

MARY OF NAZARETH PRESCHOOL

14131 Seneca Road
Darnestown, MD 20874

PHONE NUMBERS
301-869-0940

FAX
301-869-0942

www.maryofnazareth.org

Preschool Founded in 2008

2016-2017

WELCOME

Mr. Michael Friel, The Board of Directors and the Faculty and staff of Mary of Nazareth School would like to welcome you to our school community. We hope this will be a wonderful beginning for your child and an exciting and rewarding experience for you as a parent.

The handbook is deigned to acquaint you with our school. It will have most of the information you will need to know throughout the school year. We urge you to read the handbook and keep it as a reference during the year.

The staff looks forward to working with you and your child in the year to come.

I PHILOSOPHY

Mary of Nazareth Roman Catholic Elementary School is a Christ-centered environment where each child, nurtured by parent, parish, and educator is encouraged to follow the example of Jesus in all aspects of life. Our students thrive in an environment of regular worship, service, daily prayer, devotion to Mary, and consistent reference to the Word of God. We welcome diversity among our inclusive student-body and stress the unifying concepts of tolerance, love and respect. Students are encouraged to seek knowledge through the teaching of the Catholic Church and apply those teachings to daily life.

Mary of Nazareth Roman Catholic Elementary School is comprised of three age-focused programs: early childhood, intermediate and middle school. Within these programs, teachers collaborate to develop and strengthen relationships. These interdependent relationships within the school community are fostered through leadership of administrators.

The curriculum of the Archdiocese of Washington is viewed from a Catholic perspective, with a central love for the wisdom that comes from the Holy Spirit. The Faculty is aware that the manner in which we model our love of God and Church encourages our students in their own search for lasting faith. Families of our students and their individual parishes continue to foster a love for Christ and a respect for education. Parents are the primary educators; in partnership, teachers and parents strive for overall success of each student.

We are dedicated to providing students with a well-rounded curriculum which focuses on the spiritual, developmental, emotional, cognitive and physical well being of our students. Recognizing the multiple learning styles and diverse needs present in each classroom, the educators differentiate with a variety of resources, teaching methods and assessments. Through reinforcement, praise, and consequence, we foster an enthusiasm for education. As a result, our students develop the inner confidence to make choices that positively impact their world.

II. MISSION

The mission of Mary of Nazareth Roman Catholic Preschool is to provide a high quality Catholic education rooted in the faith and teachings of the Roman Catholic Church while promoting child development through hands-on learning. The school emphasizes each student's development of Christian values and virtues and a growth in understanding of

our Roman Catholic tradition in conjunction with a carefully designed play-based learning program.

The school reflects the needs, values and purposes of the specific community it serves. Within this Catholic school environment, the Gospel message of Christ, as understood by the Church, is taught, the life of prayer and sacramental worship of God is nurtured, the building of relationships is carried out and service is rendered.

The faculty and staff, with the active involvement and support of parents and parish communities, will create and constantly maintain an environment which will enable each student to develop a positive self-image and to realize his or her full potential. Thus, each student will grow spiritually, emotionally and intellectually.

III. HISTORY

Mary of Nazareth Catholic Elementary School opened on August 29, 1994. It was the first Catholic elementary school to open in the Archdiocese of Washington since 1964.

The school is affiliated with the following upper Montgomery County parishes:

- Mother Seton, Germantown
- Our Lady of the Presentation, Poolesville
- Our Lady of the Visitation, Darnestown
- St. John Neumann, Gaithersburg
- St. Mary's Shrine, Barnesville
- St. Paul's, Damascus
- St. Rose of Lima, Gaithersburg

Mary of Nazareth students embrace the Catholic faith through daily prayer and religious education.

The school building includes state-of-the-art classrooms, a library dedicated to James Cardinal Hickey, a computer lab, science lab, all-purpose room, and a before and after school care facility. An additional set of classrooms were added to expand the school to eighteen classrooms.

The name *Mary of Nazareth* was selected by James Cardinal Hickey to "create a link with the Holy Family, in recognition of the school's role in supporting Christian family life". It is the community's and the Archdiocese's commitment to Catholic education that has resulted in the historic opening of this school, the first new elementary school to open in the Archdiocese of Washington in 30 years.

IV. GOVERNANCE AND LICENSING

Mary of Nazareth's Preschool is under the authority of the Archbishop of Washington and is related to the Catholic School's office.

Mary of Nazareth's Preschool is licensed by the State of Maryland's Department of Education.

V. ADMISSIONS POLICIES

Mary of Nazareth Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, creed, color, or national origin, however we do give admissions preference to Catholic Students who are members of Mother Seton, Our Lady of the Presentation, Our Lady of The Visitation, St. John Neumann, St. Mary's Shrine, St. Paul's, and St. Rose of Lima Parishes, siblings of Current Mary of Nazareth Students or siblings of Mary Of Nazareth Alumni and space permitting, to all others.

Children with special needs will be admitted if, with reasonable accommodations on the part of the school, they can function in the school environment. Children will be conditionally accepted and status will be reevaluated if the need arises.

