

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC SCHOOL



K3 and K4 PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

**711 James I. Harrison, Jr. Pkwy East
Tuscaloosa, AL 35405
205-553-9630 (Telephone)
205-553-8880 (Fax)
www.holyspirit-al.com**

August, 2023

Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the Holy Spirit Catholic School K3 and K4 program! In choosing Holy Spirit, you have demonstrated a commitment to the values and philosophy of a Catholic education. Thank you for making us your choice.

The Parent/Student Handbook reflects the policies of Holy Spirit Catholic School for the 2023-2024 school year. Please read this document carefully and sign the attached agreement. This agreement states that you intend to abide by the policies of Holy Spirit Catholic School during the 2023-2024 school year.

The faculty and staff of our school look forward to working with you to promote the academic excellence and spiritual development of the students who have been entrusted to our care. We are glad to partner with you this year. We promise our prayers and support and ask for yours as well.

May God bless us as we journey together to bring the best to our children.

Sincerely,
Mr. Joshua Saibini,
Principal

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC PRESCHOOL

VISION STATEMENT: Our vision for Holy Spirit Catholic School is to create an environment in which Gospel values are integrated into the life of our school community. We envision a school community where all people are welcome and encouraged to grow spiritually and academically.

MISSION STATEMENT: The Holy Spirit Catholic School family honors the dignity of each person and provides a strong foundation for life-long learning within the framework of a Catholic faith community.

BELIEF STATEMENTS:

1. Holy Spirit is committed to educating the whole child by promoting spiritual, academic, physical, emotional and aesthetic development in a Christ-centered environment.
2. Holy Spirit challenges students to develop their abilities to attain academic success.
3. Holy Spirit motivates students to live and serve as part of a Catholic faith community.
4. Holy Spirit encourages students to appreciate various cultures and creeds and to respect the diversity of God's kingdom.
5. Holy Spirit promotes a curriculum which prepares students to become life long learners enabling them to become responsible, productive citizens.
6. Holy Spirit believes the school and family share the responsibility for preparing students for a life-long journey of faith and learning.

ADMISSIONS

ADMISSION POLICY: Holy Spirit K3/K4 program does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, or national origin. Holy Spirit Catholic K3/K4 program admits children as follows:

1. Siblings of students currently enrolled in Holy Spirit Catholic School
2. Catholic students from Holy Spirit or St. Francis Parish
3. Other Catholic students
4. Non-Catholic students

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS: Students must be 3 years of age on or before September 1st to enter the three-year-old program. Students must be 4 years of age on or before September 1st to enter the four-year-old program. Exceptions to the above requirements can be made by the principal with the understanding that the student would need an additional year of preschool before entering Kindergarten. All children must be toilet trained prior to starting school. **Children still wearing Pull-Ups are not considered to be toilet trained.** Parents must provide a certified birth certificate, a social security number, and an Alabama health/immunization record. All students entering our school must be immunized. A blue Alabama Immunization Form is required to be on file for each student. This form may be obtained from your doctor or from any health department. The only exception allowed is an official

Medical Exemption Form issued by the Alabama Health Department or a licensed medical professional.

Acceptance is subject to a four-week probationary period. The Principal may require the parents to withdraw a child if, in the opinion of the administration, placement in the preschool is not in the child's and/or the preschool's best interests. Although a child may meet the age requirement, school readiness is a factor that must be considered and maintained in order for the child to be successful in preschool. In the event that the teachers recognize that a child is simply "not ready" for preschool, parents will be contacted and asked to come to a conference to discuss these concerns.

PRESCHOOL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

It is the responsibility of each family to keep the Business Manager informed of the need to make any changes in the preferred tuition payment plan or adjustments in the tuition paid. Without such information, the following will apply when tuition payments are received late:

Families who miss a monthly payment due to insufficient funds or other reasons will be assessed a \$30.00 missed payment fee by FACTS and may incur a fee from their own financial institution. The missed tuition payment will be re-attempted by FACTS on the next payment date (5th or 20th of the month). In addition, families who have missed two monthly payments will be contacted by the Business Manager and given 10 business days to bring the account current (No personal and/or business checks will be accepted as payment, only cash, cashier's checks or money orders). If the account is not brought current within that time period, the student will not be allowed to return to school until the account is brought current. In addition, report cards, records, transcripts, etc. will not be released if there is an outstanding financial obligation.

