

Saint Gregory the Great
Early Childhood Enrichment Program



PARENT HANDBOOK

Director's Message

This handbook is prepared for students and parents at Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program. Its purpose is to provide both the guidelines and policies that govern the way we operate our school. No one document can answer every question or address every concern that arises throughout the school year; however, every attempt has been made to address the issues that affect the daily lives of students in our preschool.

Open communication is critical to the successful operation of our preschool. It is our belief that students and parents need to know and understand policies and guidelines. If everyone, both students and parents, understand what is required of them, we can look forward to a smoother running school year. Hopefully, for the most part, an awareness and understanding of the rules and regulations will curb many problems before they happen.

We have an open door policy in our school. The administration and staff are available to clarify and follow up on any concerns or questions that you may have. You are invited to be an integral part of your child's preschool experience.

Every school year brings with it the opportunity for all of us to do a better job than we did the year before. Students can improve in their class work and behavior. Teachers can improve on the way they teach. The administration can run a more efficient school. Parents can become more involved in the education of their children.

We should, then, all work together to ensure that we all do better.

We welcome you and your child to our preschool program.

God Bless you, and the children you have entrusted to our care.



Non-Discrimination Policy

Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program admits students of any sex, race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate based on sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, athletic or other school administered programs.

Our Philosophy/Mission Statement

Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program looks upon the field of child development as a total educational experience in which administrators, teachers, and parents are partners in education, working collaboratively in all aspects of a child's growth and development. We believe from the time of birth, all children are ready to learn and will discover knowledge through active experimentation. It is our aim, therefore, to provide an early childhood enrichment program which is educationally based, through age appropriate activities that focus on the stages of each child's cognitive, social, emotional, cultural and physical needs.



Our Beliefs

- All children can learn.
- Each student is a valued individual with unique intellectual, physical, social, and emotional needs.
- Student learning is the chief priority of our school.
- Teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and students share in the responsibility for providing a supportive learning environment within our school.
- Clear goals and high expectations for student achievement guide the development of the curriculum and the design of instructional strategies and learning activities.
- Students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of instructional approaches to support their learning.
- Assessments of student learning should provide students with a variety of opportunities to demonstrate their achievement.
- The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is going to enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong active learners.



Our Program Promotes

An environment which:

1. Develops creativity, interest, and the joy of learning through an interactive process with the environment, using all the senses. Discovery of relationships through direct experiences and the promotion of choice are encouraged.
2. Enhances communication skills through fostering meaningful dialogues with children and adults, listening to and discussing stories, participating in group play, language experience activities, relating to pictures, role playing and pretending, as examples.
3. Develops self-control and responsibility through gentle guidance by setting clear, consistent, fair limits for behavior and expectations, redirecting to more acceptable behavior if necessary, guiding children to resolve conflicts and modeling skills that help children solve problems. All staff use a philosophy of positive behavior support.
4. Develops fine and gross motor skills by providing a balanced amount of large and small muscle activities. Gross Motor activities might include running, jumping, balancing, and group games. Fine motor skill development may be enhanced through artwork, use of scissors, solving puzzles, block building, and cooking, as examples.
5. Introduces pre-academic skills and exposes children to letter sounds, numbers, the alphabet, shapes, and color. Examples of pre-academic skills are number concepts, such as one to one correspondence and counting meaningful objects. Aspects of language arts are presented through exposure to stories, poetry, and the provision of a print-rich environment.
6. Encourages appropriate interaction with other children and adults through opportunities to communicate, practice social skills such as cooperating, sharing, and helping others make positive choices.
7. Teaches problem-solving and decision-making skills through individual choices of activities and encouragement of child-initiated investigation, exploration, questioning, and making suggestions.
8. Enhances concern for others through recognition of feelings, demonstration of respect, ability to share, promotion of understanding of commonalities and acceptance of differences between individuals.
9. Encourages the development of a positive self-concept through demonstration of respect for and acceptance of children. This lends to a positive and supportive relationship between teachers and children which is crucial to social and emotional growth.



Our Program Provides

- An awareness of God, Our Creator, through Religious Instruction
- Learning that fosters exploration and inquiry
- Meaningful and relevant learning experiences that include:
 - manipulation of different materials, objects, textures
 - dramatic play
 - creative arts
 - small and large muscle activities
 - cooking
 - participation in simple games
 - exposure to literature, math, music, science, and nature
- Acquisition of basic skills
- Creative activities that develop a child's imagination
- Active hands-on learning
- Interactive teaching and cooperative learning
- Thematic activities
- Social interaction
- Indoor and outdoor play, which provides opportunities for exploration, experimentation, and manipulation



Absence/Attendance

- During the COVID-19 Pandemic all absences must be called into the school and follow the New Policies and Medical Protocols
- See Parent Handbook Addendum and Medical Protocols

Absence/Attendance and punctuality are important habits to assist children in developing social success. If a child is absent, parents should call the school office at 835-1278 before 8:30 a.m. to report the absence. Messages may be left on our automated system. Please follow the appropriate prompts. When a child returns to school, a note of explanation must be given to the child's teacher. If a student is absent 5 days or more a physician's note is required for their re-admission to class. Such notes are required by the State of New York and are kept on file.

Accident Policies

At School Accidents that must be reported include any accidents or incidents that may cause minor or severe injuries to the students in our charge.

Accidents must be reported as soon as possible. Employees are obliged to report immediately to the Director any of the following:

- Head, skull or face injuries
- Damage to any of the senses
- Dislocation of limbs that hinder functionality
- Damage to skin (e.g. extensive burns, bruises or cuts)
- Blows or injuries to the spine, back, ribs
- Loss of consciousness
- Slips or falls

When an employee witnesses or is involved in an incident (non threatening or serious) they must report such incident to the Director immediately. The Director will call the child's parent and advise them of what happened and how the situation will be handled. In case of a serious injury EMS (921-0100) will be called as well as 911 and the parent will be asked to come in immediately.



An official report must be completed immediately. (3 copies)

The employee who reported the accident/incident must provide the following information:

- Place of accident/or incident
- Date and time of accident/incident
- Student (s) or Staff involved or injured (Witnesses)
- Actions immediately taken depending on the severity of the injury.

In case of an accident or injury parents are asked at Registration to authorize any and all emergency medical, dental and/or surgical care and hospitalization listed on the Child's Office of Children and Family Services Blue Day Care Registration Card for the proper health and wellbeing of their child.

- Child's Source of medical Care (Physician's Name)
- Child's Source of Dental Care (Dentist's Name)
- Name of Nearest Medical Care Facility (Hospital)

If hospitalization is require the Parent if available will accompany the child in an ambulance to the hospital of choice.

If the parent is unavailable the Director will accompany the child by ambulance to the hospital of choice.



Accreditation

Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program, an integral part of Saint Gregory the Great Parish, is a Catholic institution under the mandates of the New York State Department of Education. Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program is licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

Address Changes

Please inform the school office as well as your child's teacher, if you change your address, telephone number, e-mail address or any emergency contact numbers. It is imperative that we have accurate information to reach you in the event of an emergency.

Admissions

The New York State Education Department recommends that every child admitted to an Early Childhood Program for 3's be three years old before December 31st of that year. A child admitted to an Early Childhood Program for 4's must be four years old before December 31st of that year. An interview is required for admission.



Assessments

St. Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program uses an assessment tool as follows:

1. To determine children who are developing normally and are not in need of further assessment. Exceptions might include: significant language delays, behavior problems, etc. as determined by the examiner at the time of screening.
2. Rescreening of children who have marginal scores.
3. If problems identified in the screening process are confirmed, a definitive plan of action, or Individualized Education Plan (IEP) would be designed. (Done by each individual school district). Such a plan may include:
 - Placement in another school that will address the child's needs appropriately.
 - Placement in a specialized remediation program for further observational assessment.
 - Supplementary home visiting plan.
 - Enrollment in a small preschool classroom with a specific plan for remediation and further observation.
 - Provide feedback about screening results whether verbally or in writing.
 - Consultation with parents in making recommendations after the initial screening.

St. Gregory the Great has in place a child observation and assessment policy that includes the collection and protection of assessment results and sharing results with parents. The information collected is confidential. We shall be using the following: The Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Assessment Toolkit for Ages 3-5 based on The Creative Curriculum's goals and objectives. This provides teachers with a structure for observing children in order to plan for each child. The toolkit provides all the assessment materials needed.

We are also using the ESI-R, a developmental screening instrument that provides a quick overview of a child's development in three major areas: Visual-Motor/Adaptive, Language and Cognition, and Gross Motor. All three sections are designed to investigate a child's abilities within a particular area, but screening recommendations are based on the total score. The following is an overview of the three areas or domains of the ESI-R.



