five Dollars (\$75.00); and (c) for all subsequent convictions, a fine not to exceed One Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$150.00) shall be imposed. Any adult found in violation of this section shall be issued a citation by a law enforcement officer, which citation shall include notice of the date, time and location for hearing before the justice court having jurisdiction where the violation is alleged to have occurred. For the purposes of this section, "subsequent convictions" are for violations committed on any educational property within the State of Mississippi. Anyone convicted under this act shall be recorded as being fined for a civil violation of the act and not for violating a criminal statute. It is the responsibility of all law enforcement officers and law enforcement agencies of this state to ensure that the provisions of this act are enforced. SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2000.

WEAPONS

There shall be no firearms or other dangerous weapons strictly prohibited on and around the St. Alphonsus Catholic School campus.

PROHIBITION OF WEAPONS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

MS Code 97-37-17 (Senate Bill 3349)

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

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

FELONY \$5,000 and/or 3 years for possession of a gun, rifle, pistol, other firearm encouraging or aiding a minor to possess the same.

MISDEMEANOR \$1000 and/or 6 months for possession of a BB gun, air rifle, air pistol, bowie knife, dirk, dagger, slingshot, leaded cane, switchblade, blackjack, metallic knuckles, razors, and razor blades (except for shaving), any sharp-pointed or edged instrument (except instructional supplies, unaltered nail files and clips and tools only to prepare food, instruction and maintenance of school property), or to causing, encouraging or aiding a minor to possess the same.



REVISED: June 20, 2022

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

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



PreK-1 & Pre-K2 Handbook and Child Care Regulations Summary for Parents Acknowledgement Signature Form

I have read and understand the entire St. Alphonsus School Pre-K1 & Pre-K2 Handbook and the Child Care Regulations Summary for Parents. I also understand that the handbook is subject to change and if I have any concerns or questions, I will contact my child's teacher, the director, or the principal.

Child's Name: _____

Printed Name of Parent(s): _____

Parent(s) Signature: _____

Date: _____