Returned Checks and Late Charges: Checks returned for any reason will be assessed a \$15.00 returned check fee. Payment for a returned check and fee must be made by cash, cashier's check or money order. A flat \$25.00 late charge will be incurred for any late payment.

Families withdrawing students prior to the first day of school shall not be refunded any paid tuition. The family must submit to the Principal a written request for any refund or release from the FACTS contract.

HOME-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP

CLOTHING: Children are to wear appropriate play clothes to school. Clothes must be modest, halter tops, crop tops or spaghetti-strap tops are **not allowed**. Girls are to wear shorts or bloomers under dresses and skirts. Children **must** wear socks. Students must wear tennis shoes or closed-toe shoes and socks every day. Shoes that have lights or wheels, flip-flops, sandals, and croc-type shoes **are not allowed**. Please note that, at this age, children tend to do better with shoes that have Velcro closings rather than shoelaces. Also, children must wear clothes that are easy to get in and out of when they use the bathroom. One-piece rompers and overalls are not to be worn because the children struggle with them at bathroom time. **Coats, sweaters, mittens, raincoats, books, lunch boxes, backpacks, etc., must be marked plainly with the child's name.** Each child will also need a complete set of extra clothes (including socks and underwear) in case a change is needed. Put them in a ziploc bag and label with the child's name.

*Some parents have asked about their child being allowed to wear the school uniform that is worn in Grades K-5. A school uniform is not required in preschool, but it is an available option if a parent wishes to have his/her child wear a uniform.

CONFERENCES: Communication between home and school is essential. Teachers are available for conferences by contacting the elementary school office (553-9630) to schedule an appointment. Typically, conferences are held between teacher and parent only. It is very difficult for our teachers to conference with several members of one family or hold group conferences. Therefore, parents should designate who will be the person with whom the teacher is to conference throughout the school year. Parents may not visit the classrooms without permission from the principal. Cell phones may not be used in the building while with a child and/or a teacher.

CORRESPONDENCE: Each child is to bring a backpack everyday to school. The child's work and any correspondence from the school will be sent home in the backpack. **Parents are to check backpacks daily.** Newsletters from teachers will include units of study, special events/activities, and dates to remember. A lunch menu will be posted on the website and sent out via email. Letters to the teachers or to the office, and money that is in an envelope with the child's name and purpose (tuition, lunch, after school, etc.) should be placed **in the pocket of the child's folder.** The staff will check the folders daily.

DISCIPLINE: The children learn within a stimulating educational environment that incorporates positive reinforcement. When a behavior problem occurs in the classroom, "time out" (2-3 minutes of sitting quietly away from the group) is given to the child, and then appropriate behavior is discussed. The behavior is discussed in a positive manner to help the child understand what he/she did. The teacher will remind the child of the rules and allow the child to join the group. Consistent behavioral problems, including defiance, refusal to comply with the teacher's instructions, and becoming physically or emotionally unruly, are areas of major concern and will be reported to the parents. Parents are asked to help correct the situation. If problems persist, a conference will be held with the parents, the teacher, and the

principal. Continued serious behavior problems could result in the child's dismissal from the program. It is the policy of the school to notify the parent with a written warning letter when infractions of policies continue to occur and to hold a conference to discuss the problem before the child is removed from the program. However, some situations may occur that jeopardize the welfare of the children and /or staff. **The administration reserves the right to dismiss a student immediately if such an incident occurs.** The safety of everyone is our utmost concern.

Biting Policy—It is unacceptable and unhealthy for any child to bite another person (child or adult) in our preschool. Upon the first incident of biting, the parent will be called immediately. If there is a second biting incident, the child will be sent home for the day. A third incident of biting could result in the child being asked to withdraw from our program.

FACULTY/STAFF: The faculty/staff is made up of educated and experienced personnel. They annually attend professional development workshops and seminars. The staff is dedicated to providing a rich, creative atmosphere from which learning can flow.