Visual-Motor: This section uses block building, drawing tasks, and a visual memory game to assess fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, short-term memory skills and the ability to reproduce two and three dimensional forms and structures.

Language and Cognition: The language and cognition items focus on language comprehension and verbal expression, the ability to reason and count, and the ability to remember auditory sequences.

Gross Motor: These tasks are designed to assess the child's developmental level in gross motor skills. They are targeted for the expectations of each age level and quite specifically show the child's performance on a continuum of development.

Observation and assessment results are used to guide instruction and is tailored to address assessment results (e.g.), IEP's with modifications for individual students.

Uses of student assessment results allows teachers to make appropriate adaptations in the classroom such as:

- To encourage student to use basic verbal language to communicate his/her needs within the classroom.
- To have student demonstrate acceptable topic behavior during conversational speech.
- To have student take turns during conversational discourse with teachers, aides, and classmates.
- To have student respond appropriately to the feelings of others and display appropriate behaviors in response to the feelings of others within the classroom.
- When the student becomes angry in the classroom setting, the teacher will ask him/her to identify the behaviors that may have caused him/her to become angry.
- To have the student use classroom toys in a purposeful manner.
- To have the student engage in pretend play with toys
- To have the student engage in cooperative play skills with peers, demonstrating turn taking, etc.



- To have the student use an appropriate voice, sharing, and maintaining personal space when interacting with peers.
- To have the student communicate and interact in a positive manner with classmates (non aggressive verbalizations or body language, eye contact, turn taking, listening without speaking).
- To encourage the student to maintain his/her attention during classroom instruction.
- To provide the student with Special Education Itinerant Teacher Services through our school district
- To provide the student with small group Speech/Language Therapy
- To provide parent counseling and training through the school district

Arrival at School

- **During the COVID-19 Pandemic Arrival and Dismissal times will be staggered**
- **See Parent Handbook Addendum and Medical Protocols**

Arrival and Dismissal:

The program opens at 8:45 a.m. In order for the staff to prepare for the day, please do not enter the building prior to 8:45 a.m. unless they are in the Early Morning Drop Off Program.

Parents/Caregivers must press the PK doorbell and identify themselves in order to be buzz into the school. Our secondary Security Alarm will be activated at 9 a.m. at all doors. Anyone arriving after 9 a.m. must use the RING BELL at the Glass Doors adjacent to the Preschool Office.

For safety reasons, the adult bringing/picking up a child each day must make contact with the child's teacher. Children should be brought into their classrooms by the adult who brings them to school. *Please do not allow a child to enter the building alone or walk unaccompanied.* No child is to be dropped off/picked up in the Parking Lot or at the door. Parents are responsible for their children on route to and from the program.

Please allow enough time both in the morning, and in the afternoon for a calm, smooth and relaxed separation, and re-connection



It is important to notify us if your child is to be picked up by someone other than the usual authorized person(s). A special form was included in your program portfolio for listing those persons who are authorized to pick up your child. It is the duty of classroom personnel to prepare for your child's arrival, so please understand that when the classroom doors are closed, we are setting up and planning for the children.

Backpacks

Please provide your child with a large backpack with his/her name on it to be used to transport papers, artwork, and special items. We ask that you keep it in a special place so it will be available to your child when he/she prepares to come to school. We feel a great deal of learning can take place as he/she takes on responsibility for his/her own backpack.

Birthdays

- **During the COVID-19 Pandemic Birthday treats will not be permitted**
- **See Parent Handbook Addendum and Medical Protocols**

We would be happy to celebrate your child's birthday at school. Please contact Ms. Gaudelli and your child's classroom teachers so that they may discuss what types of treats are acceptable. We would like to remind you that Saint Gregory the Great is a "nut free" school, because many children are susceptible to life-threatening allergic reactions from certain food products.



BLACKBOARD CONNECT

In order to build community relations, improve parental involvement, and ensure school safety, Saint Gregory the Great uses BLACKBOARD CONNECT, a rapid communication service. This service allows the school administration to deliver voice, e-mail and emergency messages, keeping parents and staff informed of important and time sensitive information. We consider BLACKBOARD CONNECT, a critical component to our school communication and crisis plan. It ensures that accurate information is communicated immediately in the event of school closings, delays, early dismissal, a lockdown, relocation, and evacuation or other emergency situations. The e-mails will appear in the FROM category as St. Gregory the Great. Please make sure that all emails and phone numbers are up to date.

Breast Feeding

Although we do not have infants or toddlers in our program, St. Gregory the Great provides active support to breastfeeding families.

- Our program makes a comfortable place available for mothers to nurse their infants
- Our program provides an atmosphere that welcomes breastfeeding families.
- When asked our program is happy to provide breastfeeding materials in the languages of the families served in our program.

Calendar

A yearly school calendar will be distributed to each family in September. The school year begins in mid September and runs through early June. We will follow the Harrison Public School's vacation and holiday schedule. Each classroom teacher will provide a monthly calendar of activities, so that you are aware of special events and projects that will be happening throughout the month. The Pre School Director has the authority to make changes to the calendar when deemed appropriate. A yearly calendar can also be located on our website: info@stgregoryearlychildhood.com.



Change in Family Situation

Please notify the Director and Classroom Teacher if there are major changes in your family situation, such as: a new baby, moving, separation, divorce, hospitalizations, death, and parents going out of town. Teachers and staff members will be able to help your child work through these changes in his/her life if we are made aware of them.

Child Abuse Policies

Mandated Reporting

As professionals in contact with young children and their families, we at St. Gregory the Great Pre School are required by law to help the Office of Child Protective Services become aware of children who may be abused or neglected. According to the law, public or private school teachers, educational administrators, guidance or family counselors; as well as day care/child care workers, are mandated reporters. Thus it is the policy of St. Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program to report any and all suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect to Child Protective Services immediately by telephone and to follow up in writing within 24 hours the same information as reported by telephone. Our pre school will offer full cooperation of its staff during the investigation of the reported incident. The director and staff will follow these steps if abuse/neglect is suspected.

Definitions

Child Abuse is the non-accidental commission of any act by a caretaker that causes or creates a substantial risk of harm to a child's physical and emotional well being, including child abuse.

Child Neglect is the failure by a caretaker, either deliberately or through negligence, to take those actions necessary to provide a child with minimally adequate food, safety, clothing, shelter, medical care, supervision, or other essential care.

Reasonable Cause means that after examining all the facts in a particular situation, most people with similar training and experience would also suspect abuse and/or neglect.

Parental Child Abuse



The following procedure has been established regarding the reporting and/or recording of suspected child abuse and neglect:

1. Any staff person that suspects a child has come to school abused or neglected, must report that information directly to Child Protective Services as they are Mandated Reporters then must notify the supervising Class Room Teacher/Director.

Institutional Child Abuse

It is the policy of the preschool program that there shall be no corporal punishment of children. No child shall be subject to cruel or severe punishment, humiliations, or verbal abuse, including, but not limited to the denial of food. It is the policy of the preschool program that no one have unmonitored contact with the children at any time. Staff must in sight/sound of each other at all times.

The following procedure has been established regarding the steps taken if a staff member is suspected of abusing and/or neglecting a child at the preschool program:

1. Whoever has reasonable cause to believe that a staff member may have been abusive or neglectful to a child(ren) shall immediately make a report through SCR and then notify the Director.
2. The Director will prepare, within 24 hours, but no later than 36 hours, a written report of the situation. The report shall include dates, times, names of all parties involved (adults and children), places, and description of incident.
3. The Director will notify the Office of Children and Family Services as well as Child Protective Services, who will assess the situation.
4. The suspected or alleged employee shall immediately be removed from working directly with children until an investigation has been completed, and authorized to return as appropriate, the employee will be paid only after an unsubstantiated report is made, employee will then receive back wages.
5. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Phone Numbers of Services Involved

- State Central Register for Child Abuse and Maltreatment
- Mandated Reporter Hot Line: 1-800-635-1522
- National Sex Abuse Hotline: 1-800-422-4453
- Harrison Police Department: 967-5110



Class Schedules

Our Three Year Old Classes Meet:

- 3 mornings (Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays)
8:45 - 11:30 a.m.
- 5 mornings (Monday through Friday)
8:45 - 11:30 a.m.
- 5 mornings and 3 afternoons
Monday through Friday - 8:45 - 11:30 a.m.
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday- 11:30- 2:30 p.m.