Student Withdrawal

If someone wishes to withdraw a child from the preschool program, one month's written notice must be submitted to the principal or director. Registration fees are nonrefundable. September tuition is nonrefundable. May tuition will be refunded only if the child has been withdrawn by February 1st and with 30 days prior written notice alerting the principal or director of this intention.

VI. TUITION

The School Board establishes tuition for Mary of Nazareth Preschool annually. Tuition may be paid in full with check or money order directly to the school no later than July 20. Monthly, quarterly, and semi-annual payment plans using direct debit or credit card have been established through the FACTS Management Company. Payment in full by credit card can also be made through FACTS. Information on

FACTS Management and the payment options may be obtained from the school website.

Delinquent Tuition Policy - If tuition is not current at the end of any quarter, the student(s) may not be permitted to return to school at the beginning of the next quarter unless the parent or guardian contacts the Principal or the Director. If tuition is not current at the end of the school year, the student(s) may not be permitted to register for the next school year.

VII. **CURRICULUM**

Mary of Nazareth Preschool's curriculum is designed to promote child development through hands-on learning while immersed in a spiritually rich environment. As early childhood educators, our staff believes that play is a natural part of learning that encourages integration of a child's experiences into language and actions.

Our curriculum is theme-based. Lessons are planned around holy days, seasons, real-life experiences, and community awareness. The goal of all lessons is to develop a greater understanding of God, create new skills, develop new ideas and promote learning that can be used beyond the classroom. The classroom environment is specifically designed to promote and encourage play, exploration, and problem solving. These experiences will build literacy, math, science, and social skills.

Children learn and receive knowledge at their own pace. Therefore, class plans are flexible and differentiated to allow for individual differences among children. We strive to have every child realize his or her potential and feel successful. We feel it is vital that children build positive images of themselves as well as strong relationships with God, peers, and adults.

VII. **RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS**

Volunteer Requirements

Fulfill Archdiocese of Washington requirements including an electronic background check, Virtus training, and Archdiocese application. Please go to www.adw.org for more information, or see the volunteer link on our website.

Field Trips

Field trips are an important aspect of our curriculum. Parents are expected to drive directly to and from field trips during the year. Parents must fulfill Archdiocese of Washington requirements including Virtus compliance and Archdiocesan Field Trip Permission Form. We will try to provide field trip dates as far in advance as possible so that working parents can accompany us. Because we need a parent's full attention on field trips, we can not allow other siblings to come along. A copy of a valid driver's license, insurance documentation and cell phone number will be required. Cell phone use must be restricted to emergency use only while chaperoning a field trip.

Parent Participation

There is a parent orientation meeting the week before school begins, plus a beginning and year-end picnic that parents are encouraged to attend. Parents are asked to help with occasional special projects or trips when more adults are needed.

Parents are encouraged to visit the class during their child's normal class time, but we ask that you allow 24 hours notice to the director or teacher. Parents who come to visit will be likely asked to participate with the group. If you have been specifically invited to the class to help with a group project or celebration, please be courteous and only take emergency cell phone calls.

Parents with special skills, talents, hobbies or places of work suitable for field trips are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the teacher or director.

Any parent who comes into the classroom to help or assist **MUST** be VIRTUS trained. Please see the school website to obtain materials related to our Child Protection Policy, or visit www.adw.org for more information.

IX. GENERAL INFORMATION

Phone Numbers

Main Number 301-869-0940 ext. 4

Fax 301-869-0942

Website www.maryofnazareth.org

School Hours

Mary of Nazareth Preschool follows the regular MoN school year calendar. When the school has a day off, the preschool will also be off. Half days on the regular schedule will be observed by the preschool.

The three-year-old class begins at 8:30a.m. and is dismissed promptly at 11:00 a.m.

The four-year-old class begins at 12:15 p.m. and is dismissed promptly at 2:45 p.m.

Drop-off and Pick-up

ALL students must be walked to and from the parking lot to the school's entrance (lower entrance) by an adult. Cars may be parked in the adjacent 12 spots nearest the entrance to the preschool.

Three year old class drop-off is from 8:30 a.m. - 8:40 a.m. at the Preschool door. Four year old class drop-off is from 12:15 p.m. - 12:25 p.m. Doors are locked after the drop-off time. You must follow the Security Policy below if you arrive after regular drop-off times.

Punctual drop off and pickup of students is important to the students as well as being fair to our staff. Habitual late pickups will require parents to have a conference with the Director.

Weather Policy

During inclement weather we are closed when Montgomery County Schools are closed. When County schools have a delayed opening the three year old class will be cancelled. When the County has an early closing the four year old class will be cancelled. We do not add snow make-up days to the end of our school year unless Mary of Nazareth School has agreed to extend the regular school year due to an unusual number of missed school days.

Crisis Plan

There is a crisis plan on file in the school office. Children participate in various emergency drills including fire drills.

