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HASTINGS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

# SAINT MICHAEL'S ELEMENTARY CHILDCARE PARENT HANDBOOK





# Welcome!

Welcome to Saint Michael's Child Care! We are honored that you have chosen our facility and program to provide after school care for your child. Our program is located in the south hallway across from the gym. Along with our childcare room, we also utilize KC room in the west hallway, gym, large playground on the Northwest side, small playground on the East side, and the church basement.

Our outstanding staff is comprised of qualified child care providers we refer to as teachers. We are also supported and assisted by the wonderful teachers, staff, and administration from Saint Michael's Preschool and Elementary School.

Please read through and become familiar with this handbook, as it covers important policies and procedures that pertain to the care of your child during their time with us.

# Table of Contents

## Description of Center

Statement of Purpose.....	1
Philosophy.....	1
Program Goals.....	1

## Administration

Hours of Operation.....	2
Calendar.....	2
Extended Hours.....	2
Child Care Closings.....	2
Center Entrance.....	3
Key Cards.....	3
Admission and Enrollment.....	3
Scheduling and Attendance.....	4
Drop-In Policy.....	4
Cancellation Policy.....	4
No Show Policy.....	4
Late Pick-Up.....	4
Program Fee.....	5
Payment of Fees.....	5
Arrival and Departure.....	5
Release of Children.....	5
Custody.....	6
Withdrawal.....	6
Termination of Services.....	6

Daily Routines

- Daily Schedules.....7
- Homework Club.....8
- Clothing/Attire/Changes.....8
- Nutrition.....8
- Naps.....8
- Behavior/Discipline Policy.....9

Program Policies

- Photo Consent.....10
- Personal Belongings.....10
- Lost and Found.....10
- Forgotten Items.....10
- Anti-Bullying Policy.....10
- Revisions to Handbook.....10

Health, Medical and Emergency Information

- Hand Washing.....11
- Illness and Injury.....11
- Medication and Medication Forms.....11
- Suspected Child Abuse / Neglect.....11
- Fire Drills.....12
- Tornado Drills.....12
- Emergency Evacuation of the Center.....12

Staffing

- Staff Qualifications.....13
- Staff-to-Child Ratios.....13

Communication

- Family-Center Communication.....14
- Remind App.....14

Acknowledgment of Handbook..... Back Cover

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[www.hastingscatholicschools.org](http://www.hastingscatholicschools.org)  
[www.facebook.com/STMChildCare](http://www.facebook.com/STMChildCare)  
[www.facebook.com/HastingsCatholicSchools](http://www.facebook.com/HastingsCatholicSchools)

Remind: @stmchi

# Description of Center

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

Saint Michael's Child Care provides a safe, engaging, and nurturing environment for families requiring high quality childcare after school. It is a program designed to encourage children's spiritual, social, cognitive, physical and emotional growth under the watchful eye of a qualified staff. The childcare program offered provides parents with safe, convenient and reliable out-of-school time care for their children. We maintain clear policies and procedures and actively encourage and welcome open communication and parent involvement.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Saint Michael's Child Care provides children with a caring, safe, and secure environment in which children are treated with love, respect, and dignity. Our teachers create an atmosphere of support and affection. They provide materials, equipment and opportunities required to optimize the children's experiences, acting as facilitators rather than directors of activities.

We believe that children achieve their fullest potential through caring, supportive and stable relationships. Our teachers build relationships with the children based on trust, respect and positive regard. Through our activities and interactions, we nurture and appreciate each individual child knowing this will contribute to a growing positive self-concept and self-identity.

## **PROGRAM GOALS**

The goals of our program are:

- To accept children as individuals, to nurture their individuality and creativity.
- To help children learn to trust themselves and feel confident in their ability to make choices.
- To help children learn self-control and accountability for their actions.
- To foster the ability to be sensitive and supportive of one another's feelings.
- To encourage children to approach learning with confidence and joy and be willing to take risks.
- To nurture children's capacity to make commitments and become involved.
- To engage the whole child through meaningful and hands-on experiences.

