



Dear Parents and/or Guardians:

Attached to this letter you will find our **Early Childhood Program** supplemental handbook. This handbook was created to help cover the different rules and regulations that are part of the Early Childhood program. The rules, procedures, discipline policy, and financial responsibilities described in the Handbook have been established to create the best possible atmosphere for the rights of others and the individual's responsibility to perform daily in the best way possible.

After you have read the handbook contents, please sign, detach, and return this letter. We look forward to a successful school year with all of us working together for the success of your child.

Mrs. Mary Reynolds, Principal
Mrs. Joan Hubbell, Teacher/VPK Director

Christ is the cornerstone of St. Raphael Catholic school where we empower all to strive for academic excellence. Provide faith filled service to others, reflect Catholic values and become responsible leaders of the church and community.

St. Raphael Catholic Early Childhood Program is Accredited by the FCC . Our Pinellas County License is 3482NP.

I have received a copy of the St. Raphael Catholic School Early Childhood Program Handbook, which includes discipline and expulsion policy. I understand that the Catholic faith is infused throughout the curriculum.

I agree to abide by all stated information pertaining to St. Raphael Catholic School and VPK policies.

Student's Name _____

Parents or (Guardian) Signature _____

Date _____



St. Raphael Catholic School

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2022-2023 EC-4 Program Handbook

A companion piece to the St. Raphael Catholic School Parent Handbook

Mission Statement:

Christ is the cornerstone of Saint Raphael Catholic School where we empower all to strive for academic excellence, provide faith-filled service to others, reflect Catholic values, and become responsible leaders of the church and community.

Educational Philosophy:

The goal of the St. Raphael Catholic School Early Childhood VPK Program is to provide every child with the opportunity to grow in a developmentally appropriate, safe, loving, and creative environment. We are especially focused on the social, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of our students. We will provide the appropriate program to guide your child to his/her full potential within an environment that is non-threatening and to help the child experience the intrinsic satisfaction of success. Of course, we are just the facilitators in your child's life; you as the parent are the true teacher. We will create a mutual respect and communication between our school and you to enhance the child's successful development.

Non-Discrimination Policy: The Office of Catholic Schools and Centers of the Diocese of St. Petersburg restate their open admission policy, namely that no person, on the grounds of race, color, national or ethnic origin is discriminated against in admission or in receiving services operated by them. Nor do they hire, assign, promote, discharge, or pay staff, fringe benefits, job training, classification, referral, and other aspects of employment on the basis of race, color, disability, age, national or ethnic origin, or gender of the individuals they are to serve.

Accreditation & Licensing: St. Raphael Early Childhood Program is accredited by Gold Seal VPK provider, Florida Catholic Conference, and is a Member of The National Catholic Education Association. Our center is licensed with Pinellas County License Board, #3482NP. Regular inspections by licensing specialists, as well as the Health Department, help ensure compliance with the expected standards of care. Visit the license board at www.pclb.org for additional information.

Welcome Families: St. Raphael Catholic School welcomes new and returning families to our school. Inquiring families tour our school, meet our staff, ask questions; receive a program handbook, curriculum outlines, and additional pertinent materials to assist with the transition from home to school. Families are welcomed by host families from the Home and School association. Family Orientation is held each August and Open House is held just before the start of school giving families and children an opportunity to explore our classroom and school settings together.

Admission policies: Children must be four years old on or before September first of the school year for which they are registering and have the following records.

Enrollment Records: Children must have the following forms fully completed and on file before they may attend the center. Forms are to be updated each year. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to immediately inform the office in writing of any changes in phone numbers, emails addresses, physical addresses, emergency information, health conditions, etc.

Families will be notified prior to the expiration of any items noted below. A child will not be permitted to attend school if either of the Health Records are expired. See important details below.

1. Health Records:

- A. Current Physical Examination (Date valid for 2 years)
- B. Certificate of Immunization (Current & Updated)

*As per diocesan policy, Religious Exemptions with regards to Immunizations are not accepted.

* If an immunization record indicates that the child's shot record has expired, parents must provide evidence of a scheduled appointment to receive immunizations.

If a lapse in immunization schedule occurs, a child in care may not have current immunizations.

