

St. Helen Catholic School

Pre-K Parent Handbook
2024-2025



2050 20th Avenue, Vero Beach, Florida 32960
(772) 567-5457

Parochial Administrator
Fr. Matthew DeGance

Principal
Mrs. Debbie Irish

Assistant to the Principal
Mrs. Annie Kathman

Preschool Director
Mrs. Mary Beth Albert

Welcome to Pre-K!

Class held Monday through Friday

Drop off between 7:30am-7:45am
Pre-K Morning Only Program: 7:45am-11:00am
Pre-K School Day Program: 7:45am-3:15pm

Drop-off & pick up location: You will enter from SR 60 onto Tallahassee Ave and follow it into the St. Helen Catholic School parking lot. Please review the SHCS Handbook and Drop-Off/Pick-Up Procedures on the school website (www.sthelschoolvero.com) under Parents, Forms & Information.

Students will need to exit the car from the right rear door, and therefore it is recommended, if possible, to have your child seated on the right-hand side of the car for easier exiting.

Parents are to remain in their vehicles during the carline. If your child needs assistance unbuckling or buckling, our carline staff members can assist, or you can pull out of the carline to buckle your child.

Our Mission Statement:

The mission of St. Helen Catholic School is to provide a quality Catholic education that incorporates faith, academics, service, and leadership. Students are encouraged to be confident and productive learners who are "making good things happen."

Our Pre-K Philosophy:

We are passionate educators dedicated to creating a vibrant and supportive learning environment that is both safe and nurturing. Our Pre-K program is built on a foundation of Catholic values, academic excellence, and the holistic development of each child. We emphasize faith and virtue in all aspects of our curriculum, guiding children to learn about respect, love, compassion, forgiveness, and service.

Principal's Statement:

St. Helen Catholic School Parent/Student Handbook is the over-riding document for our school's procedures and protocols. However, knowing that the Pre-K is a unique year for many families, this handbook was developed to better assist you.

Curriculum:

The Frog Street Pre-K curriculum is a comprehensive program designed to meet the needs of diverse learners while supporting developmental learning domains. This engaging, interactive pre-kindergarten curriculum celebrates the joy of learning as children travel down the road to success.

Religion:

The Pre-K students will attend mass each Friday at 8:40am. Parents are welcome to attend but the children will be expected to sit with their classmates.

Pre-K Weekly Afternoon Enrichment (School-Day Program):

Monday: Spanish

Tuesday: Music/Dance

Wednesday: P.E.

Thursday: Drama

Friday: Religion

Learning Centers:

Art Workshop Center: It is important to remember that the process of creating is more important than the product. Children will have the opportunity to create through painting, coloring, modeling, cutting, etc. Children will use their fine motor skills to develop eye-hand coordination and finger dexterity and increasing thinking skills.

Make Believe Center: Children enjoy dramatic play as they imitate the world around them. Using their imaginations, the students will learn to play cooperatively and experiment with various roles they portray.

Transportation Center: Through building, designing, and manipulating blocks and vehicles, children can improve their understanding of size, shape, balance, and socialization with their peers. Diving into the world of science and math, students will investigate through the concepts of measuring, set, quantity, numbers, counting, shapes, size and positional relationships within the sensory bin and additional materials.

Gross Motor/Playground time:

Each morning, the children will spend 30 minutes on the outdoor Preschool playground (Weather permitting. In the event of inclement weather, teachers will utilize movements videos and songs for daily exercise). Full-time students will be on the playground twice daily.

VPK Attendance Daily Procedure

VPK requires daily Sign-In/Sign-Out: A daily record will be recorded at drop off and pick up of which parent (or assigned adult) picks up your child each day. At the end of each month, a physical copy will be signed verifying your child's VPK attendance for the month. A clipboard will be presented to you on this day.

Emergency Clothes:

Send an extra set of uniform clothing (shorts and shirt) with a pair of underwear and socks in a Ziploc bag, labeled with your child's name on the bag.

Labeling:

Remember to label all items; jacket, clothing, snacks, lunch boxes, water bottles, food containers, backpacks, nap bedding, stuffed animal, blankets, etc.

Required Rest/Quiet Time:

School Day Program students will be required to rest during quiet time for one hour and thirty minutes. If a child does not fall asleep, we will provide a quiet activity at their mat.