# Administration

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Saint Michael's Child Care will be open on regular school days from 7:40am to 6:00pm. Extended hours are available as follows: Early dismissals for elementary students (1:15pm – 6:00pm), Late starts for preschool students (10:00am – 6:00pm), and Preschool Christmas program days (7:40am – 6:00pm). Extended hours are also available for unscheduled closings due to state tournaments, as well as some of the scheduled closings (7:40am – 6:00pm). Childcare will be closed during holidays, holy days, professional development days, and school vacations.

## **CALENDAR**

Saint Michael's Child Care will follow the Hastings Catholic Schools Calendar. It opens on the first day of school and closes on the last day of school. Childcare will be closed during times deemed essential by school administration. In this event, parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible. A more detailed calendar for each school year may be obtained in the childcare room.

## **EXTENDED HOURS**

Our childcare program will be available for extended hours (7:40am – 6:00pm) several times throughout the school year. Most are scheduled, but some will be unscheduled.

**SCHEDULED** – Please refer to the yearly calendar to find these dates. Sign up forms will be available 2 weeks before the date of the extended hours (EH) days and each will have a deadline for when the form is due back.

**UNSCHEDULED** – In the event that HCS cancels school due to a sporting event, our program will be available from 7:40am – 6:00pm.

Fees may be applied for late cancellations if the spot is unable to be filled. Fees will be applied to your account for no shows.

## **CHILDCARE CLOSINGS**

In the event of an unexpected closing, childcare will follow the Hastings Catholic Schools schedule. In the event of a school delay, childcare will be delayed for the same amount of time. In the event of an unscheduled early dismissal, childcare will close early. If school is cancelled for the day, childcare will be closed for the day. Please tune in to your local radio and/or television or the HCS Facebook page for information regarding delays or closings. A notification will also be sent through the Remind app.

## **CENTER ENTRANCE AND KEY CARDS**

The safety of the children, families, and staff is our primary concern. All parents and other visitors are required to enter through the main elementary school doors before 3:15pm (or 1:15pm on early dismissal days). To maintain center and school safety, the childcare entrance is to be used for childcare purposes only and is locked at all times. It is not available to those seeking access to the elementary school. After hours, a key card is required to unlock the door. Staff is available to open the door for those who do not have a key card.

Families utilizing our childcare program will be issued up to two key cards per parent/guardian household. The cards will be issued to families during the preschool and elementary open houses each August, or upon registration with the program, after the check-out form has been fill out. Cards must be returned to the childcare no later than closing on the last day of school. A fee of \$20 will be added to the family account for any cards that are not returned. Lost or stolen cards must be reported immediately. The cost for one lost or stolen card, per household, is \$10. A fee of \$20 is required for any additional lost or stolen cards.

## **ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT**

Any student who attends Saint Michael's Parish Preschool or Saint Michael's Elementary School may use the childcare program. For a guaranteed spot, enrollment requirements must be met.

In order for your child to be accepted into the program, the following is required prior to your child's start date:

- Registration Form
- Authorized Pick-Up Form
- DHHS Brochure Receipt
- Parent Acknowledgment of Handbook
- Emergency Information Forms turned into Preschool or Elementary
- Transportation Form (preschool only)

It is the parent's responsibility to keep Saint Michael's Child Care informed of any change in address, telephone, or other pertinent information included on the above listed forms.

## **SCHEDULING AND ATTENDANCE**

A schedule between you and STM Child Care is necessary to ensure that space and adequate resources are reserved for your child. Schedules are available in yearly, monthly, or weekly formats. Yearly schedules are due one week before the start of school. Monthly schedules are due on the 20th for the following month. Weekly schedules are due each Wednesday for the following week. The schedule simply states which days your child(ren) will use the program. Approximate hours are appreciated, 11-5pm or 3:15-5:30 for example. Child care is available to preschool children only on days your child's class is in session or days with extended hours, unless prior approval has been granted by the director.