2. Emergency Medical Release – Notarized and renewed annually.

3. Child Enrollment Record
4. Emergency Record Card
5. Handbook and Policy Agreement Form (Both parent/guardian signatures required)
6. Signed receipt of the Flu Brochure
7. Food Experience Permission Form/Nutritional guidelines
8. Promotional Media Release (Both parent/guardian signatures required)
9. Permit to Remove Form (Both parent/guardian signatures required)
10. Parent Communication Form
11. Certified copy of the Shared Parental Responsibility of the Final Judgment of the Disillusion of Marriage (If applicable), to include the approved Parenting Plan.
12. Medical Support Plan (for children requiring medication during school hours)
13. IEP's – (Individualized Educational Plans for children with diagnosed special needs)
14. Field Trip Permission Form (to attend Mass and Specials)

Additional Records For VPK

1. Certificate of Eligibility
2. VPK Agreement/Attendance Policy

Continuity of Care:

Open houses are scheduled yearly to allow families to visit our school, to tour our facilities, meet our staff and visit the classrooms prior to registration. Orientation at the beginning of school is designed to help children and families become acquainted and to help ease the transition into school life. Children are assigned to teaching staff for one full school year as a means of providing ongoing personal contact, meaningful learning activities, supervision and immediate care as needed to protect the well-being of the child.

To assist families with transition to kindergarten, children who continue their education at St. Raphael Catholic School meet the kindergarten teacher and visit the kindergarten classroom during Step-Up day. Children who are set to attend Pinellas County schools will be provided Preschool Kindergarten Partnership Information forms, with signed parental approval.

Operational Policies and Procedures:

St. Raphael Catholic School offers the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program. Our program takes place Monday through Friday from 7:50 a.m. - 11:15 a.m. In order for your child to receive the high-quality benefits of this program it is essential that your child is here on time daily for the full three and one-half hours.

In the event your child will be absent please call the school or send an e-mail so we may plan accordingly. In the event that your child exceeds the permitted absences, he or she, may be withdrawn from the VPK program at our site, at the Principal's discretion (see attendance policy). You may choose to continue your child's care with us by using our private pay program.

EC-4/VPK Hours

VPK only is scheduled from 7:50 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Lunch bunch/part time is scheduled from 11:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Full day is scheduled from 7:50 a.m. – 2:50 p.m.

If the school has an early dismissal scheduled the pick-up time is 12:00 (noon) unless your child attends extended care.

Arrival: Student Drop off Procedure:

Parents should escort EC-4 children to the classroom on the first week of school. Then follow car line procedures for drop off thereafter.

Late Arrival and Early Release:

If your child arrives after school starts, you must accompany him/her to the school office to be signed in, per Diocesan Policy. No child is ever to be dropped off outside of the office or church to walk in by him/ herself or left unsupervised at any time. If a child needs to leave early, parents must enter the school office first.

Morning Drop-Off Procedures for Students (EC 4 - 8th grade)

1. Enter at the Snell Isle Boulevard parking lot, proceed to the back of the property and drive along the cones.
2. Drivers are to circle around and exit at the west end of the parking lot
3. DO NOT DROP STUDENTS AT THE BAND ROOM, FRONT OF THE SCHOOL OR BY THE BRICK PAVER AREA BY THE BREEZEWAY
4. Enter at the Snell Isle Boulevard parking lot, proceed to the back of the property and drive along the cones.
5. Drivers are to circle around and exit at the west end of the parking lot
6. Parents and guardians are asked to NOT park and walk with your child(ren) and cross through the morning or afternoon carlines. It is our goal to maintain a safe environment for all children in the classrooms and throughout the campus at all times.
7. **If parents do park and walk with their children it is their responsibility to keep their children with them at all times
8. All car lines are CELL PHONE FREE ZONES. Parents are asked to not use cell phones when in the car line for the safety of all children.

EC-4 Dismissal:

11:15 dismissal: Children will be escorted out the walk gate by the Parish Center to meet their parents. Parents should form a car line at the speed bump. Parents remain in their car and their child will be brought to the car.

12:30 dismissal: Children will be escorted out the walk gate by the Parish Center to meet their parents. Parents should form a car line at the speed bump. Parents remain in their car and their child will be brought to the car.

2:50 dismissal: EC4 students follow the regular dismissal procedure

2:50 Dismissal Pick-Up Procedures for Students (EC 4-8th grade CARPOOLS)

All EC4-8th grade students and their carpools are to be picked up on the north (back) side of the school at 2:50.

1. Enter at the Snell Isle Boulevard parking lot, proceed to the back of the property and drive along the cones.
2. A card with the students' name(s) should be displayed on the passenger side visor.
3. Drivers are to circle around to the left and exit at the west end of the parking lot.
4. If your students are not present when your car goes through the line you may be asked to park along the fence on the east side of the basketball court and wait.

Part of the VPK program is verifying your child's attendance at the end of the month by signing the monthly form. We expect that you will verify your child's attendance no earlier than the last VPK day of the month and no later than ten VPK days after the end of the month.

Fees

VPK only: 7:50-11:15 -no charge State contribution VPK voucher

There is no registration fee or general fee for VPK students.