School Day & School Day Program students:

1. Pre-K uniform must be purchased through: Risse Brothers (www.rissebrothers.com)
2. Velcro shoes only (please no shoelaces unless your child can tie their own shoes)
3. Shoes and socks must follow the SHCS shoe/sock guidelines
4. **Full size** backpack (will be large enough to send home weekly folder & artwork)
5. Backpack should have a front pouch large enough to hold morning & afternoon snacks (both snacks must be non-refrigerated items). Morning Only students will need a morning snack, School Day students will need a second afternoon snack. Snacks must be labeled.
6. Backpack should have a side compartment large enough to hold your child's water bottle.
7. Water bottle: must have a spill proof top (the top must close shut and not leak when tipped on its side). Please see SHCS water bottle guidelines. *Pre-K water bottles should be small enough to fit into the side of your child's backpack for them to put their own water bottle in and out.

School Day Program students only:

6. Lunch box: your child will need a lunch box with cold packs inside, we are unable to refrigerate or heat up food.
7. Bedding: your child will need a blanket/pillow attached that will go on top of the mat provided by SHCS

"Stuffy/Lovey/Blankie" Policy:

School Day students will need to bring a rest blanket/pillow combo that is referred to as "bedding". With their bedding, each child can bring one small blanket OR small stuffed animal. This must stay at school. Please make sure your child's name is on their bedding and on their "stuffy/lovey/blankie".

Birthday Treats:

On your child's birthday (or a designated day for weekend or summer birthdays), you can drop off a special Birthday snack. Mini cupcakes, cookies, pretzels, fruit, donut holes, mini-muffins, ice cream cups are examples of small treats that would be great for this day! Parents are invited to attend the birthday snack time if you have completed the Diocese Fingerprinting and Protecting God's Children course. Please email Mrs. Albert if you plan on attending or are dropping off a snack to the front office.

Toy Guidelines:

Please leave all personal toys at home. We respect easing the transition from home to Pre-K, but personal toys can cause conflict within a sharing environment.

Pre-K Discipline Plan:

When a child breaks one of the three Pre-K Rules (Be a Friend, Listen or Pick-Up) the following sequence of events will occur:

1st Student receives a verbal warning

(There is no verbal warning for hurting another – immediate action is taken)

*Incident reports will be sent home in the event of any physical injury

2nd If the behavior does not improve after the verbal warning, the child will “take a break” in the classroom

3rd If the behavior continues after “taking a break”, the child will be removed from the room for a supervised time out

4th If behavior continues, child be brought to the office and parents contacted

Teacher/Parent Communication:

To aid in communication, your teacher will set up a “Remind” account to send messages to parents. She will also communicate through email and weekly folders that will go home on Fridays with updates.

Remind:

Please text @shcspk2024 to 81010 to receive class text messages, alerts, reminders, photos etc...

*It is recommended that you install the app on your phone  to receive any previous messages communicated prior to the date/time you sign-up.

Parent/Teacher Conferences:

VPK requires the FAST Assessment to be completed three times a year. The Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring Program is the statewide, standardized program known as Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) Star Early Literacy. It is implemented in all VPK programs as required by s. 1002.68, F.S., and used to assess student achievement of the performance standards established in s. 1002.67(1)(a), F.S., in early literacy and mathematics. Results of these screenings will be signed by the guardian and sent home.

Your classroom teacher will be reaching out to set up a parent/teacher conference after the 2nd assessment.

Toileting Policy:

We expect that all children are completely toilet trained. This includes being able to wipe properly and pull clothing up and down as needed. All children are to wear underwear. Pullups are not allowed. We know occasional bladder accidents will occur. If frequent problems arise, we will work with you to establish a manageable plan.

Health and Medication Policy:

Please refer to the SHCS Parent Handbook for health and medication policies. As a reminder, please make sure your child is symptom free for at least 24 hours before returning to school after having fever, heavy nasal discharge, diarrhea, vomiting, coughing or rash. If your child experiences any of these symptoms during school, you will be called and asked to pick them up immediately.

Below you will find the Pre-K school supply donation list.