Our Four Year Old Classes Meet:

- 5 mornings (Monday through Friday)
8:45 - 11:30 a.m.
- 5 mornings and 3 afternoons
Monday through Friday - 8:45 - 11:30 a.m.
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday - 11:30- 2:30 p.m.
- 5 full days (Monday through Friday)
8:45 - 2:30 p.m.



Typical Daily Routine:

- Welcome: Meet students at classroom entrance
- Health Check
- Put backpacks away
- Attendance/Name Activity
- Choice of various centers and activities in room

- **Circle Time:**
 - Hello song
 - Prayer
 - Pledge
 - Our Day (go over the day's schedule)
 - Helpers/Daily Jobs
 - Music (songs/ fingerplays/musical concepts)
- **Social Skill Lesson:**
 - Students participate in children's literature and a short activity based on a social skill
- **Bathroom/ Snack:**
 - Use of restroom/wash hands
 - Snack
 - Focus on Table manners and "having good conversation with friends"
- **Music:**
 - Students participate singing songs in large groups
- **Center Time:**
 - Children's Literature
 - Classroom Centers based on various themes
- **Book Time:**
 - Students choose books to read individually or with a friend
- **Gross Motor**
 - Outside unless weather does not allow/inside appropriate gross motor activities
 - Creativity Time: Arts and Crafts
- **Room Clean-Up:**
 - Make sure the room is picked up
 - Check cubbies
 - Meet parents at classroom entrance



Clothing

Your child will be learning through creative, active play that can sometimes be messy. Your child should wear comfortable, washable clothing as well as a rubber soled and closed toe shoes suitable for running and climbing to help ensure your child's safety in his/her motor play. Please clearly label clothing with your child's name to reduce the possibility of mistakes. During winter months coats, hats, mittens and boots are necessary. All families are asked to provide an extra set of clothes to change into in case of spills, accidents, etc.

Curriculum

Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program curriculum follows developmentally appropriate practices (i.e. Child-centered and hands-on learning) evolving from credible research into child development. It is also aligned with the New York State Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core. It offers a varied curriculum that includes science, nature, cooking, music, dance, health, prayer, pre-reading, math readiness, creativity, and small and large muscle activities. The curriculum fosters social, spiritual, emotional, physical, cognitive development and group skills. It allows children to make choices, encourages independence and kindergarten readiness and visibly integrates Gospel teachings throughout the school day. The curriculum also fosters ongoing parent involvement and community building during specific times throughout the school year. These family events include: Creativity Fair/Art Show, Children's Carnival, Christmas Pageant, Donuts with Dad, Family Fun Night, Graduation Day, Grandparents Day, Moving up Day, Muffins with Mom, Pot Luck Supper, St. Jude's Trike-A-Thon, Thanksgiving Celebration and Trunk or Treat.



The Creative Curriculum For Pre-School

Saint Gregory the Great uses a written curriculum or curriculum framework: The Creative Curriculum For Pre-School.

The Creative Curriculum is our blueprint for planning and implementing a developmentally appropriate program. We interpreted it and used it to build our program. We incorporated our own interests and teaching styles, as well as information about the children we teach and their families, to make the curriculum work for us.

The Organizational Structure of The Creative Curriculum Part I (Chapters 1-5) presents the five components of the Creative Curriculum:

1. How Children Develop and Learn
2. The Learning Environment
3. What Children Learn
4. The Teacher's Role
5. The Family's Role

Part 2 Interest Areas (Chapters 6-16)

6. Blocks
7. Dramatic Play
8. Toys and Games
9. Art
10. Library
11. Discovery
12. Sand and Water
13. Music and Movement
14. Cooking
15. Computers
16. Outdoors



It describes the various materials that meet the developmental needs of young children and enhance learning and teaching in each of the interest areas. Connections between the Curriculum's 50 objectives and academic content share how teachers guide and assess children's learning.

Our curriculum is:

- Consistent with prevailing professional opinion and research on how children learn.
- Curriculum content is designed to achieve long-range goals for children in language, literacy, mathematics, science, social and emotional development and creative arts.
- The curriculum provides activities that encourage knowledge in a developmentally appropriate manner. Activities are presented in a fun, interactive way that makes learning enjoyable for young children.
- The curriculum presents themes based on areas of general interest to pre-school children, including familiar topics and those that explain the child's world.
- Curriculum goals are realistic, attainable, and appropriate for the preschool classroom. Adjustments will be made as needed to be sure the activities best meet the needs of each child.
- The curriculum provides a wealth of materials for children to generate interest, encourage interaction, aid in knowledge construction, meet individual needs, and accommodate various learning styles.
- The curriculum respects and supports individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity, and encourages parents to become partners in their child's education.
- The curriculum is built upon a flexible scope and sequence. Skills and concepts are developed sequentially, with each new skill based on the foundation of previous learning.
- The curriculum is based on themes that spark interest and curiosity in young children.
- The curriculum engages children actively in the learning process, with hands-on activities and manipulative materials.
- The curriculum offers a balance between child initiated and teacher-facilitated learning opportunities.
- The curriculum puts priority on developing a pre-schooler's social/emotional skills and building character.
- The curriculum is supportive of children's physiological needs for activity, sensory stimulation, fresh air, rest, nourishment and elimination.
- The curriculum encourages children to learn about their world by engaging them in projects that are of interest to them. They then can acquire skills from their own explorations of content. These experiences promote positive feelings of success, competence, and most of all a love for learning.



Discipline

Discipline in preschool is a teaching opportunity. Emphasis is placed upon being positive. When a problem arises the child is encouraged, under the teacher's guidance, to work it out herself / himself. Biting, spitting, and hitting are discussed with the parent to enlist their cooperation and support. The child will be made aware that she/he is loved and that it is her/his behavior that we cannot accept. The child is encouraged to talk about her/his feelings and to realize that all people have feelings.

Discipline Policy

The Program has a written policy on the discipline of children which provides for positive guidance, with direction for resolving conflict and the setting of well-defined limits.

Teaching staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, planning ahead to prevent problems. They will encourage appropriate behavior through the use of consistent clear rules, and involving children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined. Where the child understands words, discipline will be explained to the child before and at the time of any disciplinary action. The teaching staff will encourage children to respect other people, to be fair, respect property, and learn to be responsible for their actions. The teaching staff will use discipline that is consistent, clear, and understandable to the child. They will help children learn to persist when frustrated, play cooperatively with other children, use language to communicate needs, and learn turn taking.



Discipline - Challenging Behavior

The teaching staff in the preschool is highly trained, responsive, respectful, and purposeful. They anticipate and take steps to prevent potential challenging behaviors. They evaluate and change their responses based on individual needs. When children have challenging behaviors teachers promote pro-social behavior by:

- Interacting in a respectful manner with all children.
- Modeling turn taking and sharing as well as caring behaviors.
- Helping children negotiate their interactions with one another and with shared materials.
- Engaging children in the care of their classroom and ensuring that each child has an opportunity to contribute to the group.
- Encouraging children to listen to one another and helping them to provide comfort when others are sad or distressed.
- Staff will guide children to develop self-control and orderly conduct in relationship to peers and adults.
- Children will be taught social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. If a child displays persistent, serious and challenging behavior, the teaching staff, parents, and Director will work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.
- Aggressive behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable. Teaching staff will intervene immediately when a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all of the children and encourage more acceptable behavior. (biting, scratching, hitting, etc.)



Dismissal

- During the COVID-19 Pandemic Arrival and Dismissal times will be staggered
- See Parent Handbook Addendum

Please notify the Program in advance in writing if there is any change in the person who transports your child to and from school. Children will only be released to those listed on your signed dismissal form. It is important that you be on time to pick up your child. It is frightening for a small child to be picked up later than the others. They worry that they will be forgotten. If a child is not picked up at the close of the school session, we will telephone the child's home. If we fail, after 30 minutes, to reach a parent or emergency contact person listed on your forms, the Director will keep your child with her and will continue to try to reach the parents or emergency contact.

Early Morning Drop Off Program

- During the COVID-19 Pandemic Early Morning Drop Off will be suspended
- See Parent Handbook Addendum

The Early Morning Drop Off Program is a safe, structured play environment supervised by the staff of St. Gregory the Great under the direction of Mrs. Ledesma. Activities will include playground (weather permitting), gym games, and small group centers (in classrooms). The program will run from 8:00 am - 8:45 am Monday - Friday. The children will be escorted to their classroom at 8:45am. Morning Drop Off will not be available 1-2 days per month due to staff conferences. Ample notice will be given. Payment for this program is not included in your tuition and will be paid separately. For enrollment information and questions you may contact Ms. Gaudelli or Mrs. Ledesma at sgmorningcare@gmail.com.



