

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE)  
Parent Handbook



**STMA recognizes the importance of early education for children and families. It is our mission to provide each family with a positive introduction to STMA schools.**

*ECFE is the first step in your child's education journey.*

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60 W. Central Ave.  
St. Michael, MN 55376

Class offerings, events, and more information can be found  
online at [stma.ce.eleyo](http://stma.ce.eleyo)

**The components of most ECFE parent-child classes include:**

*Parent-Child Interaction Time:* Time together enjoying all the classroom has to offer. This is time to focus on your child and model behavior for interacting with others in the classroom. The licensed classroom teacher has planned developmentally appropriate activities for you and your child.

*Circle Time:* A small portion of the parent-child interaction time will be set aside for a short group experience or “circle time.” During this time you and your child will sing simple songs, learn finger plays, hear stories, learn circle games and be involved in movement activities. Encourage your child to sit with the group during circle time. Generally, children under 2 ½ years may have difficulty sitting for an entire circle time.

*Parent-Child Separation Time:* Parents will attend parent group in a separate area from children. During this time, children stay in the classroom with the licensed teacher. Additional activities, games, and play are scheduled to promote independence and learning.

**Payments**

No family will be turned away from ECFE for lack of ability to pay. Class fees may be waived or reduced. All families with young children are welcome at ECFE! St. Michael/Albertville Schools believe in the importance of early childhood education. A sliding fee scale is in place to help all STMA families with class fees. ECFE is a part of Community Education and is funded by a local tax levy, state aid, and fees.

**Withdrawals**

If a family must withdraw from a class, a partial refund may be issued with proper notice.

### **Home Visits**

Home visiting is designed to give families who are unable to attend regular classes the opportunity to participate in an ECFE program. Questions regarding parenting, child development, and other important topics may be discussed. If you are interested or know of a family who would benefit from home visits, please call 763-497-6512

### **New Baby Visits**

If you have a new who just arrived, ECFE would love to meet him/her! Our parent educator will call to set an appointment for a new baby visit. At this visit, the ECFE program will be explained and other new parenting information may be dispersed. Monthly letters are sent to all new parents in the St. Michael/Albertville school district.

### **Health/Wellness**

All children are required to have up to date immunizations.

If your child is unable to attend school, please call your child's teacher. If your child exhibits the following symptoms, please keep them at home. Fever, severe cold, green mucus, vomiting, diarrhea, pink eye require that your child stay home a minimum of 24 hours after the symptoms have disappeared.

If a child becomes ill at school, the parent will be the first called and then emergency numbers will be tried.

Communicable diseases such as head lice, strep throat, pink eye, etc. should be reported to ensure the safety of all the children. Due to the number of students that utilize our facilities, a child may come back to school once nits and lice are gone. Children on medications should stay home during the first 24 hours of administration.

Children sent home from school or daycare are not allowed to attend ECFE.

ECFE staff does not administer medications at school. If your child has special health needs, be sure to update their profile online and speak with your child's teacher.

In the event of an accident at school, staff will administer the proper treatments, document the injury, and call the parents if necessary. In an accident where immediate medical attention is needed, 911 will be called first.

More health and wellness information can be found on the STMA district website.  
<http://www.stma.k12.mn.us/district/departments/health-services>

### **Snacks**

ECFE families may be asked to donate snack items. Families who bring snack to share in their classroom must follow the state law that all food should be wrapped and commercially prepared; no home-prepared food can be shared at school. We encourage healthy snacks to provide the nutrition and energy for optimal health and learning. Please consider this when you and your child plan snacks.

### **Parent Group Guidelines**

Children over 6 months of age are not allowed in parent groups.

You are invited to be as open and honest as possible.

You also have the right to pass.

Be respectful of each person as they speak.

Our time is limited. Avoid sub-conversations.

Please maintain confidentiality.

Be respectful of each person's beliefs.

### **Cell Phones**

Please turn off cell phones during class. Cell phone use is not allowed in class.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is very important. While attending class you may observe, read or hear things about individual students and families' home experiences. We expect our parents to maintain confidentiality of our students, families, and staff.

## **Separation**

Separations occur at home and at school. Some children handle them well with little or no difficulty. However, separation anxiety is a normal, natural process for children and parents to experience.

To help children work through separation distress, it is helpful to:

- Let your child see where you will be when you are gone.
- Talk about the feelings he or she is having.
- Always tell your child that you are leaving and that you will come back.
- It is helpful to say, "I'll be back after you have a snack and play
- Let your child bring a comfort item, such as a blanket/favorite stuffed toy, to class.
- Ask staff members to help you and your child with any separation problems that arise. If your child experiences an unusual degree of anxiety, it may be necessary for you to spend some extra time in the classroom with him or her to make the transition more gradual.