Security Policy

All doors to the school will be locked after drop off. If you arrive later than the drop-off time, please bring your child through the main doors of the school. You must check in at the main office before bringing your child to the Preschool room. Only authorized persons will be able to enter the building during school hours. Parents will be asked to sign in upon entering the school. Parents must give permission for anyone picking up their child by listing them on the pickup form that is returned to the child's teacher before the first day of class. Changes may be made at anytime; however, **all changes must be made in writing**. Your child will not be allowed to go home with anyone who has not been authorized in writing by the child's parent/guardian.

Clothing

Part of the Preschool program includes outdoor play as well as using paints, play dough, and other materials that could stain clothing. We ask that you dress your child in clothing that can get messy and that your child can move around in easily.

Mary of Nazareth Preschool does not have a uniform policy; however is it strongly recommended that students wear simple t-shirts, pants or shorts, socks, and sneakers or tennis shoes. Inappropriate clothing choices for school would include camisole-type tops, halter-tops, and t-shirts with weapons or violent graphics, open-toed shoes such as sandals, and Crocs or Croc-like shoes.

Please dress your child appropriately for the weather.

We also ask that every child has an extra change of clothing in a bag marked clearly with the child's name (label all clothing as well). Items that must be in the bag include socks, pants, t-shirt, underwear. These bags will be returned during winter break in order to update if necessary. All items will be returned at the end of the school year. If, for some reason, your child must change into the extra clothing, please return a new set the following class day.

Please label all clothing especially jackets, hats, gloves, and mittens. All items that become "lost" are held until the end of the school year. Unclaimed items will be donated.

Potty Training

All students must be able to successfully use the toilet with minimal or no adult assistance. Accidents do happen and are most likely to occur during the beginning of the school year when a child is totally engrossed in an activity or when the child is feeling poorly. This is expected and normal. However, if there seems to be repeated accidents, parents and teacher/director will need to meet to discuss ways to help the child with his/her toiletry skills.

It is important that your child have a change of clothes at school at all times.

Archdiocese of Washington: Child Protection Policy

Mary of Nazareth Preschool complies with the requirements of the ADW's Child Protection Policy. A full explanation of this policy can be found at www.adw.org.

School Records

Mary of Nazareth Preschool assumes that the child is in the custody of both parents unless otherwise notified.

Mary of Nazareth abides by the Buckley Amendment with respect to the right of non-custodial parents. In the absence of a court order to the contrary, Mary of Nazareth will provide the non custodial parent with access to the academic records and other school related information regarding the child. If there is a court order specifying that there is to be no information given, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to provide the school with an official copy of the order.

Newsletter

A weekly newsletter for Mary of Nazareth School is available every Wednesday on the website, www.maryofnazareth.org, under the "News and Events" header.

Student Roster

A roster of all students currently enrolled will be printed in the summer. If personal information should change during the school year, please inform the office. **This roster is for internal use only and may not be used to solicit student families.**

X. HEALTH AND WELLNESS

General Health

If your child is sick (frequent coughing, runny nose) do not send him or her to school. If your child is not well enough to play outside, a staff member will not be able to stay inside with your child.

Fever is considered 100.1 degrees F or greater.

Your child should be fever free as well as not having vomited for 24 hours before returning to school. Please refer "When to Keep Your Child Home" on the Health Room section of the school website.

Snacks

Parents are asked to provide snacks for the class two or three weeks a year. We ask that you send a snack that is nutritious, nut free and complies with any other necessary restrictions (please read all labels carefully). Snack should require no preparation by the staff.

Children with food allergies must supply their own snacks. Storage space will be available for non-perishable items such as rice cakes, crackers, etc. In the event of a special celebration that requires the student to avoid the foods being offered, the staff will alert the parent/guardian so he/she can bring in a special treat for his/her child as well.

XI. DISCIPLINE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Classroom Problems:

On occasion, there may be a classroom problem you would like to discuss. The following is the procedure we would like to have you follow.

1. Discuss your particular problem with the teacher.
2. If you feel there is still a problem, you may discuss your problem with the Principal/Director and a teacher-parent-Principal meeting can be arranged.

Behavioral Concerns:

1. If the teacher determines that a child's behavior is inappropriate, the teacher will first attempt to resolve the situation with the child by actions including but not limited to talking to the child about what is appropriate and acceptable behavior in the class, and/or giving timeouts with teacher follow-up.

2. If the behavior continues, the teacher will discuss the situation with one or both parents.
3. If the behavior does not improve and or one or both parents do not agree with the teacher, the teacher will speak with the Principal and a conference will be arranged with one or both parents, the teacher and the Principal.
4. If the situation does not improve by the established deadline, the Principal may expel the student.
5. If, in the Principal's discretion, the safety and/or health of others in the school will be impaired by the child's continued attendance, the Principal may require the child's immediate withdrawal.
6. Discipline is based on the belief that all children will need loving guidance as they navigate and build social and emotional skills. Teachers model and support students' positive behaviors through problem solving, using breathing techniques to calm, sitting with teacher to refocus, and/or redirection of students to better options.