Emergency Evacuations / Fire Drills

State law requires practice for emergency evacuations and fire drills, therefore, throughout the school year drills will be performed. The students will be familiarized with fire regulations which will be posted in each classroom. Strict silence is to be maintained during fire drills. It is essential that when the first signal is given everyone obeys orders promptly and clears the building by the prescribed route as quickly as possible. The teacher will give the students instructions. The fire box in the school has a direct line to the fire department. The fire bell is loud. We are very experienced in helping children and we model non-fearful behaviors which in turn helps your child. Emergency evacuation plans are also practiced with the children.

PRIMARY ROUTES:

- ROOM 1 ROOM 3 ROOM 5 ROOM 7 ROOM 8
REAR BLUE DOORS FACING HARRISON AVENUE - WALK TO IRVING PLACE.
- ROOM 2 ROOM 4 ROOM 6
FRONT BLUE DOORS FACING BROADWAY - WALK TO PARK AVENUE
- ROOM PK ROOM K -
REAR CLASSROOM DOORS FACING PLAYGROUND - WALK TO PARK AVENUE

SECONDARY ROUTES:

- ROOM 1 ROOM 3 ROOM 5 ROOM 7 ROOM 8
FRONT BLUE DOORS FACING BROADWAY - WALK TO PARK AVENUE
- ROOM 2 ROOM 4 ROOM 6
REAR BLUE DOORS FACING HARRISON AVENUE - WALK TO IRVING PLACE
- ROOM PK ROOM K -
REAR MAHOGANY DOORS FACING PARKING LOT - WALK TO PARK AVENUE

Classes may re-enter the building when the bell sounds again.



In case of a real fire, or crisis, all students must be escorted to the Lower or Upper Church or The Harrison Fire House.

In case we are not able to leave the school building, we will go into "LOCK DOWN" mode. All classes will remain in classrooms with doors locked. Teachers will use their code word to alert children to go to their designated spot in the classroom.

If for any reason we must evacuate this building, we will go to the upper or lower portions of St. Gregory the Great Church, located at 215 Halstead Avenue, Harrison or we will go to the Harrison Fire House located at 206 Harrison Ave. Harrison. We will call all parents from there. The safe evacuation of children is our FIRST priority and the children will never be left unsupervised.

Emergency Forms: OCFS Registration Forms

Parents have been provided with a Blue Form with emergency contact information on it to complete before the beginning of the school year along with an emergency contact sheet. Careful and total completion of this form is essential for each school family. Parents also have the important responsibility of **updating the information** each time such information changes

Emergency Information

Parents are responsible for making sure the information the school has regarding emergency contacts including the physician's name, in case of illness or injury, is current. Parents should notify the school office if any information changes



Emergency Numbers

EMS	921-0100
HARRISON POLICE	911
HARRISON POLICE	967-5110 (Business)
CONTROL 60	231-1900 (Preinstructions)
FIRE DEPARTMENT	835-1100 (FIRE ONLY)
FIRE DEPARTMENT	835-9871 (Business)
GREENWICH HOSPITAL	203-863-3000
WHITEPLAINS HOSPITAL	681-1155 / 681-0600
WESTCHESTER MEDICAL	962-3627
POISON CONTROL	1-800-336-6997 / 1-800-222-1222
SEXUAL ABUSE HOTLINE STATE:	1-800-635-1522
NATIONAL SEXUAL ABUSE HOTLINE	1-800-422-4453
Archdiocese of New York	1-212-371-1000
NYSOCFS	1-845-708-2418

Emergency Plan: Shelter In Place

Shelter in Place is a response to an emergency that creates a situation in which it is safer to remain in the building rather than to evacuate. Most situations calling for sheltering in place are in response to events that have a relatively short duration (hours). Examples of situations that might require sheltering in place: Severe weather conditions * Extreme temperatures (hot/cold) * Public disturbance that escalates to violent acts * Chemical or biological spills * Rabid animal sighting. These emergency procedures are practiced at least twice during the school year. The Primary Room where the children will be located would be the Auditorium/Gym and the Secondary Room would be the Individual Classrooms.



Shelter in Place Plans include:

- Close school and activate school's emergency plan.
- Follow reverse evacuation procedures to bring students, faculty and staff indoors *
- If visitors are in building to provide for their safety
- Ideally have access to the school wide public address system Have all children, staff, and visitors be in shelter in place pre-selected rooms
- Shut and lock all doors and lock all windows. Close blinds and shades and stay far away as possible from large windows
- Turn off heat systems
- Use Secret Password Alert to direct all children to designated areas
- Methods used to Alert children and caregivers
- Public Address System and Code word or phrase.

Methods used to insure everyone is moved to a safe location:

- Daily Attendance sheets/Class lists
- Room searches
- Head Counts.

Shelter supplies that will be stocked on site include:

Dry food, water, Parmalat, first aid kits, contact lists and class lists with phone numbers , health emergency lists/written emergency health plans, medications, Emergency numbers (Fire/Police/Poison Control/Local Health Department/OCFS etc.) flashlights and batteries, cell phones and chargers, portable battery powered radio, games and books and crayons, markers, craft paper, notepads and pencils, wet wipes, disposable cups, plates, napkins, utensils, manual can opener, scissors, tissues and gloves.

Drills will be documented and performed a minimum of twice a year. Parents will be notified in advance of the Shelter in Place drills.



Extracurricular Activities

- **During the COVID-19 Pandemic Extracurricular Activities will be suspended**
- **See Parent Handbook Addendum**

Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program offers a wide variety of Extracurricular Activities, sponsored by outside agencies. These may vary from year to year. They are:

- Cooking Crew
- Epic Explorers
- Happy Feet Soccer
- Happy Fit Olympiad
- It Takes Skills
- Kinderbox Kids
- Math Minds
- Ready, Set, Read Yoga

ALL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ARE OPTIONAL.

Family Self-Assessment Program

St. Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program uses the Center for the Study of Social Policy's Family Strengthening Self-Assessment tool for program improvement. We are actively working to assess and improve our family responsive practices. This process is spread over a period of time and hopefully will result in a meaningful action plan.



Field Trips

- During the COVID-19 Pandemic field trips will be suspended
- See Parent Handbook Addendum

Field trips are an integral part of the schools instructional program. They broaden the student's educational experiences. Field trips within our town and to nearby points of interest are scheduled by various teachers throughout the year. These trips are designed to supplement different aspects of the classroom curriculum and to introduce students to the resources of the community.

Parents will be informed of the date, purpose, destination, expense, and means of transportation and probable time of departure from school as well as the return time. No student may be permitted to go on a field trip unless their parent has given permission by completing and signing an official School Permission Form.

Food Allergies

For each child with special health care needs, food allergies, or special nutrition needs, the child's health care provider should provide the program an individualized care plan prepared in consultation with family members and the specialist involved in the child's care.

Children with food allergies shall be protected from contact with the problem food. With family consent, the program posts information about the child's allergies in the child's classroom to be used as a visual reminder to all adults who interact with the child during the day.

Health Procedures

Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Program is planned with the health and safety of your children in mind. The Medical Statement of Your Child in Childcare form and the Tuberculin Skin Test form is to be filled out by your child's physician. The completed forms should be submitted with your registration application. This is required as per Section 2164 of the New York State Health Law.



Proof of complete immunization is required **before** a child can enter the school program.

A parental consent form, which authorizes emergency medical treatment and/or transportation in the event that parents cannot be contacted when an emergency occurs, shall be on file for each child. In case of emergency where there is an injury to the child, the Director will take the following steps:

1. Notify the parent if possible.
2. Notify the doctor listed by the parent on the medical form.
3. Take the child to Greenwich Hospital or White Plains Hospital Emergency Room via ambulance or other emergency vehicle designated by Harrison Police or 911 respondents.

Please let the Director and your child's teacher know of any allergies your child has, or if he/she is on any medication. Five members of our staff have MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION TRAINING (M.A.T.). **At present we can administer emergency medications. Please contact the office for the appropriate medication consent forms. All Head Teachers and Assistant Teachers are certified in CPR and First Aid. Our school nurse, Judy Bisbano is on duty three times weekly.**

Health Policy (Illness/Injury)

- **During the COVID-19 Pandemic Health Policies have been changed refer to the Medical Protocols and Exclusion Policies**
- **See Parent Handbook Addendum**

Please keep your child home if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- Diarrhea - (within the last 24 hours)
- Vomiting - (within the last 24 hours)
- Severe nasal congestion
- Enlarged glands
- Sore Throat
- Frequent Cough
- A fever within the last 24 hours
- A contagious stage of any communicable disease



Parents should notify the Director if their child contracts a communicable disease (such as chicken pox, head lice, pink eye, strep throat) and has exposed children in the class. We will notify the parents of those children so they can anticipate a possible illness. If a child becomes ill during school, the parent will be contacted to pick up the child immediately. Use your own judgment - if you think your child is too sick to play outside, they are too sick to go to school.