Part-time/lunch bunch: 7:50-12:30- \$55.00/week plus VPK Voucher (\$1980 for the year)

Full-time: 7:50-2:45- \$4530.00 plus VPK Voucher

Full-time: 7:50-2:45- without VPK voucher \$7008.00 for the year

Children may attend the VPK program without using our other care services, however, you should know that we do extend instruction beyond VPK hours and your child will continue to learn while in our full day program.

An Extended Day Program is available for children needing to stay after school dismissal at 2:50, contact the Director Mrs. Bonnie Haire for more information.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL: When a student withdraws from school; it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school office. If a parent cannot come to school, a note or an email should be sent to the school office. A forwarding address and withdrawal date must be provided at the time of the transfer request. The Early Learning Coalition/VPK will be notified and the child will be terminated from our program. If the student attends hours beyond the state paid VPK voucher hours or does not use the voucher, the following fees for the withdrawal will apply. The student will be charged the full monthly

tuition payment for the month he/she leaves, if it occurs after the 15th of that month. If the student is withdrawn before the 15th of the month, half of the tuition (for that month) will be refunded. The first tuition payment is not applied towards a withdrawing month's payment and is not refundable. Since the General Student Fee is added to the 10-month tuition payments this fee must be paid in full at the time a student withdraws.

Schedule:

Parents will receive a copy of your child's daily class schedule from the classroom teacher. Occasionally, there will be slight changes due to current circumstances (e.g. changes in the weather). Also, a copy of the schedule is posted on the classroom bulletin board, along with a copy of the weekly lesson plan.

Curriculum:

St. Raphael Catholic School strives to infuse our faith beliefs throughout every aspect of our early childhood program, instilling our Catholic faith in the minds and hearts of the children and families that we serve. We provide a faith-based quality, developmentally appropriate early childhood program for the children in our care. Children are encouraged to be actively involved in the learning process to experience a variety of activities and materials. The curriculum guides the teachers' development and intentional implementation of learning that aligns with our philosophy of early childhood education and allows us to meet program benchmarks.

We currently utilize curriculum from the following resources:

Starfall Pre K Curriculum

Creative Curriculum

Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards for Four Year Olds (2017)

Religion Series: Allelu Growing and Celebrating with Jesus Ages 4-5, Our Sunday Visitor (USCCB approved)

Diocesan standards and benchmarks for Safe Environment

Assessments and Screenings:

The St. Raphael Early Childhood conducts assessments as an integral part of our program. Our curriculum goals and objectives guide the ongoing assessment of children's progress this includes:

1. Florida VPK Assessments administered 3 times during the year
2. Starfall Pre-K assessment checklist
3. The Ages and Stages Behavioral Assessment & Developmental Screening Tool, identifies and monitors normal development and possible developmental delays, where a delay may be suspected
4. Student Support Plan for children with special needs (IEP)
5. Individual child portfolio with work samples

6. Teacher developed assessment tools
7. Input from parent/teacher conferences
8. Teacher informal observations and anecdotal notes
9. FDLRS/Child Find (Florida Diagnostic Learning & Resource Service) of Pinellas County provides developmental screenings (speech, hearing, vision, behavior, developmental delays, and language) for all children. Parents may initiate a screening and/or teacher may suggest a screening if observations and other source of information indicate a concern in these areas, as well as screenings through the Early Learning Coalition.
10. Screening assessment administered by the school resource teacher.

Discipline & Expulsion Policy, Intent & Purpose:

We are committed to each child's social emotional development. The St. Raphael Catholic ECC staff recognizes that children are at different stages of development and self-discipline skills. Throughout the day positive techniques of guidance that include anticipation and elimination of potential problems, re-direction, modeling, natural consequences and encouragement of appropriate behavior are used to minimize behavioral problems. Behavior concerns tell us that children need more time, support and practice to develop their social and emotional skills. When serious concerns arise, we will partner with parents and professionals who specialize in supporting children's social and emotional health. On rare occasions, we may work with families to seek the best care for their child if our program no longer meets the needs of an individual child.

The goal of maintaining a positive and safe atmosphere within the classroom is explained to the children. The children assist the teaching staff in developing the following expectations.

1. We use helping hands
2. We use kind words
3. We use walking feet indoors
4. We use listening ears
5. We use gentle, not hurtful hands or feet with our friends

Discipline:

Licensing prohibits children from being subjected to discipline, which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest, or toileting. Childcare personnel never use physical punishment such as shaking or hitting and do not engage in psychological abuse or coercion. Childcare personnel never use threats or derogatory remarks and neither threaten to withhold

or withhold food as a form of discipline.

Reasons for Expulsion, Suspension or Dismissal:

Every effort will be made to prevent the expulsion or dismissal of children from our program.