## **DROP-IN POLICY**

Saint Michael's Child Care is expected to run at capacity, drop-ins to the program will not be accepted during the normal hours if you have not called or emailed ahead of time to find out if spots are available. Enrolled families have the first opportunity for drop in spots.

## **CANCELLATION POLICY**

It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the center if a child is going to be absent or late. Every effort should be made to notify the childcare at least 24 hours in advance. In the event of an illness or emergency, a 1-hour notice by way of phone call, email, or text is sufficient to ensure the account will not be billed for the day. If a child attends school, but will not attend childcare on a scheduled day, the parent must notify the child care director. If a child will be absent from both school and child care, notification to the school office or preschool teacher will be sufficient.

## **NO SHOW POLICY**

Each time a child misses scheduled care without providing proper notice, another child is denied care. Families will be allowed 1 no-show per semester. After the free no-show has been used, parents will be charged for 2-8 hours of care, depending on their child's schedule. Families who sign up for an extended hours day will be charged a fee of \$16.25 for no-shows on those days. Consistent and/or excessive no-shows may result in a suspension from the program. If a child attends school, but not childcare, notification must be made directly to the director.

## **LATE PICK-UP**

After 6:00pm, the charge for care is \$1 per minute per child. Upon a third late arrival, your child(ren) will be suspended from the program. The child(ren) can return after 30 days if no waiting list exists. All late fees must be paid before a child can return to the program.

## **PROGRAM FEE**

Parents are charged only for the time their child is scheduled to receive care, at a rate of \$3.25 per hour per child.

## **PAYMENT OF FEES**

Monthly invoices are issued on the 1st or 2nd of the month for the previous month's charges, and are sent home in the children's backpacks. The invoice for May will be mailed to the parents. Payments should be made by check to Saint Michael's Elementary or Hastings Catholic Schools (HCS) and is due no later than the 10th of the month.

Failure to pay the bill in a timely manner will result in the suspension of attendance in the child care program. Families with an outstanding balance will not be allowed to re-enroll into the program until the balance is paid.

## **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE**

Saint Michael's Child Care Staff will sign in students as they arrive from preschool or elementary school. When children leave the program it is the responsibility of the person picking them up to sign them out. Children will only be allowed to leave with those who are on the authorized pick up list. If parents consistently forget to sign out their children, the time out will be considered 6:00pm.

There are two ways to sign a child out, depending on their frequency. Children who attend our program on a drop in basis will use our sign out book. Those who attend more frequently will use our attendance software. Families using the software will need to register their accounts. This can be done during preschool or elementary open houses, or any time during our program's operating hours.

## **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

Children will not be released to anyone except those who are authorized to pick up the child on the approved pick up form. In the event that you wish another adult to pick up your child, it will require written permission in advance or a phone call to verify. Staff will check the individual's photo I.D. before releasing the child. Should an unauthorized individual arrive without STM receiving prior communication from the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately. The child will not be released until permission is obtained from the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian does not grant permission, the individual will be asked to leave and information regarding the individual will be documented.

## **CUSTODY**

Unless Saint Michael's Child Care has verification of court papers stating temporary or permanent custody or restraining order, management has no legal authority to deny either parent access to the child. Please make a photocopy of relevant court order(s) for your file.

## **WITHDRAWAL FROM PROGRAM**

Families who wish to discontinue services with Saint Michael's Child Care are asked to notify the Director via letter or email.

## **TERMINATION OF SERVICES**

Reasonable steps will be taken to avoid termination. However, the child care Director may terminate services for any of the following reasons:

- Consistently late payments, returned checks, failure to pay fees.
- Failure to honor the obligations listed in the Parent Handbook or revised policies.
- Any action by parents or children that adversely affect the safety of the children or staff.
- Failure to cooperate with STM in matters which the child care and/or school determines serious enough to warrant termination.
- Failure of a child to adjust to our program.
- False information given by parent either verbally or in writing.