## **Sibling Care**

Sibling care is provided for most ECFE classes. Children in sibling care must follow all the health/wellness guidelines. Parents of children in sibling care must remain on the school property. A child who cries or is distressed for over ten minutes and does not respond to comforting will be returned to his/her parent. Please pick up your child immediately after class. A child may be sad if he/she doesn't see his/her parent when other parents arrive.

## **Inclement Weather**

ECFE follows all STMA Schools weather policies. If the district is closed, so is ECFE. If the district is 2 hours late, there will be no morning sessions. If there is an early dismissal, ECFE will cancel the afternoon sessions. ECFE families will be notified by the school district, text message, Facebook and email if classes are cancelled. ECFE does not refund for snow days until two or more classes have been missed.

### **Tobacco Free/Chemical Free**

Smoking and use of tobacco products, alcohol, and chemicals are prohibited on school district property.

### **Mandated Reporting**

Staff members and volunteers are required by state law to report instances of observed or suspected child abuse or neglect. Staff will report directly to the program coordinator and together will report to the proper authorities

### **MN School Dangerous Weapon Law**

Bringing a dangerous weapon on school property is a violation of Minnesota law. This is any device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of producing great bodily harm or death. Parents please remember this when attending classes and/or entering school property. Children are discouraged from bringing toy weapons to school; these toys will not be allowed in the classroom.

### **Book Orders**

Book order forms are sent home frequently with your child. All book orders are voluntary but a great way to build your home library. ECFE does collect bonus points from each order which allows us to purchase classroom books and supplies.

### **Fundraising**

ECFE is a tuition based state-funded program. However, we continue to make efforts to raise funds for program scholarships and supplies. Once a year, we offer a program wide fundraiser through Clubs Choice. This is an optional effort that benefits all classrooms throughout the program. In addition, Dairy Queen hosts a once a month benefit for both our ECFE and Bright Beginnings programs.

### **Ready 4 Kindergarten Sessions**

ECFE will offer a series of supportive seminars to help guide families through the transition to kindergarten. 3 sessions will take place during the school year to provide support, answer questions, and introduce you to the world of K-12 learning. These sessions are optional, but recommended for first-time kindergarten parents.

### **Advisory Council**

We welcome any parents to join our advisory council meetings. Meetings are held every four-six weeks throughout the school year. The state of MN requires that our program establish/maintain an Advisory Council. This council is to be made up of parents currently in the program, a few staff, and community members.

What does the Advisory Council do?

1. Recommend program policies, goals, and objectives.
2. Develop/train volunteers
3. Promote program through outreach and community relations
4. Assist in program evaluations
5. Serve as an advocate in the community and Legislature
6. Expand resource development
7. Fundraising

*It is important to note that the council makes only recommendations and does not have authority to make final program decisions.*

### **Complaints – Students, Employees, Parents and Other Persons**

The school district takes seriously all concerns or complaints by students, employees, parents or other persons. While written reports are encouraged, a complaint may be made orally. A person may file a complaint at any level of the school district; i.e., principal, superintendent or school board. However, persons are encouraged to file a complaint at the building level when appropriate. It is best to discuss concerns or complaints with the person most familiar with the incident and, if the concern or complaints is not satisfactorily addressed, to the principal or supervisor, superintendent and school board.

Federal law requires that school districts designate specific individuals and procedures for disability discrimination, sex discrimination, equal education and

employment opportunity, homeless and harassment. Contact information is as follows:

Student Disability Discrimination - ADA/504 Coordinator – Superintendent Dr. Ann Marie Foucault, 763-497-3180, District Office in Middle School West, 11343-50th St. NE, Albertville, Minnesota

Homeless Compliance – District Homeless Coordinator - Superintendent Dr. Ann Marie Foucault, 763-497-3180, District Office in Middle School West, 11343-50th St. NE, Albertville, Minnesota

Student Sex Discrimination – Human Rights Officer – Director of Human Resources Douglas Birk, 763-497-3180, District Office in Middle School West, 11343-50th, St. NE, Albertville, Minnesota

Student Sex Nondiscrimination Program Compliance – Title IX Officer – Activities Director Douglas Birk, 763-497-2192, High School, 5800 Jamison Ave, NE. St. Michael, Minnesota

Student or Staff Harassment – Human Rights Officer - Director of Human Resources Douglas Birk, 763-497-3180, District Office in Middle School West, 11343-50th, St. NE, Albertville, Minnesota

Equal Education Opportunity/Equal Employment Opportunity – Human Rights Officer - Director of Human Resources Douglas Birk, 763-497-3180, District Office in Middle School West, 11343-50th, St. NE, Albertville, Minnesota

### **STMA School Board Policies**

A full list of district-wide policies is located online at [www.stma.k12.mn.us](http://www.stma.k12.mn.us) under School Board and Policies