However, St. Raphael Catholic School reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for reasons, not limited to, but including, the following:

- Non-payment or excessive late payment of fees/tuition.
- Failure to adhere to policies and procedures as outlined in our Family Handbook.
- The parent/guardian exhibits behavior which is detrimental to the health and well-being of the children and staff in a classroom or negatively interferes with the normal functioning of the classroom and/or program. This includes but is not limited to: vulgarity, intimidation, harassment, or violation of child care licensing regulations.
- Failure of the child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time; the child may not be ready developmentally at this time.
- The child has needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.
- The child's behavior threatens the health & safety of him/herself, the other children or staff. Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
- Bullying or hurting other children (pushing, kicking punching, cursing, etc.)
- Threatening other children with violent words.
- Other – at the discretion of the school principal.

Steps Taken Prior to Expulsion:

Positive Behavior intervention supports include:

- Screenings Classroom/environment assessments
- Reaching out to inclusion specialists, specialized care teams, mental health consultants where available.

Proactive Actions that will be taken to prevent expulsion:

- Staff will try to redirect the child from negative behavior
- Staff will teach the child appropriate skills to address challenging behaviors
- Staff will reassess the environment, activities, and supervision
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children;
- Staff will celebrate appropriate behaviors

- *Staff will always maintain strong connections with the child*
- *Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules*
- *The school principal will be consulted and may speak with the child*
- *Incident report is written and signed by parents/guardian*
- *Family will be notified of disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion*
- *Teachers will work with families to develop positive behavior support strategies for continuity between home and school.*
- *With parental consent, a specialized care team will be formed to address how to best support the child; through observations, accommodations, and, if necessary, outside agency referrals.*
- *If inappropriate behaviors persist the family may be called to pick up their child.*
- *If the behavior does not improve upon the child's return to the center, the child is suspended for a period up to 5 days with the possibility of termination.*

Communication: Fostering Positive Relationships with Families

Our families...

Communicate regularly with staff to ensure consistency in guidance between home and school. Partner with us and allow us time to work with all children, including those needing higher levels of support. Understand and acknowledge that children are learning appropriate behavior skills and the ECC strives to serve the individual needs of each child while ensuring the safety of all children. Know that to best serve children, we may need to partner with local professionals to help give a child the best foundation for their social, emotional and academic success.

Transition to Another Provider:

On the rare occasion that another setting is needed, we may work with families to seek the best care for their child if it is agreed that our program can no longer meet their needs.

Special & Individual Needs of Children:

We attempt to meet the educational needs of all children; however, for children with special needs, our center may only be equipped to provide an appropriate environment for those students with mild learning deficits. We are not equipped to care for children with certain special needs; therefore, any such care is conditional upon the consent of the Principal. All children who enroll at St. Raphael EC-4 are placed on a two-month probationary period

pending evaluation to the child's needs. Parents of children with special needs are required to be forthcoming and share all educational evaluation information (IEPs etc.), disabling conditions, prior specialized placements/identification, and familial issues, which may require special educational programming. The probationary period is still in effect, as this will allow the administration and staff time to determine the appropriateness of placement in our program. In all cases, the child must be able to participate and substantially benefit from our program without risk to himself/herself or to the other children. We make every attempt to work with children on an individual basis and it is important for us to know their strengths and weaknesses. If there is anything special we need to know about your child (e.g. hearing or speech difficulties, changes in family structure, history of any behavioral problems), please inform the school and the teacher before school starts, so we can meet with you. Our staff collaborates with specialists assigned to children to provide support and plan appropriately to meet individual needs. The more we know about your child, the better we will be able to meet those needs. St. Raphael EC staff encourages and supports families in making the primary decisions about services that their children may need, and we encourage families to advocate for those needed services.

Family Involvement

Communication:

Parents may contact the school office by phone at 727-821-9663 or email the school office srsoffice@st-raphaels.com or contact the teacher through school email.

Parents are requested to send a red folder in their child's backpack. Each day this folder will be sent home and must be returned to school the next day. This is our way of communicating with you daily. It is your responsibility to check this folder every day.

If at any time you wish to conference with the teacher, kindly send a note or email and the teacher will arrange a time and date that is convenient to both parties. Emails will be responded to within 48 hours. Talk with your child about the activities at school. If they do not share details don't be too concerned, this is normal for this age.

School Newsletters (The Royal Report), Pre-K weekly news and calendars will be sent home from the office through e-mail. They will keep you informed about what is happening throughout the school. Parents will receive instructions on sign-in information on the school communication system RenWeb. FACTS system.

We encourage you to visit our web site: www.straphaelschool.net.

We are firmly committed to working with you and we strongly encourage your involvement and participation in every aspect of your child's education.