1. 1 box of Tissues
2. Clorox wipes
3. Baby wipes
4. White paper plates
5. Spoons
6. 24 pack (or larger) of crayons
7. 1 pair of children's scissors
8. 1 box of Gallon size baggies
9. 1 box of Sandwich size baggies
10. Glue sticks

SHCS Pre-K Schedule

7:30am-7:45am Arrival

Fine Motor Manipulatives

7:45am-8:00am Morning Tables

School prayer/Handwriting/Journaling

8:00am-8:30am Greeting Circle

Class Prayer, Pledge, Calendar &
Morning Message

8:30am-9:00am Pre-K Playground

Gross Motor & Exploration

9:00am Snack

Pray/Wash Hands/AM Snack

9:30am Story Time

Read Aloud with Questions

10:00am Centers/Small Group

Literacy/Math/Science

10:45am Circle Time

Content Connections

11:00am Lunch (School Day students)

(Dismissal: Morning students)

11:30am Pre-K Playground

Gross Motor & Exploration

12:00pm-1:30pm Quiet Time

Rest on mats

1:30pm Art (Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri)

2:00pm Enrichment

Monday: P.E.

Tuesday: Music/Dance

Wednesday: Spanish (1:34-2:19)

Thursday: Drama

Friday: Religion (attend mass Friday morning)

2:40pm Snack

Pray/Wash Hands/PM Snack

3:00pm Pack Up

Review

3:15pm Dismissal

(School Day students)



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Drop Off & Pick Up Procedures Parent Commitment Form

Please know that we take your child's safety and the safety of our faculty and staff seriously. As such, we ask your cooperation and understanding in adhering to the following safety requirements.

Visitors: All visitors to the school must be buzzed in at the main gate. When on campus, visitors are prohibited from allowing outside individuals onto the school campus by opening outside doors or allowing visitors on campus without ringing into the office.

Parking: When visiting the school to volunteer, pick up your child early, or drop them off late, parents may use the roadway on 20th Avenue to park as spaces are available. Parents may also use the southeast parking lot as spaces are available.

Dismissal Time: Dismissal is at 3:15 p.m. Students will NOT be dismissed from the main office after 2:45 p.m. Parents are NOT permitted to pick up any students via the school office after 2:45 p.m. Please schedule appointments accordingly.

During Drop Off & Pick Up

Drop off and pick up procedures are NOT voluntary. They are required as a part of your Parent Cooperation to create a safe, organized environment. These procedures were designed to ensure a safe and orderly environment that benefits all and can be well managed by school personnel.

Students may be dropped off in the morning starting at 7:15 a.m., for those needing early drop off due to work schedules. Students will exit their vehicles and enter the parish center through the open door (see traffic flow map attached).

Dismissal begins at 3:15 p.m. **DO NOT enter the pick-up line before 2:45 p.m. (or 11:45 a.m. on noon dismissal days).** Please be advised that the School Resource Officer will be enforcing this policy, and early arrivals will be asked to move and/or be ticketed.

*****IMPORTANT***** IMPORTANT Cars MUST have a blue car tag hanging from the rear view mirror wjth your family number and last name until your student(s) get into your vehicle. This is required for anyone picking up students. Two pre-filled car tags will be provided to each family.

All cars must display the "blue car name tags" on their rear-view mirror upon entering the lot for both drop off and pick up. For safety reasons, do not share your name tag with anyone that is not listed on your family emergency card.

If someone other than a party on the emergency card needs to pick up your child, you must notify the office in advance so they can be put on an approved list for that day. If you need another

“blue car name tag” for another driver that will come to pick up your children *on a regular basis*, please let us know.

- **NO CELL PHONE USE.** Drivers are not to be on a cell phone in any parking lot at school.
- Students, parents, and staff are ***prohibited from unloading items*** (backpacks) from the trunk or back of vehicles during drop-off and pick-up.
- Enter the main parking lot from Tallahassee Ave to Vero Beach Ave ONLY. DO NOT enter Vero Beach Ave from Route 60 or Victory Blvd.
- Exit the main parking lot on the north side with a **RIGHT TURN ONLY** onto Vero Beach Ave and preferably a right turn onto Victory Blvd.
- During drop off the traffic flows in one lane along Tallahassee Avenue and not two one way, please stay in the correct lane (see traffic map). The stop sign at Tallahassee and Vero Beach will be enforced.
- During pick up, vehicles should line up in two lanes along Tallahassee (see traffic map).
- Cars in the drop off/pick up area should put the car in “park” so as not to accidentally move forward and hit a child, staff member, or another car.
- Children should be dropped off and picked up in the marked zone only.
- If you have older children, please consider pulling up in front of the building in the left lane. The older children have more experience in crossing the street and will hopefully be more watchful when crossing the inside lane.
- DO NOT park on Tallahassee Ave, Vero Beach Ave, or Victory Blvd to walk your children into the school building or to pick your children up.
- DO NOT drop your children off on Vero Beach Ave, Tallahassee Ave, or Victory Blvd to avoid the line. Children must be dropped off directly in front of the school building.
- DO NOT park in or pass through the Parish Office parking lot.
- DO NOT drop off in the back-parking lot. Families/students will not be “buzzed” in from the back-parking lot.
- Please be patient as children get in and out of cars, and parents buckle children into car seats.