The Director will schedule a meeting and/or give written notice of termination. In most cases, notice will be received 2 weeks before the date of termination. In cases that put the safety of the other children and staff at risk, termination will be immediate.

# Daily Routines

## DAILY SCHEDULE

The following is a typical day at Saint Michael's Child Care. Times are flexible to accommodate the children.

### PRESCHOOL

7:40am – 8:00am	Program opens, free play
8:00am – 8:05am	Morning announcements
8:05am – 9:00am	Free play / Outside play
9:00am – 9:20am	Morning Snack
9:20am – 9:50am	Art/Fine Motor Activity
9:50am – 10:15am	Small Group Activities
10:15am – 10:30am	Large Group Activity
10:30am – 10:50am	Outside play / Gross Motor Activity
10:50am – 11:00am	Group Reading
11:00am – 11:10am	Children arrive, wash hands, prepare for lunch
11:10am – 11:35am	Lunch
11:35am – 12:00pm	Gross Motor activity and Story Time
12:00pm – 1:45pm	Rest Time
1:45pm – 2:00pm	Individual Reading
2:00pm – 3:00pm	Outside Play
3:00pm – 3:15pm	Transition in and wash hands
3:15pm – 3:30pm	Snack
3:30pm – 4:00pm	Art / Fine Motor Activity
4:00pm – 5:30pm	Play outside or free play inside
5:30pm – 6:00pm	Clean up / closing procedures

### GRADES K – 1

3:15pm – 3:25pm	Children arrive, Gross Motor activity in gym
3:25pm – 3:40pm	Snack
3:40pm – 4:30pm	Outside Play
4:30pm – 5:00pm	Activity in Gym
5:00pm – 5:30pm	Free play inside
5:30pm – 6:00pm	Clean up / closing procedures

## **GRADES 2 – 5**

3:15pm – 3:40pm	Children arrive, Gross Motor activity in gym
3:40pm – 3:55pm	Snack
3:55pm – 4:30pm	Homework Club / Activity in Gym
4:30pm – 5:15pm	Outside Play
5:15pm – 5:30pm	Free play inside
5:30pm – 6:00pm	Clean up / closing procedures

## **HOMEWORK CLUB**

2nd-5th Grade students attending childcare are provided with up to 35 minutes (Monday through Thursday) to work on, and receive assistance with, any unfinished homework. Students not working on homework are expected to participate in a quiet activity such as reading, word puzzles, and the like; and are welcome to bring their own book to read quietly.

## **CLOTHING / ATTIRE / CHANGES**

Outside play is a daily activity at STM Child Care. Parents are asked to dress their children appropriately for the weather (including hats, mittens, boots, and coats for cold weather). Closed-toe shoes are required for play on the playground equipment. We also request that girls wearing dresses or skirts wear shorts underneath. Children not wearing appropriate attire may miss out on some of the activities and experiences that are being provided. Please mark all of your child's removable clothing (hats, gloves, coats, boots, etc) with your child's name or family surname. Items are often spread out and mixed up during the removal process.

If you wish for your child to change clothing due to a sports or other activity, you may submit a written request which will then be granted or denied by the Director and/or Principal.

## **NUTRITION**

The program will provide snacks twice daily to the children in attendance. Preschool students may pack a lunch or purchase lunch through the Hastings Catholic Schools hot lunch program. Lunch will not be provided when school is not in session for unscheduled state tournaments. To set up an account please contact the Saint Michael's Elementary (402) 462-6310. Please note that Hastings Catholic Schools is a peanut/tree nut free school when packing lunches.

## **NAPS**

To comply with Licensing requirements, all morning Preschool children will be required to rest. We make every effort possible to provide an environment which is quiet enough for those who need to sleep, yet not too restrictive for those who don't.

Teachers assist the children during this time by reading stories, providing soothing music and rubbing backs. Children are not required to sleep but are expected to rest quietly during this time. We invite children to bring one small blanket from home to cuddle with during this rest time.