FIELD TRIPS: While Diocesan regulations prohibit off campus field trips for 3- and 4-year-olds, the teachers may plan on campus field trips

PARENTAL RIGHTS: The administration needs to be aware if a student's parents are divorced, separated, or if the student is in the custody or care of another person. If the parents are divorced, the custodial parent must provide the principal a copy of the court order or agreement regarding custody and visitation rights. Any school information on said student will be shared with the parents accordingly. Whenever there is any change in the custodial rights of a parent or other custodian (whether temporary or permanent), the school must be notified immediately in writing; otherwise, the school will be entitled to continue to rely upon the original written arrangement that is on file.

PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO):

The PTO offers support in a variety of ways to the school family. The officers organize social functions and fundraising activities for parents, faculty/staff, and students. Parents are asked to volunteer their time and talents to serve on the various committees that help the school and build community.

SERVICE PROJECTS: Each year students will participate in several projects which may include collecting food for Catholic Social Services and collecting food and supplies for the animal shelter. Students are also encouraged to demonstrate a spirit of service to all aspects of Holy Spirit School - keeping the grounds and classrooms clean and orderly, assisting adults and students in various ways (holding open doors, picking up dropped items, etc.) A spirit of service helps to nurture the Christian, Catholic values so prominent in our school.

TOYS: Children may not bring games/toys to school, except on Share Day or at the request of the teacher. **Toy guns, knives, swords, monster toys, or other violent items are not allowed at any time.** The teachers or principal reserve the right to determine the appropriateness of the toy.

TRANSPORTATION: If a child is to be picked up by someone other than a parent, the parent must send a written note to the child's teacher. The individual must present a driver's license at the time of pick up. Verbal messages from children are not reliable and will not be accepted. If a child is going home with a friend from the class, both children's parents must send a note to the teacher with this information.

WORKING WITH PARENTS: Registration at Holy Spirit Catholic School is an agreement by the parent/guardian to abide by the rules and regulations of the school and to support its mission and belief statements. A cooperative relationship between Holy Spirit Catholic School personnel and a parent/guardian is essential for the overall education of a student. If a parent/guardian refuses to abide by the rules and regulations of Holy Spirit Catholic School, is unsupportive of its goals by word or action, or otherwise fails to meet his/her obligations according to Diocesan policies, the administrator may require the parent/guardian to withdraw his/her child from Holy Spirit Catholic School. Additionally, parents/guardians will be held to the same standards of respect as students in regard to their interactions with administrators, teachers and students. This applies to members of the child's extended family as well.

CURRICULUM

RELIGIOUS FORMATION: Catholic/Christian values and service to others are an integral part of the total school program. Children will participate in prayers at their level on a daily basis. Students are taught the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be prayers. They are taught to make the Sign of the Cross and genuflect. They recognize that God is in our church in a special way. They celebrate birthdays, feasts of the more prominent saints (e.g., St. Francis of Assisi and St. Patrick), All Saints Day, Thanksgiving, St. Nicholas, Advent, Christmas, Valentine, Lent, and Easter.

THREE YEAR OLD PROGRAM: The curriculum incorporates a learning theme each week. It includes activities in listening/sharing, music, games, etc. The children have daily arts and crafts, using many different materials to correlate with the different subject areas.

FOUR YEAR OLD PROGRAM:

Religion/Spiritual Development: Our Sunday Visitor-Allelu! Series

Handwriting/Fine Motor Skills: Zaner Bloser Writing Program

Reading: Students are instructed in cognitive developmental skills in Reading Readiness.

Math: Envision Math

General Readiness: Personal Development Skills, Physical/Gross Motor Skills, Social Development Skills, and Work Habits are incorporated into the preschool curriculum every day.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

ACCIDENTS/EMERGENCIES: In case of an emergency, parents will be notified immediately. If a parent or relative listed on the Emergency Form cannot be reached, the child's doctor will be notified. In the event of sickness or accident and the child's parent or physician cannot be reached, the principal has permission to obtain necessary care at the parent's expense. Every precaution is taken to insure the safety of children. Nevertheless, the administration or the teachers will not assume the liability for injury of a child. Parents must agree upon enrollment not to hold the preschool responsible for any claim which may arise as a result of injury to a child.