IF YOUR CHILD HAS A COLD WITH A RUNNY NOSE AND A COUGH, PLEASE KEEP HIM/HER HOME. LITTLE ONES CANNOT HANDLE SECRETIONS AND SPREAD ILLNESS EASILY.

IF YOUR CHILD IS ILL WITH VOMITING AND/OR DIARRHEA HE/SHE MAY NOT RETURN TO SCHOOL UNTIL A FULL 24 HOURS WITHOUT SYMPTOMS. YOUR CHILD MUST ALSO REMAIN HOME FOR A FULL 24 HOURS WITHOUT A FEVER.

ALL RASHES MUST BE DIAGNOSED BY A PHYSICIAN AND A NOTE FROM THE DOCTOR RETURNED TO SCHOOL WITH YOUR CHILD.

IF YOUR CHILD IS DIAGNOSED WITH STREP THROAT, OR ANOTHER ILLNESS THAT REQUIRES TREATMENT WITH AN ANTIBIOTIC, HE/SHE MUST REMAIN HOME FOR A FULL 24 HOURS OF TREATMENT BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL.

OUR PROGRAM AND ITS TEACHERS WILL NOT ADMIT A CHILD WHO IS ILL.

IF YOUR CHILD SHOULD CONTRACT A COMMUNICABLE DISEASE (I.E. CHICKEN POX, STREP THROAT), PLEASE NOTIFY THE SCHOOL IMMEDIATELY. WE WILL IN TURN, NOTIFY THE FAMILIES OF ALL CHILDREN WHO WERE EXPOSED. PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD BACK TO SCHOOL AGAIN UNTIL ALL INFECTION HAS PASSED.

IF YOUR CHILD IS RECOVERING FROM AN ILLNESS AND YOU DO NOT WISH HIM/HER TO GO OUT TO THE PLAYGROUND, WE CONSIDER THAT HE/SHE IS NOT WELL ENOUGH TO BE IN SCHOOL AND WE ASK THAT YOUR CHILD REMAIN HOME UNTIL HE/SHE CAN PARTICIPATE FULLY IN THE PROGRAM.



When a student becomes sick or is injured during the school day, the teacher will send the student, accompanied by another adult, to the office. After being informed, the director and parent will make the final decision regarding continued attendance at school that day. A student should stay home at least 24 hours after having a fever, or after starting a course of antibiotics.

Homework

Homework can provide practice and drill that reinforces classroom learning. Parents can help their children by arranging a quiet, comfortable place for students to work

Immunizations

New York State School Immunization Law requires that children be up-to-date on their immunizations to attend preschool. A copy of their immunization record is mandatory and will be required before your child can enter preschool.

Inclusion

The preschool program accepts all children, including those with disabilities and unique learning needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with special needs. The staff is made aware of the identified needs of individual children. It is our belief that inclusion in our program will enrich the experience of teachers, students, and other children and their families.



Licensing Agencies

St. Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program is licensed by New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) and follows the OCFS Regulations for Child Day Cares.

OCFS Regulations are located at each school entrance and in each individual classroom or on the OCFS Website under Child Care.

The OCFS website gives you news and links to update state information, forms and more. You can access the website at <https://ocfs.ny.gov>, then proceed to FIND CHILD CARE then hit the link SEARCH FOR REGULATED CHILD CARE. Only input under school district HARRISON 10528. Scroll down and you will find the school online. The Child Care Complaint Line is 1-800-732-5207.

Location and Hours

- **During the COVID-19 Pandemic Arrival and Dismissal times will be staggered**
- **See Parent Handbook Addendum**

Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program is located at 94 Broadway, Harrison, New York, 10528.

Our hours of operation are Monday - Friday

- Half Day Programs: 8:45 to 11:30
- Full Day: 8:45 to 2:30



Lunch

Lunch is an important part of a Pre School student's day. Lunch should be nutritious and ready to eat. Parents are responsible for providing lunch for their own child which is to be sent in each day that they are here for the extended day. Parents must also provide their child with an appropriate beverage in an unbreakable container (no glass). You may send in water in a plastic container and we suggest 8 oz. bottles. All food should be brought to school in a lunch box or bag which is labeled with their name on it. We do not store children's lunches in a refrigerator and we do not warm up lunches. We are a **nut free** school and products that contain nuts or products that were manufactured in a factory where nut products are made are not permitted in school. Please consult the snack/meal pattern charts for appropriate foods, beverages and portion sizes. Or you may visit MyPlate.gov for more information.

Napping/Sleeping Arrangements

Napping and Resting Arrangements are made in writing between the parent and the program in the Pre School Registration Packet. Such arrangements shall include the area of the program where the child may rest or nap, how the child will be supervised, consistent with the requirements of section 418.8 of OCFS Regulations. The resting places are:

- Located in a safe area
- Located in a draft free area
- Will be where children are not stepped on
- Be in an area where egress is not blocked
- Allow a person to move freely and safely within the area to check on or meet the needs of children
- Be at least two feet apart from each other
- Children will be placed head to toe

Children who do not wish to nap are offered a quiet play area, or they may be seated to read a book or select a puzzle to complete, or sit at a table and draw.



Children who attend extended day classes are given a rest time daily. This is done immediately following their lunch period. Each family is asked to supply a rest mat for their child as well as individual clean mat coverings (fitted crib sheet or king size pillow case). These will be sent home weekly for laundering. Rest mats are stored separately so they do not come in contact with the sleeping surfaces of another child's rest equipment. Rest mats are cleaned daily. The rest mats are placed on the carpeting portion of the classroom. Students will be supervised by classroom personnel. Soft and soothing music is played during this period and blinds are drawn. The rest period lasts approximately 30 minutes. If a child is asleep at the end of the rest period, we will not disturb them.

During the course of a very busy morning a child in the half day program may need to rest or possibly take a short nap. The program has extra mats to accommodate that child. The classroom teachers will disinfect the mats after each use. The primary reason for this policy is to make sure children do not become irritable and it enables teachers to make the rest of the day manageable. Parents will be asked to sign off on this policy. Mats are available as needed and are stored and cleaned daily.

Further reminders:

- Mats located in approved day care space
- Mats located in safe areas of the program
- Mats located in draft-free areas
- Mats are where children will not be stepped on
- Mats are in a location where safe egress is not blocked
- Mats are placed so that a staff member can move freely and safely with the napping area in order to check on or meet the needs of children.



Newsletters

Since keeping you informed is a top priority, every month I will post a Monthly Newsletter on our website. This newsletter will have important information and reminders. It is important that we have your correct home, cell, emergency phone numbers and e-mail address in case of emergencies and up to date information regarding our program. If you change your information or would like to add additional information, please contact the office. Please advise your child's teacher, as well regarding changes. Teachers will also be sending home classroom newsletters. All newsletters are now posted on our website: info@stgregoryearlychildhood.com

Nutrition / Childhood Obesity Prevention Policies

St. Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Programs Obesity Prevention Policies: Goals, Recommendations and Potential Actions

Goal: Increase physical activity in young children

- Providing opportunities for light, moderate, and vigorous physical activity for at least 15 minutes while children are in care.
- Providing daily outdoor time for physical activity when possible
- Providing a combination of developmentally appropriate structured and unstructured physical activity experiences.
- Joining children in physical activity
- Integrating physical activity into activities designed to promote children's cognitive and social development.
- Providing an outdoor environment with a variety of portable play equipment, a secure perimeter, some shade, natural elements, an open grassy area, varying surfaces and terrain and adequate space per child.

Goal: Decrease sedentary behavior in young children

- Implementing activities for preschoolers that limit sitting or standing to no more than 30 minutes at a time.



Goal: Promote the consumption of a variety of nutritious food

- Encourage parents to provide their children with a variety of healthy foods and age appropriate portion sizes. All snacks, lunches and beverages served in the program should be consistent with the Child and Adult Care Food Program meal patterns and safe drinking water be made available and accessible to the children.

Goal: Create a healthful eating environment that is responsive to _____ children's hunger and fullness cues

- Provide meals and snacks as part of a daily routine, requiring adults to sit with and eat with the children.

Goal: Help adults increase children's healthy eating

- Provide guidance and training to parents of young children and those working with young children so they have the right tools to increase children's healthy eating.