### **BEHAVIOR / DISCIPLINE POLICY**

The rules of the child care program include, but are not limited to: Be respectful, responsible, and safe. Appropriate school behavior is expected at all times. Consequences for inappropriate behavior are necessary to maintain a safe and secure environment for the children.

Violations of these rules will result in consequences from staff. More serious violations (i.e., foul language, bullying, hitting, etc.) will result in a written behavior incident report. Behavior incident reports will be written by staff witnessing the behavior and then signed by the program director and the parent.

Upon three incident reports, a child will be placed on probation and the parent(s) will be required to have a meeting with the program director and elementary principal within 3 business days to arrange a behavior plan. Any further behavior incidents within 30 days will result in the suspension of the child from the program. If no incidents are recorded within 30 days, the child will be removed from probation and given a fresh start. Any suspended child(ren) can return to the program after 30 days if no waiting list exists.

The school administration and program director reserve the right to remove any child from the child care program based on consistent inappropriate behavior.

# Program Policies

## **PHOTO CONSENT**

Your child's photograph may be taken for use with art projects or published on print and digital media including but not limited to Facebook, LINKS newsletters, Instagram, and Twitter. The childcare program follows the Preschool and Elementary photo release policy.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Any items brought from home for school show and tell will need to remain in your child's backpack during child care, except on designated days. It is difficult to share a special toy and they are easily lost or misplaced in a large classroom.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

All found items will be turned in to the Child Care Lost and Found located by the child care entrance.

Found items that are marked with your child's name or family surname will be returned to your child the following school day. Unmarked items will be placed in Lost and Found.

## **FORGOTTEN ITEMS**

Please make sure you have your child's belongings when you pick your child up for the day. Employees are not permitted to unlock the doors after hours or on weekends to retrieve personal belongings left there, with the exception of prescription medication.

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

Saint Michael's Child Care is committed to providing an environment for children that is safe, welcoming and free from bullying. Bullying of any form is unacceptable and we follow Saint Michael's Elementary policy and procedures.

## **REVISIONS TO HANDBOOK**

Parents will be notified of any revisions to the program policies or handbook at least 1 week before the changes go into effect.

# Health, Medical and Emergency Information

## **HAND WASHING**

STM child care staff and children practice appropriate hand washing procedures. Hands are washed upon arrival, before and after meals, after bathroom use, after nose blowing/wiping, after outdoor play and after handling an ill child.

Our hand washing procedure is as follows:

- Wet hands
- Apply one pump of soap
- Scrub hands (no water) for a minimum of 20 seconds, or while singing the ABC's
- Rinse hands with warm water
- Dry hands with a paper towel
- Using the paper towel, turn off water
- Dispose of the paper towel in an open top trash can

## **ILLNESS AND INJURY**

The guidelines in determining illness and treating injuries are consistent with that of Hastings Catholic Schools. Parents will always be notified if a child sustains an injury while in child care. Most injuries will be reported at pick-up. However, if it is serious, parents will be called immediately to determine treatment.

## **MEDICATION AND MEDICATION FORMS**

All medications will require specific instructions from a child's physician and parent before it will be administered. A medication form must be completed and dated for the days the medicine is to be dispensed. Information on the agreement must include the child's name, the name of the medicine, prescription number, dosage, and possible side effects. The form must be signed and dated by the parent. When the medicine is dispensed, the administering staff member will record the time and dosage, then sign the form.

## **SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE / NEGLECT**

Child care workers are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect. Suspicions of child abuse or neglect will be reported as soon as possible and at least within 12 hours of suspicion.

## **FIRE DRILLS**

Fire drills will be held monthly in accordance with licensing requirements. Drills will be scheduled by the Principal and/or Director, keeping in mind the climatic conditions and well-being of the children. The scheduled times will vary from month to month and one fire drill a year must be held at nap time. All children will be evacuated through the East child care entrance to wait along the Creighton Ave sidewalk for further instructions. Any child(ren) with special needs will be assigned to staff member(s) according to the child's specific needs and taken with the other children to safety.