Community Resources:

Diocese of St. Petersburg Schools/centers www.dioceseofstpete.org

FDLRS-FI Diag. Learning and Resource service <https://www.fdlrs.org/child-find>

Early Learning Coalition Pinellas/VPK

www.elcpinellas.org

Johns Hopkins All Childrens Hospital

www.allkids.org

Health Department www.pinellashealth.com/index.org

Confidentiality Policy:

Within St. Raphael EC-4 confidential and sensitive information will be shared with employees of the center on a “need to know” basis in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential information about staff, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents as St. Raphael EC strives to protect everyone’s right to privacy. Outside of St. Raphael EC confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except when otherwise provided by the law. Parents will complete “Consent to Release Confidential Information Form” indicating what information is to be shared outside of St. Raphael Catholic School, persons with whom the information is to be shared, and the reason for sharing the information. Additionally, you may observe children who are disabled or who may exhibit behaviors that may appear inappropriate. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. Staff member are prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

Parent Teacher Conferences:

As required by VPK, EC-4 has two conferences per year; a fall conference (school-wide, school is closed) and a spring conference (school is in session, meetings scheduled before-after school or during lunch). However, should any concerns arise during or between these times a conference may be scheduled at a mutually agreed time.

Visitors:

To promote a healthy and safe learning environment, all visitors must report to the school office, and must sign in.

Birthdays:

Birthdays are a wonderful part of being in school. Please give your teacher advanced notice of what you want to do for your child’s birthday in the way of treats for the class. Treats must be store bought in the original sealed container, and easy to distribute. Please check with the teachers to discuss if there are any allergies to be considered. Summer birthdays may be celebrated in May. We are not permitted to distribute birthday invitations in class.

Classroom Parties and Celebrations:

We strive to provide a safe and appropriate environment for the children enrolled in our EC-4 program. We encourage parents to attend classroom parties. However, we cannot accommodate siblings/younger children during classroom events and ask that parents who plan to attend to make other arrangements for younger children. For school events that are held outside of the classroom, picnics, concert, events in the Parish Center siblings are invited to attend under parental supervision

Field trips:

EC-4 children do not leave school property; however, we do attend Mass and specials. In order to participate, Licensing requires parents sign the field trip permission form.

Volunteer Requirements:

A Level II screening is required for all employees, volunteers, clergy and many contractors or vendors who provide ongoing services. Recertification is required every 5 years.

A Credit Card is required at the time of registration or processing. A fee of \$51.00 (Volunteers) or \$58.58 (Employee or Vendor) will be charged. (Reimbursement would have been discussed before completing this process).

Register for fingerprints <https://dospsep.org>

On the left side of the page is a box for Application Registration. Click on the box to proceed.

You will be brought to the FLORIDA APPLICANT EXPERIENCE. Read the page and then click the box on the bottom to acknowledge and proceed.

Select the Location you wish to use, and then choose the date you wish to go. Available times will be listed. (note the unique number at the top of the page)

Once your appointment has been scheduled you then choose the applicant type from the list (Employee, Volunteer, Vendor, Clergy, etc.)

Next, select the location (St. Raphael Church or School).

Complete the demographic information requested.

Continue to the waiver section and payment section.

After you complete the scheduled appointment the results will be sent to either the Church or School within 2 days of your appointment.

Safe Environment Training (SEP) is required every 5 years for all clergy, employees. It is also required for volunteers who seek unsupervised access to Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults. There are no fees for these training.

Go to <http://stpetesburg.CMGconnect.org> to create an account and register.

Select our Diocese – Diocese of St. Petersburg

Complete the Demographics information (name, address, etc.).

Select your primary entity (St. Raphael School or Church)

Select your role (in the dropdown) and then mark your activity.

Select the REQUIRED SAFE ENVIRONMENT Training for St. Petersburg.

Complete the disclaimer and Safe Haven – It's Up to You training curriculum.

Once all elements are complete (video and questions) download and print the Certificate.

Keep a copy of the certificate and forward a copy (via paper copy or email) to the Parish or School Office (srsoffice@st-raphaels.com) as soon as possible.

Health and Safety:

It is imperative for the parent to send in a written note stating the reason and dates absent when your child returns to school. (Upon 5 consecutive absences) a person other than the child's parent must show the reason for the absences e.g. a physician.)

Sickness:

We need your cooperation with the following health policies. In the event the following should occur, we ask that you keep your child home:

- A temperature of 100 degrees or higher accompanied by
- A deep cough
- Earache or draining ear
- Spasms or coughing
- Sore throat
- A rash of any kind until diagnosed, treated, or declared harmless by a physician
- Early cold (coughing/ sneezing) to very bad colds with colored discharge
- Diarrhea or vomiting within the previous 24 hours
- Vomiting and diarrhea (free from vomiting and diarrhea and fever for 24 hours before returning to school)
- Inflammation or discharge from the eyes
- Communicable disease (chicken pox, strep throat etc)
- Head lice
- Covid 19, refer to St. Raphael School Re-Opening Plan 2020-2021, p. 13

If your child becomes ill at school, you will be notified immediately, and you are asked to respond as quickly as possible to retrieve your child from school. Your cooperation with this is extremely important.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children must present a doctor's note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program. St. Raphael Catholic School reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the Principal, Director or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.