Goal: Limit young children's screen time and exposure to food and beverage marketing

- Limiting screen time, including television, cell phone or digital media to less than 30 minutes
- Counseling parents and caregivers to limit screen time

Goal: Promote age-appropriate sleep durations among children.

- To adopt practices that promote age-appropriate sleep durations
- Creating environments that ensure restful sleep, where children sleep and there is low noise and light levels during napping
- Encouraging sleep-promoting behaviors and practices, such as calming nap routines.

Goal: Use social marketing to provide consistent information and the prevention of childhood obesity in early _____ childhood.



Our Staff

Our staff consists of an Educational Director who has a Masters Degree in Education, New York State Permanent Certification in Elementary Education, a Professional License in Supervision and Administration and many years of experience in supervision and school administration. In addition, a teaching staff of experienced and highly qualified early childhood professionals is in charge of daily instruction, with the assistance of trained classroom assistants.

Outdoor Play

We have daily opportunities for outdoor play as the weather permits and provided the weather air quality and environmental safety conditions do not pose a threat. This allows children the opportunity to develop their large muscle skills, get exercise, and be active. In cases when we cannot go outside due to weather conditions children are given the opportunity to use indoor equipment for similar activities inside.

In order to make sure that your child can play comfortably outside it is important to dress him/her according to the weather.

Parent/Guardian Involvement

Parents are the best advocates for their children. Pre-school parents are considered full partners in their child's development and learning. This is going to be an exciting year in the child's educational career. Your participation and involvement will only benefit your child's pre-school experience. Parent/Guardian involvement is a "required" component of the pre-school program. Attending at least one of the parent/child events during the year fulfills this requirement. Events include, but are not limited to: parent/teacher conferences, seasonal parties, field trips, and other day or evening pre-school sponsored events.



Parent /Teacher Conferences & Progress Reports

Conferences are available at any time by request. These may be either in person or by telephone except during class time. The Program schedules two conferences each year, one in the Fall and one in the Spring. Progress reports are issued at both these times. You are encouraged to discuss any issues regarding your child at any time during the year. We really want to work as a team with you, so please, if you need to talk with us, we are available.

Parents on Vacation

It is helpful to teachers and the school administration to be notified when parents plan to be away. If a student is living temporarily with relatives or friends or is being cared for at home by someone other than a parent, parents should notify the school.

Parent Volunteers

- **During the COVID-19 Pandemic Parent Volunteers will be limited**
- **See Parent Handbook Addendum**

Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Center considers its parent volunteers a very special resource. Parents are encouraged to help in programs and extracurricular activities. It is our expectation that each school family volunteer to work at one school event per year. Please contact the Director if you have time or skills you can donate to make our Center a better place for our students to learn and grow.

Parking and Transportation

Parents/ Guardians are responsible for their child's transportation to and from preschool. When dropping off or picking up students, parents/guardians are asked to park in the designated parking area on the school grounds or use street parking. Please do not double park in the street, park on the sidewalk, or block the driveways of local residents. Please do not allow a child to enter the building alone or walk unaccompanied. At no time should a child be left unattended in a car. We urge you to love your child at HOME and BELT them in the car. The law requires children under seven to be in an approved car seat.



Photographs of Students

Occasionally, photographs of students and school activities are taken and are used for classroom displays and the school yearbook. If a parent does not want his/her child's photograph to be made public in ways such as these, a written statement must be signed and sent to the school office by the first week of school

Physical Activity

St. Gregory the Great provides opportunities for preschoolers to have at least 15 minutes of developmentally appropriate structured and unstructured moderate to vigorous physical activity (both inside and outside). Our program supports the social-emotional, health, physical, and fine and gross motor development of children through active play. Multiple daily opportunities are offered for structured and unstructured physical activities.

- Light intensity physical activities:
 - Dressing up in costumes
 - Standing and painting
 - Slow walking
- Moderate-to-vigorous activities:
 - Running
 - Jumping
 - Playing ball games
 - Throwing, catching or kicking a ball
- Structured physical activities:
 - Gymnastics
 - Happy Feet Soccer
 - Happy Fit Olympiad
 - Creative Movement Class
- Unstructured physical activities:
 - Playing on playground
 - Dancing
 - Games (Duck Duck Goose & Red Light Green Light)



Our preschoolers have access to both indoor and outdoor areas that meet the recommended safety standards for performing large-muscle activities. Caregivers and parents in charge of preschoolers' health and well being are responsible for understanding the importance of physical activity and for promoting movement skills by providing opportunities for structured and unstructured physical activity.

Potty Training

Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program believes that children develop naturally and normally at different rates and times. Toilet training is a human landmark that is the responsibility of the family, not the Program, but the Program will support the family's effort as much as possible.

They will be supervised in the bathroom by classroom personnel and assisted when necessary. Please send children in clothing that they are able to manage independently. Assistance means: buttoning, unbuttoning clothing, zipping, reminding a child to wipe, flush, wash hands. Children will be encouraged to do the best they can and be reminded to wash their hands. Universal Precautions will be used by staff members.

Parents are responsible for providing pull-ups and a full change of clothes including socks for the child in case of a toileting accident here in school.

The child will be changed in the bathroom area under the supervision of classroom staff using Universal Precautions. If the child is unable to take off his/her own clothing, a staff member will encourage them. If the child is able to dress him/herself we will encourage this as well. This supervision will be within sight of a colleague.

We will change a child who has had a bowel accident and when this happens the clean-up must be within the presence of a colleague or family member. Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES will the child remain in the classroom until cleaned.



Pre-School Newsletters

School newsletters from the Director and the Teachers will be posted monthly on our school website. The newsletter will be on our website under News and Events. Our school website is: info@stgregoryearlychildhood.com. Songs, games, and poems are usually included in the newsletter. Also, any special events relating to pre-school will be highlighted in the newsletter along with family fun ideas for at home.

Progress Reports

We have created our own Preschool Progress Reports. The teachers have created a checklist that outlines the different levels of development for the student's age and group. These include categories such as: Social/Emotional Development, Art/Music Development, Fine/Gross Motor Development, Work Habits, and Reading/Math Readiness. The teachers developed a key that explains each level of proficiency. There is also a special section for special skills, notes or comments that may be relevant to the individual student. Conferences are conducted twice yearly with the parents; one in the Fall and one in the Spring since our program runs September to May. These conferences are between parents and teachers of the students and are held to discuss the child's progress at school and to find solutions to development progress or behavioral issues.



PTA

- During the COVID-19 Pandemic PTA meetings will take place through Zoom
- See Parent Handbook Addendum

The purpose of the PTA of Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program is to support and promote our children's education by assisting the administration and staff. Specifically, the purposes of the PTA are:

- To facilitate open communication between the School Administration, parents, faculty, and students.
- To provide support for our children's educational and recreational needs by:
 - A. Providing volunteer support for the school community
 - B. Providing social programs and educational activities for parents, students, and teachers.
 - C. Promoting the school to the parents and community.

Please look for opportunities throughout the year to become an involved member of the PTA. Your involvement is important and offers a great way to meet new friends while making a difference for the children and their education. The PTA meets at the school on the first Tuesday of each month at 9:00 a.m. PTA DUES are \$5.00 per scholastic year.

Parent Advisory Committee

A Parent Advisory Committee is an essential component of our school. Our Board acts in an advisory capacity. Parents bring their time and expertise as advisors and consultants with whom the preschool director and staff can share ideas, plans and challenges. The parent group often acts as a sounding board and brainstorming team. Parents can serve on specific committees to best utilize individual skills, such as having an accountant serve on a finance committee or human resource professional serve on a hiring committee.

Our Parent Advisory Board also takes on a more hands-on role where they provide enrichment activities and support the staff. This can take the form of volunteering in the classroom, bringing in supplies, etc. They might even arrange to bring in special guests such as a story-teller, or a magician. Parents also advocate for the school to keep its reputation strong which in turn can help enrollment and fundraising.



The Parent Advisory Board serves as a means for two-way communication between the Program staff and the parents-at large, ensuring all parents are adequately informed and effectively engaged. They are the parent voice on the board that makes certain that the parent perspective is taken on such things as the schedule. Similarly, they can deliver a unified preschool voice to the parents and perspective parents.

Governing Board

- Father. Joseph Tierney, Pastor
- Maria Gaudelli, Director
- Judy Wagner, Parish Accountant
- Parish Trustees: Dino Fabrizio & Jean Wurzburger
- Parish Finance Committee (members selected by Pastor)

Punctuality

Prompt arrival at school is expected. Late arrival disrupts class and causes a loss of instruction time. Parents/students arriving late for class must enter through the main entrance of the school and sign in at the Pre - K office.