CHILD ABUSE LAWS: Holy Spirit Catholic School abides by the Child Abuse laws of the State of Alabama. This law mandates that all cases of **suspected** abuse and/or neglect be reported to the Department of Human Resources/Child Protective Services.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT: A detailed campus-wide crisis management plan has been developed. Each teacher and staff member has received training with these various action plans. Students are well informed of the plans and often practice the drills.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS AND DISMISSALS: When emergency conditions exist, such as inclement weather, school may be closed. In the event of severe weather or other emergencies, Holy Spirit Catholic School will make the decision regarding school closing or delayed start. While it is impossible to be certain of the impact of predicted severe weather, we will make an informed decision based upon the recommendations of the National Weather Service and Emergency Management Agency (EMA). Announcements will be made via email, phone blast, local TV, and radio. If severe weather causes the school to close early, after-school care will also be closed.

GROOMING: All children must be fully-dressed and have their hair combed and/or brushed prior to entering the school building.

HYGIENE: POTTY/TOILET-TRAINING POLICY: When a child begins enrollment, he or she must be completely toilet-trained. The child should be in cloth underwear and not in diapers, pull-ups, or training pants. Children are expected to use the toilets and clean up properly without assistance from teachers or teacher assistants. Assistance with hand washing reminders and clothing fastening will be given if necessary. Soiled garments will be placed directly in a Ziploc bag with a note attached, to be sent home. The Preschool is not equipped or staffed to diaper or assist in the toilet-training process. In the event the child is found not to be fully toilet trained as indicated by three "accidents" (inability to reach the toilet on time, wetting or soiling undergarments), at the discretion of the principal, the child

will be asked to take a 2-week leave from the preschool to work towards readiness. If, upon returning, the child still is not trained as indicated by one or more accident(s), the child will be asked to be withdrawn from school.

All children must know how to use tissues and/or their elbows when coughing or sneezing.

PHOTO/VIDEO RELEASE: On occasion, students may be photographed or videotaped at school. The photos may be used in the newspaper, a magazine, or other publication, or for educational projects at school. Videos may be used for informational or educational purposes regarding the programs or curriculum at Holy Spirit Preschool. If you object or do not allow your child to participate in any photography/videography, please state this in writing to the school administration.

SAFETY: School administrators reserve the right to search a student's belongings when there is a legitimate need. Backpacks are checked daily for lunches, parent/teacher correspondence, lunch money, etc. If, during this regular backpack check, anything is found that poses a danger, it will be confiscated and reported to the principal.

SICKNESS: Parents will be called if a child has an above normal temperature or needs parental attention due to illness. All medications must be left with the front office. The parent or guardian must sign a medication request form. The medication must be in the original container and be properly labeled with the student's name and dosage. Do not send medication with the child in his/her backpack. Please do not send a child to school with a fever, diarrhea, or contagious disease such as strep, pink eye, lice, etc. Children must be free of fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.

VISITORS: All visitors must check in at the elementary school office to receive a visitor's badge.

SCHOOL DAY

HOURS AND SCHEDULE: The K3/K4 hours are 8:00am-3:05pm, Monday through Friday. Classes begin promptly at 8:00am. Part time students are dismissed at noon. Full time students are dismissed at 3:05pm (2:15pm on Thursdays and 1:00pm on days specified in our school calendar). An afterschool program is offered from dismissal time until 6:00pm. Please understand that our preschool is operated as a school day. Full-time students who are absent for the morning schedule are **not** allowed to come to school for the afternoon time since academics for the day will have already been covered.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE PROCEDURES: The doors are open at 7:30am. There is Morning care available from 7:00-7:30 located in the gym. There is a \$3 fee per day. Classes begin promptly at 8:00am. Please have your child finish all breakfast food and drink items before entering the building.

Tardy Policy--Children are expected to arrive prior to 8:00am. Late arrivals disrupt important morning activities. When children arrive late to school, they are often unsettled and distract the other students who are already hard at work.

Part-time children are to be picked up at 12:00 noon, after the morning program.