Children excluded from the program due to a fever may not return to the program until they are fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 36 hours. If your child is sent home due to a fever, he/she is not permitted to return to school the following day at a minimum. Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea which occur 3 or more times in a 24-hour period. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume.

Please inform the teacher of any food, environmental allergies, or health conditions that concern your child.

Medications:

Teachers are not permitted to administer medication.

Prior to accepting any medications (prescription or over the counter) for your child, the following two forms must be completed and on file in school office:

- 1) Medication Plan –completed by your child’s doctor and
- 2) Medication Record –completed and signed by parents for each medication to be administered. Specific trained staff members will administer medication as outlined on the form signed by parents.

- Authorized staff will administer ONLY those medications: 1) prescribed by a physician that are in the original pharmacy container; 2) prescribed specifically for that child (first and last name on prescription); and 3) that are within the expiration date noted on the medication.
- All medications must include how to administer and how to store the medication. Do not leave any medication with your child or the classroom teacher.
- Instructions must be specific beyond AS Needed. Specific symptoms and signs must be detailed by the doctor.
- All required medications are stored in a safe manner inaccessible to children. No undocumented medications will be given to your child. Preventative, over the counter medicines such as diaper cream, lip balm, and cough drops require a Medication Record to be completed by the parent. Sunscreen and insect repellent should be applied at home before coming to school if and when applicable. A sunscreen with UVA and UVB protection of SPF 15 or higher is recommended.

For children with health needs, parents will authorize St. Raphael Catholic School to share that information with those on staff who need this access to best meet the child’s needs.

Accident/Incident Reports:

In the event of an accident or unusual incident, parents will receive, in written form, an account of the event. The Pinellas County License Board requires parent signatures on the accident/incident report. Additionally, unusual injuries must be reported to the Diocese as well as to Licensing.

Toilet Training:

In order for your child to be accepted into this program, your child MUST be toilet trained. There are no exceptions, diapers, and pull-ups are not permitted, as we do not have a changing area, as required by licensing.

Dress Code:

All children should wear comfortable play clothes that are easy to remove when using the bathroom. Please, no long dresses, boots, sandals, crocs, or necklaces as they pose a safety hazard for the child during playground time.

- If a parent desires sun block for their child it must be applied by the parent at home. Licensing prohibits staff from applying sun block and it cannot be in the child's backpack.
- For safety, jewelry should be kept at home; also, these items have a way of getting lost during playground time.
- All children are required to have a labeled change of clothing in their cubbies.
- If there is a "potty accident" the teacher will assist the child in changing their clothing. Our regulations require that the handling of clothing soiled with urine and feces be minimized: in such a case, soiled clothing will be placed in plastic bag and sent home to be laundered. Parents will receive an Accident/Incident Report to sign if this occurs.

Hand Washing:

All children, staff and parent volunteers in the classroom are required to wash their hands upon arrival at school. Children, staff, and volunteers will be required to follow strict hand washing procedures throughout the day.

1. Upon arrival in the classroom
2. After toileting
3. After handling bodily fluids e.g. blowing nose, sneezing, coughing, mucus, vomit
4. Before snack and meals
5. After playing in water shared by two people
6. After handling pets
7. Upon returning from the playground

Nutrition/Food:

****Families will receive a separate hand-out from the teacher detailing nutritional guidelines.**

Food Safety:

Snacks:

Families will provide their child's daily snack for morning and afternoon (if the child stays full day) in separate labeled bags. Re-usable containers can be used and must be labeled with your child's name. Containers will be returned daily for cleaning.

Water Bottles:

Children are encouraged to bring in a labeled water bottle, daily.

Lunch:

Those children attending the afternoon “Lunch Bunch” or afternoon program are required to bring a nutritious lunch and drink or purchase a school lunch. We are not able to refrigerate or heat lunch items. Candy, gum, and carbonated drinks will not be accepted and will be sent home. All lunch boxes and inside containers should be name labeled.