Ratio

- **During the COVID-19 Pandemic maximum students has been modified by the Governor. Maximum during the pandemic is 15 students per class.**
- **See Parent Handbook Addendum**

The maximum number of students in a 3 year old classroom is 18 children with a teaching staff ratio of (1:7). The teaching staff ratio for 4 year olds is (1:8). The PreK & K rooms are 4 year old classrooms that hold 21 children and still maintain a teacher staff ratio of (1:8). These rooms have a larger square footage and are able to accommodate this capacity.

These ratios are to encourage adult-child interactions and promote activity among children. Teacher to child ratio is based from the OCFS licensing Standards and are staffed accordingly. The Director will maintain a current list of available substitutes for both the teacher and teacher assistant. Should one of the teaching staff need to temporarily leave the room, the teacher will call the PK Office and the director will arrange for coverage of the classroom to maintain the staff-child ratio.



Recess Policies

Weather permitting students are given recess. Decisions to have outside recess during cold weather depend upon the temperature and the wind chill factor. Shorter outside recess times are scheduled on very cold days. Always dress your child for outside recess. Students are to remain on their assigned play area during outdoor recess.

Dangerous activities such as rock throwing and snowball throwing are not permitted. Misuse or destruction of playground equipment is discouraged. Students will have supervised free time in the classroom and the gym on days when bad weather prevents outside recess. The teacher in charge usually allows talking with friends, watching approved videos, quiet games, etc.

Recess Procedures and Rules

The playground is the arena for students to grow socially. It is the hope for all students that when they have a problem, they own it as theirs, try to work it through first themselves, and then seek assistance from the staff on duty if no resolution can be found by themselves. The following are the main recess rules and procedures:

- Students will show courtesy and respect to the playground staff and follow whatever direction they give.
- All preschool students will stay within the fenced area at all times.
- In most cases students should attempt to solve their own problems. If students are not successful, they should then ask staff for help.
- No students are to be excluded from games.
- Good sportsmanship is a must.
- Fighting games are not allowed.
- A warning will be given for inappropriate behavior. A time-out from play is given if the behavior continues.
- Play should stop immediately when a signal is given that recess has ended.



Records

Applications, registration, attendance, health, parental permission forms and developmental records will be kept for each child.

Registration

Students must complete school registration before beginning pre-school. Registration includes completion of:

1. The St. Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Programs Registration/ Tuition Form
2. Copy of child's birth certificate (passport for foreign born children)
3. Copy of child's baptismal certificate (if applicable)
4. NYS Office of Children and Family Services Registration Form
5. NYSOCFS Health Screening One Time Attestation
6. Emergency card, Emergency form, Child's Pick up form and Child Development History form, Napping Policy form
7. Medical forms including up-to-date immunizations and current physical
8. The Smart Tuition enrollment form.
9. Parent Handbook Signature Page

Safe Environment

It is extremely sad to contemplate the terrible effects that the crime of child abuse has on children and young people and their families.

The mission of St. Gregory the Great "Safe Environment Program" is to insure the safety of children and young people who have been entrusted to our care in our schools.



We pursue this mission in three ways:

1. By thoroughly screening and supervising all members of the school staff, Head Teachers, Assistant Teachers, Substitutes and Maintenance personnel as well as all employees and volunteers who work with children and young people as part of their educational ministry.
2. By providing training in recognizing and reporting child abuse to appropriate civil authorities.
3. By holding all members of the staff, employees, and volunteers who work with children and young people to Christ-centered and professional codes of conduct.

Safety of the Child

Parents are responsible for the safety of a child while he/she is being transported to or from the Program. Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Program is not responsible for the safety of a child until he/she has reached the door of the classroom and his/her arrival has been acknowledged by the staff. The school ceases to be responsible for his/her safety when the child has been dismissed by the staff at the door of the classroom. Please explain this policy to anyone who brings or calls for your child. We are unable to dismiss any child to siblings or babysitters under the age of 16.



Safety Procedures

- During the COVID-19 Pandemic parents, visitors and caregivers will be greeted at the door and not admitted unless there is an emergency situation. All who enter must wear a mask and will be subject to screening questions and temperature check.
- See Parent Handbook Addendum

Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program has always adhered to a Crisis Management Plan. As of January 14, 2013, we have implemented additional policies and procedures centered around student safety.

In light of the tragic school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut that took the lives of 20 elementary students and six faculty members, school safety has become a topic of intense discussion around the country. Please be aware of the following safety measures:

- The school will be locked and inaccessible until 8:45 a.m.
- As you know our Broadway and Harrison Avenue Entrances/Exits are already equipped with a camera and intercom system. These doors are locked at all times. Simply press the button to alert school staff to your presence. The office staff will be able to see the visitor on camera and will then be able to allow access. The two playground Entrances/Exits are also locked at all times. Parents and students using these doors must ring the door bell to be admitted into the two rear classrooms.
- Parents, Students, Relatives, CareGivers, Visitors, Seits, Therapists and Guests entering the building after 9 a.m., 11:30, or 2:30 must use the glass doors on Broadway.
- The Director, Maria Gaudelli, requires that identification may be required in certain instances, and the school will continue to follow the standard sign-in procedure for each parent/visitor. The only change is that everyone must now come to the PK Office to Sign In.



- All Parents/Visitors/Independent Contractors entering the School during School Hours are required to:
 1. Enter through the Broadway Blue Doors **ONLY**
 2. Sign in at the Main Office
 3. Provide identification upon request
 4. Display a "Visitor's Pass at all times while in the school.
- The Faculty and Staff have the right to question any unknown adults when they are encountered in the school. Our aim is not to ostracize anyone in the community, nor to discourage visitors. Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program has always tried to be very warm and welcoming, and we are not going to change that. That's not what we are after.
- If you need to take your youngster from school during the day, you must sign your child out at the main office. Parents may **not** pick up children directly from the classrooms.
- Parents are only permitted to pick up their own child, unless there is another adult designated to pick up your child on your child's emergency card. The designated adult will be required to show photo identification.
- All students who participate in any extracurricular activities will be released from the Broadway Entrance (Blue Doors) by their instructors. Parents/Caregivers may not wait outside the classroom doors/corridors/hallways.
- Teaching Assistants are now monitoring and supervising school common areas i.e. corridors.
- Saint Gregory the Great has always had a Crisis Plan and we shall continue to have preparedness training and simulation drills with the children.
- All information for students is based entirely on their need and developmental age. Young children are not able to process the complexities of violence in the same way that adolescents and young adults are prepared to discuss the issue. Young children often gauge how threatening an event is by adult reactions (i.e. if caregivers act scared and frightened, young children will view the event as scary and frightening). They may be confused by what they hear and may have basic fear responses such as bad dreams, resistance to separate from their parent, and/or crying and clinginess. They respond well to basic assurances by adults and simple examples of school safety like reminding children about exterior doors being locked, child monitoring efforts on the playground, and emergency drills practiced during the school day. The goal is to reassure students that although there is always a possibility of violence occurring in a school, the probability of a school experiencing a high profile violent act is extremely low.



Following are some general key points:

1. Schools are safe places.
 2. We all play a role in school safety. We must all be observant. If anyone sees or hears something that makes them feel uncomfortable, nervous or frightened, please report it to any responsible adult.
 3. Open communication between home and school is critical to the safety and well-being of our students and your children. Let us know if you have a concern or question about school policies or your child's safety.
 4. **Keep any guns in your house locked up and away from children. Know if any of your friends have access to guns.**
- Any parent/caregiver who is called to pick up a sick child or to bring in a change of clothing due to a toileting accident must come directly to the Pre K Office.

Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program hopes to continue to build positive relationships among students, teachers, administrators, and parents, as well as providing proper student supervision. Our staff is well versed in safety plans covering essentially everything from fire drills to emergency lock-downs and will continue to be trained in each of these areas.

We are going to continue to do our best to protect all of our students and personnel. These measures have been instituted to enhance school security. We are going to do everything we can to keep our kids safe.

Scholastic Book Orders

- **During the COVID-19 Pandemic all scholastic book fairs will be conducted virtually.**

Once a month you and your child will have the opportunity to order affordable developmentally appropriate books through the Scholastic Book Club Program. Participation in the book order program is optional and you do not have to order books every month. Some parents enjoy using this opportunity to share the importance of reading books.



School Closings

In the event of severely inclement weather or mechanical breakdown, school may be closed or the starting time delayed. The same conditions may also necessitate early dismissal.