The After-Care program for **full-time students** is from 3:30pm until 6:00pm. There is a \$14.00 charge per day. Prompt pick up at 6:00pm assures your child that he/she has not been forgotten. ***There will be a late fee of \$2.00 per minute charged for pick up after 6:00pm.**

Children will be released only to parents, unless parents have given **written** permission for another adult to pick up the child. If someone other than a parent is to pick up the child, the office must be notified in advance. The person picking up your child must present a valid driver's license for identification.

SNACKS: In order to provide students with a short break from their morning work, a snack time will be given each day. Students must bring a nutritious snack from home (granola bars, fresh fruit, raisins, pretzels, etc.). Due to health reasons, students are not allowed to share food with other students.

LUNCH: Lunch is served daily. Students may bring their own lunch or purchase lunch at school for a daily charge. If a child brings a lunch, he/she may purchase milk through the cafeteria. **Carbonated drinks and fast foods are not allowed.** If a child's lunch is in containers, the child is expected to open the containers independently. Drink cups or bottles must close securely in order to prevent spills. Teachers are not permitted to heat lunch items. Hot food items, e.g., soup, should be in a thermos. If parents wish to eat lunch occasionally with the children, they are to notify the teacher by 8:30am, even if not ordering a school lunch. **Lunch visitors need to check in at the elementary school office to receive a visitor's badge before coming to the cafeteria.** Parents may not bring fast food items to lunch. Parents are asked not to eat lunch with the children the first few weeks of school so that they can get adjusted to the school routine.

NAP TIME: Students are required to have a rest period. Students have rest time between 12:00 noon and 2 pm daily. If your child will be staying for nap time, he/she will need a nap mat. Nap mats should be the type with an attached pillow. Large, thick, extravagant mats or sleeping bags are not allowed. **Mark all items with your child's name.**

GUEST SPEAKERS: During the course of the year, community workers (fire fighters, police officers, dentists, meteorologists, etc.) will visit and educational/fun demonstrations will be shared with our students.

BIRTHDAYS: Birthday parties are not to be held at school. Only a treat for the entire class may be brought to school in recognition of your child's birthday, but no further celebration is permitted. No gifts, balloons, decorations, flowers, etc. may be brought or delivered to school. **Parents are asked to consult with the teacher prior to making plans and to please send a note confirming those plans.** Invitations to outside birthday parties may not be distributed at school. **In addition, Holy Spirit Catholic School assumes no responsibility for parties/events that take place outside of school and/or are not related to our school.**

CLASSROOM PARTIES/ACTIVITIES: Several times throughout the school year, parents may be asked to help assist the teacher by supervising at a classroom party or other activity during the school day. While we certainly appreciate and welcome the willingness of our parents to volunteer here at school, we cannot underestimate the importance of **active supervision** for the safety of our children. Therefore, we ask parents who volunteer at school to adhere to the following guidelines:

- Babies or younger siblings are not allowed while a parent is supervising an activity.
- Please refrain from texting or talking on cell phones.
- Please do not handle any disciplinary matters. Any issues should be directed immediately to the teacher.
- Please refrain from having private conversations with the teacher or other parents while supervising the students.

ADVERTISEMENTS: Advertisements for organizations outside of Holy Spirit School will be distributed at the discretion of the director of the administration.

Social Media Parent Agreement

As a parent or guardian, I recognize that the use of the Internet comes with a corresponding responsibility to use it wisely both for myself and my child. I also recognize that sending my child to a Catholic school is a privilege that comes with the corresponding duty to act in a Christian way towards others. I therefore pledge to refrain from using the internet in any way that might disparage the school's administration or its teachers. If I have a problem with school personnel, I will take my complaints directly to the school's administration and not broadcast vile, hateful or disparaging remarks about the teacher(s) or administration. Broadcasting any such vile, hateful or disparaging remarks is an indication of my intent to withdraw my child or children from the school and the principal has my permission to act accordingly.

Policy Statement from the Diocese of Birmingham in Alabama, Adopted July 9, 2018

HANDBOOK DISCLAIMER

This policy handbook is limited in content. Emphasis has been placed on those things which are deemed most pertinent to the students, parents, and Holy Spirit Catholic Preschool at the present time.