## **TORNADO DRILLS & WARNINGS**

Tornado drills will take place regularly and will be scheduled by the Principal and/or Director. The designated shelter at Saint Michael's is the church basement. All children will be evacuated through the east hallway to the basement. Any child(ren) with special needs will be assigned to staff member(s) according to the child's specific needs and taken with the other children to safety. Once in the sheltered area, all children and staff who are able, will assume a protective position by kneeling on their knees and elbows with their foreheads on the floor and covering their heads with their hands. Children with special needs will be placed in whatever position affords them the most protection.

In the event of a tornado warning, children and staff will evacuate to the church basement and remain there until it is safe to leave the sheltered area. Parents will be notified of our location through Remind, and a bright pink sign will be placed in the window next to the child care entrance.

## **EMERGENCY EVACUATION OF THE CENTER**

In the event that the entire building would need to be evacuated, the First Congregational Church on the corner of Marian and 7th Street is the alternative site. Parents would be notified if ever an emergency would arise that warranted evacuation. Students with special needs will be assisted as necessary. Children will be led south along Creighton Ave, then turn left (east) and walk along 7th Street until they reach the First Congregational Church. Children will be released to a parent/guardian in an orderly fashion.

# Staffing

## STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Our staff members are required to have experience working with children and/or education in early childhood development. We consider an applicant's professional background, as well as giving particular attention to their philosophy in working with children. Applicants are interviewed carefully and their references are checked.

As state regulations require, a criminal history check is filed with the Nebraska State Patrol for each new employee. A second background check is performed by the Lincoln Diocese. Staff members are also required to complete Safe Environment training prior to employment. Our staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR as well. In addition, state licensing requires that each full-time staff member complete 12 hours of training in early childhood education every year and part-time staff completes 6 hours of training each year.

## STAFF-TO-CHILD RATIOS

We stay within the staff-to-child ratios set up by the State of Nebraska. The following chart shows the state minimum licensing requirements and the usual ratios maintained at Saint Michael's Child Care.

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>State Maximum</i>	<i>Usual STM Child Care Ratio</i>
3 Years	10	1:7 - 1:9
4-5 Years	12	1:8 - 1:12
School Age	15	1:10 - 1:15

# Communication

## **FAMILY-CENTER COMMUNICATION**

Communication between parents, childcare staff members, school staff members, and administration is a very important element of the program's success. Parental involvement is desired and encouraged and feedback is always welcome. Your questions or comments should be directed to the childcare director. The director is on site Monday-Friday, 10:00am-6:00pm, or can be reached via text, email, or through the Remind app.

A monthly center newsletter is published to serve as a network for staff and parents to exchange ideas, experiences, and needs. It highlights the program's activities, a calendar, and other important information.

## **REMIND**

Remind is an efficient tool Saint Michael's Child Care utilizes to quickly and effectively notify parents about upcoming events, important information, and last minute changes. You may choose to receive notifications via text, email, or push notifications (or any combination of these). Our class code is @stmchi

To get text notifications:

- Join by text: Text @stmchi to 81010.
- Join online: Visit [remind.com/join](https://remind.com/join) and enter our class code along with your mobile phone number. You'll get notifications at the number you entered.

Get mobile app notifications:

- Download the mobile app for iOS and Android devices and create a new account (or log in to an existing one). To join a class, tap the + by "Classes Joined" and either join with our class code or search for our class (STM Child Care). You will automatically receive app notifications.

Get email notifications:

- Join online: Visit [remind.com/join](https://remind.com/join) and enter @stmchi and your email address.
- Join from your inbox: Send a blank email to [stmchi@mail.remind.com](mailto:stmchi@mail.remind.com). You will receive a response with more instructions.





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## Parent Acknowledgment of Handbook

I have received and read Saint Michael's Child Care Handbook and agree to abide by the rules set forth in it.

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PARENT'S PRINTED NAME

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PARENT'S SIGNATURE

DATE