When school is closed or delayed because of snow, bad weather, or other emergencies, parents will receive a BLACKBOARD CONNECT voice or school e-mail message informing them of a closing or delay. When you receive the BLACKBOARD CONNECT e-mail from the school it will appear in the FROM category as such, St. Gregory the Great.

School closings or delays will also be posted on Channel 12 News (look for the info bar at the bottom of your TV screen). Reports in the morning will be between 6:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. If no report is heard it can be assumed that the school will be open. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE RECTORY OR THE PARISH HOUSE.** Call the school at 835-1278 for any further information. **WEATHER DAYS AND HOLIDAYS ARE MISSED DAYS; THERE ARE NO MAKE-UP SESSIONS.** On snow days, if the Harrison schools are closed, we are closed. **If the Harrison Schools have a one or two hour delay, our morning session is cancelled.** The Pre School Director has the authority to (deviate) from the Harrison School closing policies when it is deemed appropriate.

School Directory

Directory information is published with a family's name, address, telephone number, and family e-mail in addition to student name. It also includes the names of teachers with school e-mail information. This information is not to be used outside of school unless prior clearance is obtained from the Director. If a family does not wish to have this information or a portion of this information published, the Director should be notified.



Screenings

Accommodations are made to ensure both screening and assessing children in their dominant language. The screenings and assessments are done in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner, including in the appropriate language. We have a large Asian population, so we recruit parent volunteers who are bilingual to assist us when we screen and assess our Asian children who still have difficulty with the English language. Some of our students can understand English, but are not fluent in speaking the language. Some lack both skills.

Show and Tell

- **During the COVID-19 Pandemic children will not be allowed to bring personal items and toys from home. Show and tell activities will be suspended at this time.**

To encourage verbal communication and expression, children may bring an object of interest to share with the group.

Snack Time

Snack is an important part of a Pre School student's day. For many children, it is the one thing they will remember to tell you about their day. Snacks should be nutritious and ready to eat. Parents are responsible for providing snacks for their own child. Remember this is a snack not a meal. For example: fresh fruit or vegetables, graham crackers, pretzels, cheese and crackers, Gogurts/yogurt, Goldfish, etc. Parents must also provide their child with an appropriate beverage. You may send in water in a plastic container. We suggest 8 oz. bottles. If you decide to send in juice, please make sure it is 100% and is boxed.

Snack time is an important part of our program both nutritionally and socially. Many children are susceptible to life-threatening allergic reactions from certain food products. Therefore, we are a "nut free" school and serve snacks that are healthy and nutritious. Nuts, products containing nuts or products made in a factory where nut products are produced are not permitted in school. If a student brings in an inappropriate snack, it will be sent home with an explanatory note to the parent. An alternative snack will be provided by the program.

P.M. students are also require a peanut- free lunch. Please consult the snack memo in your portfolio for the schools list of appropriate foods and beverages.



Candy will not be served or distributed at Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program on any occasion.

If your child has food allergies, please inform the Director and their teacher.

Our school is not participating in CACFP. However, we do provide parents with a Snack/Lunch Information sheet at our Parent Orientation and again at the beginning of the school year suggesting appropriate and nutritious food that their child/children may consume at school as well as home. We also distribute to our families the CACFP Meal Pattern for Breakfast, Snack, Lunch and Supper. The meal pattern chart shows the minimum amounts of each component that must be made available to each child.

Spiritual Development

Because the person of Jesus is the center of our school community, Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program provides a conscious program of spiritual development for each of its students. The school day is opened with a prayer. We celebrate the seasons of the church year, and we integrate special liturgical celebrations into our school life.

Staff

Who Works in the Preschool

Program Director, who supervises the preschool program. The Director meets all qualifications required by the Office of Children and Family Services and the New York State Department of Education.

Head Teachers:

Part Time and Full Time Teachers holding



Staff Qualifications

We take pride in hiring and retaining a well- educated, trained and experienced staff. Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program's Staff consists of: a Program Director, Head Teachers, Assistant Teachers, a School Nurse, and a School Secretary.

Staff Development

In order that our staff keep up to date in the field of Early Childhood Education and communicate and plan together, we have regular staff meetings, several times during the year. We will advise parents of schedule changes relating to in-service training sessions. We appreciate your cooperation on these days to enable us to delve into topics of great importance to us, and ultimately to your children. We are mandated by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services to complete a specific number of hours of training each school year.

Professional Development

All staff members are required to have a minimum of 15 hours of training every year. Professional Development is focused on the following areas: Principles of Child Development, Nutrition and Health Needs of Children, Child Day Care Program Development, Safety and Security Procedures, Business Record Maintenance and Management, Child Abuse and Maltreatment (Identification and Prevention) , Statues and Regulations Pertaining to Child Abuse and Maltreatment, and Education and Information of the Identification/Diagnosis and Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome. Every employee is required to complete two background checks, are finger printed, and screened through the NYS Central Registry of Child Abuse and the Department of Justice.



Toilet Training

Toilet learning is an important time in a child's development. For children who are unable to use the toilet consistently here are the following procedures:

- Changing of pull-ups will be done in a designated private area.
- Parents are responsible for providing pull-ups and an extra set of clothes to change the child in case of a toileting accident here in school.
- Staff will check children for signs that pull-ups are wet or contain feces regularly.
- Pull-ups and clothing that are soiled by urine or feces are immediately placed in a plastic bag without avoidable handling and is disposed of.

Toys From Home:

Because toys from home can be lost or misused by other children, they are not permitted at school.

Transportation

All transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian. St. Gregory the Great does not provide any transportation.

Tuition

Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program provides tuition payment options to parents through Smart Tuition, a tuition management company that is set up exclusively to manage the schools financial needs by receiving payments, processing them and depositing funds into the school's bank account. Smart Tuition collects and manages all tuition. Your enrollment forms have already been mailed to you. Please make sure the form is complete, signed and corrections made, and return to the school as soon as possible.



There are several convenient payment schedules and methods available. Following enrollment with Smart Tuition you will receive a confidential sign-in and password access to your account on-line. You can review your account and make payments

24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The parent contact number for Smart Tuition is (888) 862-8828. You can access your personal account information at www.smarttuition.com, where you will also be able to make payments, view balances due or paid, and find answers to commonly asked questions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING SMART TUITION

1. There is an annual fee of \$45 per family per year for Smart Tuition to manage your account. This fee is included in your first statement.
2. All tuition payments are due on the first of each month. Any payment not received by Smart Tuition by the 5th of each month will incur a \$40 late fee.
3. Any failed electronic payment or dishonored check will also incur a \$30 fee.
4. If you pay tuition in full before August 1st you do not have to pay the \$45 Smart Tuition fee. If interested reach out to the school office.

Payment Schedule you can choose from:

1. Annually: One payment August 1st
2. Semiannually: Two equal payments August 1st & January 1st
3. Monthly: Ten Equal payments First payment due August 1st and last payment due May 1st



Payments 2021-2022

<u>Program</u>	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Semi Annual</u>	<u>Monthly</u>
3 Half Days	\$5,113.00	\$2556.50	\$511.30
5 Half Days	\$7,103.00	\$3551.50	\$710.30
5 am's/3pm's	\$9,040.00	\$4520.00	\$904.00
5 full Days	\$9,794.00	\$4897.00	\$979.40

There will be no refund or discount due to absenteeism or closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual classes will replace onsite classes. There is also a non-refundable \$225.00 registration fee due with the program application.

Valuables

The Program's Director and staff cannot be responsible for valuables which students bring to school. It is recommended that students leave all valuables at home.



Visitors

- During the COVID-19 Pandemic visitors wear a mask and follow the Medical Protocols and procedures
- See Parent Handbook Addendum

It is Saint Gregory the Great Early Childhood Enrichment Program's policy that ALL visitors sign-in and out when visiting the school. All visitors must enter the school by the Main Entrance (blue front doors). This policy is set in place for the safety of all students attending our program. If a parent wishes to speak with a teacher, he/she must do so outside of class time by making an appointment with the teacher. The best time to see a teacher is before 8:30 a.m. or after 11:30 a.m. or 2:30 p.m.

Website

We now have a website for you to visit. For anyone who is interested in our program, please direct them here as it is filled with everything they need to know, including applications, tuition information and our variety of extracurricular programs. If you know of anyone interested in finding our more information about our pre-school and the programs we offer, please direct them to the website, info@stgregoryearlychildhood.com or email Ms. Gaudelli at stgregoryecep@gmail.com

What to Wear

It is important for your child to wear clothing that they will be comfortable in throughout the day. Remember that they will be participating in a variety of activities while in preschool including art and outside play. Please dress for the weather—appropriate outdoor clothing is a must!