It would be impossible to anticipate all problems which may arise in the future. Yet, each year, a few distracting fads and circumstances show up on our school grounds. Anything that detracts from or disrupts the spirit, education, philosophy, or dignity of Holy Spirit Catholic Preschool will be held to be unacceptable, even though not explicitly set forth in this handbook. Such situations will be dealt with in accordance with the principles implicit in our existing policies.

Any information that comes to the school which could endanger the life, health, or safety of a student, parent, or faculty/staff member will not be held in confidence.

In the absence of a policy in this handbook, the administration (in accordance with diocesan policy) reserves the right to determine policy should the need arise. All diocesan policies are listed in the *Policies and Regulations for Educational Institutions in the Diocese of Birmingham* apply to our school. In the event of inadvertent conflict, the diocesan policies supersede. The administration reserves the right to amend this handbook at any time.

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC SCHOOL

K3/K4 HANDBOOK

PARENT/GUARDIAN ACKNOWLEDGMENT

PLEASE READ THE HOLY SPIRIT PRESCHOOL HANDBOOK. SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM TO THE OFFICE. THE ADMINISTRATION RETAINS THE RIGHT TO AMEND THE HANDBOOK FOR JUST CAUSE AND PARENTS WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED IF CHANGES ARE MADE.

I/We have read and understand the policies and regulations in the Holy Spirit K3/K4 Handbook for the 2023-2024 school year. I/We agree to be governed by this handbook.

Child's Name

Parent/Guardian

Parent/Guardian

Date

Family-School Agreement

The purpose of Catholic education is the formation of young people who will be good citizens of this world—loving God and neighbor and enriching society with the leaven of the Gospel—and who will also be citizens of the world to come, thus fulfilling their destiny to become saints. This is all done in an environment of academic excellence, where students learn how to become intentional, missionary disciples of Jesus Christ, grow in virtue and holiness, share the Good News of Christ's love with others, and join in the Catholic Christian community of the school. This Family-School Agreement is intended to further these purposes. Catholic schools in the Diocese of Birmingham are open to all students; however, we are first and foremost Catholic.

When enrolling their child(ren) in a Catholic school in the Diocese of Birmingham, parent(s) or legal guardian(s) (hereafter, “parents”) are asked to sign the Family-School Agreement. In signing the Family-School Agreement, it is understood that:

- a. All children are welcome in the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Birmingham. As part of enrollment, parents must sign the Family-School Agreement.
- b. Our schools exist to pass on the Catholic faith in its fullness to students and to form disciples of Jesus Christ. Parents and schools are partners in this mission; parents are expected to cooperate fully in it and shall supervise their children in accordance with this agreement.
- c. As partners in this mission, students and their parents are all part of the school community. As such, students and their parents agree to live their lives in a way that supports, rather than opposes, the mission of the school.

The school joyfully exercises its responsibility to teach Catholic faith and morals in all fullness. Parents whose religious practices and beliefs run counter to Church teaching might experience conflicts as we maintain mission integrity. Sincere questioning of the practices and doctrines of the Catholic faith—whether by students or their parents—in order to more deeply understand them are welcome; but openly hostile or persistent defiance of Catholic truths or morality are a violation of the Family-School Agreement and may result in denial of admission or dismissal from the school.

2023-2024 Family-School Agreement

Diocese of Birmingham

As parents/guardians, we ask Holy Spirit Catholic School to help us in educating and forming our child(ren). We understand and agree that our child(ren) will be taught the teachings of the Catholic Church in their fullness. Our intention is to respect and cooperate with school policies and with those providing a Catholic-based education to our child(ren)—the priests, principal, teachers, parishioners, and all school personnel. We pledge our full cooperation with the school to prepare our child(ren) to be disciple(s) of Jesus Christ. We will make every effort to supervise our child(ren) in accordance with this agreement.

Name of Father/Legal Guardian

Signature:

Name of Mother/Legal Guardian

Signature:

Name(s) of Child(ren):

Grade:

Holy Spirit Catholic School accepts your request and commitment for a Catholic education and formation for your child(ren). We acknowledge our obligation to assist you in your responsibility of educating your child(ren). We will make our best effort to form your child(ren) as disciple(s) of Jesus Christ, according to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Principal's Signature: _____

Date: _____