Food Safety:

1. Treats: any food treats brought to the center for the purpose of sharing with the class must be store bought in the original container. It is a Health Dept. regulation that no homemade food is served in the classroom (the exception, class cooking projects).
2. Parents MUST SIGN THE Food Experience permission form for their child to receive treats during birthday celebrations and class celebration activities.
3. Chilled foods: Some foods brought from home need to stay cold with non-toxic ice packs. Some foods that need to stay cold include: meat and poultry sandwiches, or salads: tuna and egg salads: milk, cheese or yogurt: opened cans of fruit or pudding: peeled or cut fruits and vegetables. Some foods that don't need to be kept cold include: cookies, crackers, commercially dried fruit, unopened cans of fruit or pudding, unopened juice boxes, and fruit-filled pastries.
4. Allergies: For children with specific food allergies (documented on your medical/registration form), parents may provide extra snacks to be kept at school to use as needed for “special occasions.”
5. Sharing of Food: The children will be taught not to share their food with others at school for safety reasons, such as allergies.

Cafeteria Lunch:

A nutritionally balanced lunch is offered from Saltwater Catering for students EC-4 – GR5 FOR \$4.05 per meal (saltwatercateringco.com), more information on the school website.

Rest time:

All students have rest time if they are staying for a full day. Your child may bring a SMALL blanket with which to nap. THIS MUST FIT INSIDE THEIR CUBBY. Please label this item with your child's name. All blankets will be sent home for laundering at the end of the week.

Personal Belongings:

The following items are required the first day of school.

1. A complete set of labeled clothes (including underwear& socks) in a Ziploc bag
2. A labeled backpack or book bag, no rolling backpacks, please.
3. A labeled snack, if your child is staying for lunch, please label items as required for SNACK or LUNCH.
4. A labeled water bottle

Items from Home:

Unless requested by the teacher, please do not allow your child to bring items to school. Parents will be asked to leave items such as, but not limited to toys, cell phones, jewelry, money, etc. in the car or at home. Please check your child's backpack daily to review and remove items coming home from school and to remove items that should not be coming to school. Your cooperation is appreciated.

Emergency Closing of School:

In case of inclement weather conditions or some other emergency, school closings will be announced by email, text, or phone. It is imperative that the office has your most up to date contact information. The decision to close the school is usually made by the principal in conjunction with the pastor and Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools and Centers. Whenever the Pinellas County School District has to close schools due to weather conditions (hurricane, flooding, etc.) or some other type of emergency situation, St. Raphael Catholic School **may or may not also be closed.**

Mandated Safety Plans

➤ ASBESTOS - Our school has an approved asbestos management plan. This Management Plan is on file in the school office and is available for review ➤ RADON - The Occupational Health Conservation, Inc. Office periodically conducts radon testing of all buildings. This Management Plan is on file in the school office and is available for review ➤ EMERGENCY DRILLS - Emergency drills for fire, tornado, or other types of severe weather are practiced with students and teachers on a regularly scheduled basis ➤ The school also has plans for an "EMERGENCY ALERT LOCK DOWN DRILL". This plan has been studied, observed, and approved by the City of St. Petersburg ➤ An "EMERGENCY ALERT DRILL" is also conducted during the school year. These Management Plans are on file in the school office which may or may not also be closed.

Emergency Notification, Evacuation and Reunification Plan

In the event of a school wide emergency, St. Raphael Catholic School will contact all parents via email, phone, or text and initiate a controlled dismissal procedure. In the event a disaster such as a hurricane, tornado or other catastrophe strikes our building, the staff will accompany the children to the Parish Center building. Parents coming to the church grounds in the event of an emergency should wait for traffic directions from emergency personnel so as not to interfere with emergency vehicles, which might be needed. This emergency evacuation plan is designed as a preventative and informative statement to all concerned families, parish school staff, and the Diocese of St. Petersburg. A copy of our school crisis plan is located in each classroom.

Mandated Reporters:

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any **suspicion** of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of St. Raphael Catholic School are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees of St. Raphael Catholic School are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior, or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act,

mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at St. Raphael Catholic School take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children. As mandated reporters, the staff of St. Raphael Catholic School cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith." Schools/Centers will reasonably cooperate with regard to any investigation by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) pertaining to allegations of child abuse. Since the school/center is on private property, DCF will be precluded from reasonable access to children at school unless consent of a parent or guardian is obtained. Absent such consent, the school/center will cooperate in allowing DCF to have access to children if DCF obtains, according to law, an appropriate court order or other legal authority, such as the presence of a police officer or deputy sheriff.