Late Arrivals:

If you arrive to school after 7:45 a.m. you must park, walk your child to the school office, and sign them in. No child will be accepted by the school office if they are not accompanied by an adult.

Please refer to the [Parent-Student Handbook](#) for additional details regarding safety and security of our campus.

A FEW MINUTES IN LINE IS WORTH YOUR CHILD’S LIFE, HEALTH, AND WELL-BEING.

Please be a role model for your child(ren). Parking lots often challenge our Christianity but do your best to be the Christian we are called to be even when it is difficult.

Victory Blvd

Victory Blvd

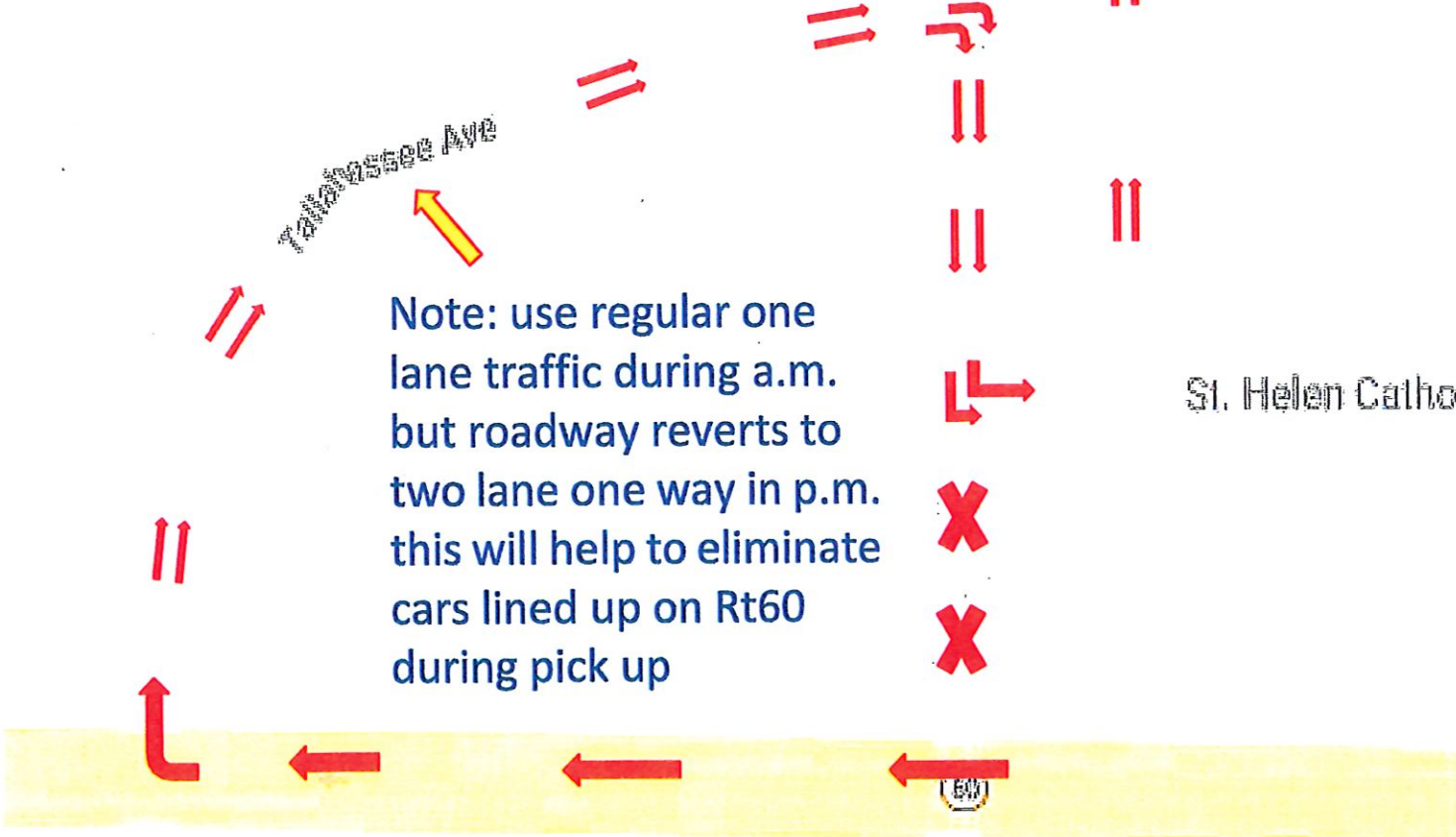
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Traffic Flow Drop Off & Pick Up St. Helen Catholic School