Rilya Wilson Act

Rilya Wilson Act Pursuant to s. 39.604, Florida Statutes, a child from birth to the age of school entry, who is under court-ordered protective supervision or in out-of-home care and is enrolled in an early education or child care program must attend the program 5 days a week unless the court grants an exemption. A child enrolled in an early education or child care program who meets the requirements of this act may not be withdrawn from the program without prior written approval of the Department or community-based care lead agency. If a child covered by this act is absent, the program shall report any unexcused absence or seven excused absences to the Department or the community-based care lead agency by the end of the business day following the unexcused absence or seventh consecutive excused absence. Educational stability and transition are key components of this act to minimize disruptions, secure attachments and maintain stable relationships with supportive caregivers of children from birth to school age. Successful partnerships are imperative to ensure that these attachments are not disrupted due to placement in out-of-home care or subsequent changes in out-of-home placement. A child must be allowed to remain in the child care or early education setting that he/she attended before entry into out-of-home care, unless the program is not in the best interest of the child. If a child from birth to school-age leaves a child care or early education program, a transition plan needs to be developed that involves cooperation and sharing of information among all persons involved, respects the child's developmental stage and associated psychological needs, and allows for a gradual transition from one setting to another. This law provides priority for child care services for specified children who are at risk of abuse, neglect, or abandonment. These children are also known as Protective Services children. Rilya Wilson Act Requirements:

- ✓ Protective services children MUST be enrolled to participate 5 days per week.
- ✓ Protective services children MAY NOT be withdrawn without prior written approval from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) or Community Based Care (CBC).
- ✓ If a Protective Services child has 7 consecutive excused or any unexcused absence, the child care provider MUST notify the appropriate community based care staff.
- ✓ The Department and child care providers MUST follow local protocols set up by the CBC to ensure continuity.
- ✓ If it is not in the best interest of the child to remain at the child care or early education program, the caregiver MUST work with the Case Manager, Guardian Ad Litem, child care and educational staff, and

educational surrogate, if one has been appointed, to determine the best setting for the child.
Community-Based Care Lead Agencies Contact Information:

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/cbc/docs/leadagencycontacts.pdf>

** If you have concerns regarding any child that you may care for, please contact the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE**

Persons Permitted to Remove a Child:

Children will be released only to adults listed on the “Permit to Remove” Form turned in to the office. Parents should list their names first, followed by family, friends, babysitters, other parents who will be allowed to remove the child from the school. In the case that the adult picking up your child is not known to St. Raphael staff, they will be required to show a photo ID confirming their identity. Teachers and staff will NOT release your child to another adult not listed on the card. Written notification is required for changing “permitted to remove”, (e.g. calling the office to let us know someone not authorized to pick up your child will be coming to school that day to pick up your child, will not suffice). You may call the school office, and send an email to the school or the teacher giving your consent for your child to be picked up by someone else. Similarly, although you may have allowed an unauthorized person (not on the list) to drop off your child, we cannot release your child to that person during pick up time. Please notify the office when a change is made in who is eligible to drop off or pick up your child.

Parents Right to Immediate Access:

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at St. Raphael Catholic School as provided by law. In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g. Child Custody Order, Parenting Plan Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) St. Raphael Catholic School must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretations of the order. In the absence of a court order on file with St. Raphael Catholic School, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. St. Raphael Catholic School cannot without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. St. Raphael Catholic School staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Persons Appearing to Be Impaired by Drugs/Alcohol at Pick-Up Time:

The staff of St. Raphael Catholic School will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent should a parent appear to the staff of St. Raphael Catholic School to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit the agency from denying a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, St. Raphael Catholic School staff will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the other parent, the local police and Child Protective Services.

Smoking, vaping and e cigarettes are not allowed on school grounds.

Grievance Procedure:

Family-School involvement and communication is very important at St. Raphael Catholic School. Please feel free to contact the office to discuss any concerns that you may have. The policy of the school encourages parents to relay their concerns to the person directly involved, whether that is a teacher, another parent, etc. If a concern continues to persist after that approach has been exhausted, the Principal will be more than happy to meet with you to discuss your situation or your child's welfare, as we seek to provide a supportive and community – building environment here at St. Raphael Catholic School.

Firearms and Weapons:

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of Firearm, Ammunitions and/or Weapon on St. Raphael catholic School property for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

Harassment Policy:

St. Raphael Catholic School strives to establish a Christian professional and supportive educational community for administrators, faculty and staff, parents and students. The Diocese of St. Petersburg has adopted and promulgated a harassment policy for its schools that addresses behaviors that interfere with fulfilling the school's mission. We at St. Raphael Catholic School condemn any form of harassment and will address all credible allegations in accord with the diocesan policy. Concerns should be reported directly to the Principal. All credible allegations will be addressed according to the Diocesan Policy.

Parent Code of Conduct:

The Diocese of St. Petersburg's Parent Code of Conduct for Schools and Centers is included at the end of the St. Raphael's Catholic School Family Handbook. Please take a moment to read it over.

Right to modify: *St. Raphael Catholic School reserves the right to alter, amend, or otherwise modify these guidelines, in its sole discretion, without prior notice.*