Note: use regular one lane traffic during a.m. but roadway reverts to two lane one way in p.m. this will help to eliminate cars lined up on Rt60 during pick up



**SHCS
OFFICE OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
2024-25 CALENDAR**

Semester 1

August

- 5 First Day for Teachers
- 12 First Day for Students – Noon Dismissal

September

- 2 Labor Day – No School
- 6 1st Friday Noon Dismissal

October

- 4 1st Friday Noon Dismissal
- 11 End of Quarter 1 -Noon Dismissal
- 24-25 Conferences – Noon Dismissal

November

- 1 1st Friday – Noon Dismissal
- 8 No School (Fall Festival)
- 25-29 Thanksgiving Break – No Classes

December

- 6 1st Friday- Noon Dismissal
- 7 High School Placement Exam
- 20 End of Quarter 2 (44 Days)
- December 23 – January 3 - Christmas Break – No School

January

- 6 Professional Workday – No Classes
- 7 Classes Resume
- 20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – No School
- Jan. 26 – Feb. 1 – Catholic Schools Week

February

- 7 1st Friday – Noon Dismissal
- 17 President’s Day -No School
- TBD Terra Nova Testing Window**

March

- 7 1st Friday – Noon Dismissal
- 14 End of Quarter 3- Noon Dismissal
- 17-21 Spring Break – No School

April

- 4 1st Friday – Noon Dismissal
- 17 Holy Thursday – No School
- 18 Good Friday – No School
- 21 Easter Monday – No School
- 22 Diocese Professional Development

May

- 2 1st Friday – Noon Dismissal
- 26 Memorial Day – No School
- 30 End of Quarter 4/Last Day of Classes – Noon Dismissal

June

- 6 Last Day for Teachers



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VPK Program Attendance Policy

The Early Learning Coalition's Attendance Policy is based on an 80/20 formula. This means your child can acquire up to 36 absences (which equals 20% of our 180 school days) during the entire school year. No documentation is necessary for these absences. The Early Learning Coalition will pay the preschool for those 36 days just as if your child were in-attendance at school. If absences exceed 36 days, the preschool will no longer be paid by the Early Learning Coalition of Indian River, Martin and Okeechobee Counties. In the event that this occurs and you wish for your child to attend SCHS for the remainder of the school year, you will have the option to complete the year as a private pay student.

If your child acquires absences in excess of the 36-day limit, a Notice of Termination for your child will be sent to ELCIRMO. This will dis-enroll your child from their eligibility program. You will receive a report regarding your child's absences if it appears there is danger of exceeding the maximum days. Our first day of VPK 2024/2025 will take place on 8/12/2024 and our last day will be 5/30/2025. Please see attached list of school closure dates and our daily drop-off and pick-up times. VPK hours will take place between 8:00am-11:00am Monday - Friday.

Each day, students must be signed in and out by an assigned guardian for attendance to be carefully documented. On the last day of each month, a Student Attendance and Parental Choice Certificate (in accordance with 1002.71, F.S., OEL Rule 6M-8,305, F.A.C) will be presented for parent signatures to certify that daily attendance was recorded and to verify St. Helen Catholic School as your VPK Provider of choice. Please reach out if you have questions regarding this policy.

Blessings,
Mary Beth Albert
Preschool Director
St. Helen Catholic School

Please sign and return this document to St. Helen Catholic School. By signing, you are stating that you are aware of the VPK Attendance Program Attendance Policy and that you agree to the guidelines outlined above.

Print VPK Child's Name: _____

Print Guardian Name: _____

Guardian Signature: _____

Date Signed: _____

St. Helen Catholic School

Pre-K Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I, as Parent of Legal Gaurdian, acknowledge that I have read the Pre-K Handbook. I agree to cooperate with the school in the interpretation and enforcement of the policies outlined in the Pre-K Handbook. I also understand that the school has the ultimate authority over the administration of the school and the interpretation of the school's rules and policies.

(Print Student Name)

(Print Parent/Legal Guardian Name)

(Signature Parent/Legal Guardian)