

Kindergarten Handbook



ST. JOSEPH

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Updated 3/2024

SECTION 1: HANDBOOK INTRODUCTION

Introduction/Purpose

This Kindergarten Handbook was prepared to assist you in finding the answers to many questions that you may have regarding your child's Kindergarten experience with the St. Joseph School District. We do not expect that this handbook will answer all of your questions. Administrators and the Board of Education have worked together to establish board policies that will also be major sources of information. All policies can be found on the district website at <http://www.sjsd.k12.mo.us>.

Message from the Superintendent

Welcome to the St. Joseph School District,

The St. Joseph Community has a deep and rich history of supporting education. Since the District's formation in 1860 to today, the community and the school district have partnered as one to provide access to high quality education and opportunities for all our children. The recent passage of the tax levy shows that your commitment is as strong as ever. We are working every day to create stronger partnerships that will lead to a prosperous future.

I invite you, as parents, to be involved and active in your child's education and continue to work in partnership with us. There are numerous opportunities to engage in our schools: volunteering at a school, attending conferences, serving on the PTA and/or booster clubs. Your support in these endeavors will play a huge factor in transforming our schools. We are also asking for your support in our work with school attendance. School attendance is a powerful predictor of student outcomes and plays an important role in your child's belief demonstrating the importance of school. Please commit to help us in this endeavor. We are here to do what is best for every child, and we want your child to have the very best experience possible.

Our schools hold the promise of tomorrow. We are excited about the opportunities we can provide our students and the powerful learning experiences occurring in our schools. In the upcoming year, we will continue to work on attendance and discipline issues, as they arise. I am confident your child will find their place in our schools. I am thankful for the opportunity to work in a district that is striving to meet the needs of all children and to live in a community that holds education in high regard. I want to encourage you to reach out to me if you want to visit about your child's education. We are here to do what is best for your child.

Have a wonderful school year!

Gabe Edgar

St. Joseph School District Superintendent

About the St. Joseph School District

In 1860, a group of concerned citizens were successful in obtaining a charter from the Missouri General Assembly that incorporated the “St. Joseph Board of Public Schools”. Today, the St. Joseph School District (SJSD) is the third largest employer in the city of St. Joseph, Missouri and educates nearly 11,000 students annually from preschool to 12th grade. In addition, the SJSD provides an adult education program and a technical school (Hillyard Technical Center) which provides programs for high school students and adults from the region. The SJSD currently employs over 2,000 individuals including certified teaching staff, professional and support staff and substitute teachers.

Vision, Mission & Values

Vision

- Create a climate of achievement in partnership with an engaged community.

Mission Statement

- Preparing students for success in a complex and changing world.

Core Values

- **Learning** – We believe that students should be engaged in rigorous learning every day, in every classroom, where curiosity is encouraged and critical thinking is cultivated in innovative classrooms.
- **Community** – We believe that a culture of collaboration and community is key to the success of the St. Joseph School District and that community is built in the classroom, in each school, in the district, and through meaningful partnerships and respectful relationships across our city.
- **Equity** – We believe that our district should invest in resources that maximize the potential of all students, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, language, or income.

SECTION 2: ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR KINDERGARTEN

Entrance Requirements for Kindergarten

- Children must be five (5) years of age on or before July 31st.
- A birth certificate or other approved legal document, giving proof of the child's birthdate, must be presented at registration.
- Children must be immunized according to state regulations before the FIRST DAY of school or enrollment will not be permitted.

School Immunizations

- **Diphtheria, Pertussis & Tetanus (DPT)** - Four (4) doses of diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus toxoid. The last dose must have been received at age four (4) or older.
- **Polio** - If a combination of IPV and/or OPV is given, four (4) doses are required, otherwise, 3 doses. The last dose must have been received at age four (4) or older. (Maximum of 4 doses are required.)
- **Rubella** - Two (2) doses of rubella vaccine received by injection at age twelve (12) months or greater.
- **Measles** - Two (2) doses of measles vaccine received by injection on or after the first birthday and before entering kindergarten.
- **Mumps** - Two (2) doses of live mumps vaccine received by injection on or after the first birthday and before entering kindergarten.
- **Hepatitis 'B'** - Three (3) doses of Hepatitis 'B' vaccine for all students entering kindergarten. Spacing between the second and third dose must be 56 days or greater. The last dose must have been received at six (6) months of age or older.
- **Varicella** - Two (2) doses of vaccine or proof of disease (chicken pox). As satisfactory evidence of disease, an MD or DO must sign and place on file with the school a written statement documenting the month and year of previous varicella (chickenpox) disease.

SECTION 3: SCHOOL ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL TIMES

School arrival and dismissal times are to be determined. This information will be communicated by your student's school prior to the first day.

SECTION 4: EDUCATION

Your child will learn many things in kindergarten. Below you will find some of the highlights of what they will be experiencing during their Kindergarten year.

Your child will grow in academics, listening, and speaking through circle time and morning meeting with their teacher and classmates. The teacher will provide books through shared reading, small group, and individually planned reading experiences. Your child will share ideas and explore writing through multiple author lenses. A variety of math concepts related to geometry and number sense will be developed through direct instruction, small group, and cooperative games. In science students will experiment with innovative ideas while developing critical thinking. Children will develop good citizenship skills and conflict resolution through our social studies curriculum. Your child will develop friendships that last a lifetime and a love for learning.

SECTION 5: FAQ ABOUT KINDERGARTEN

1. What can I do to make the first day of school go smoothly?

Make good-byes loving but firm. If you accompany your child to school, don't linger after saying good-bye. Your child will make the transition easier if you appear confident that he will do just fine. Prepare your child for any after-school arrangements.

2. What do they do all day?

Each classroom will have a different schedule. Please check with your child's Kindergarten teacher to ask about specific activities.

3. At the end of the year, will all the children be on the same level?

Each child grows, develops and learns at an individual rate. Each child enters Kindergarten at a different level and each will master kindergarten tasks differently.

SECTION 6: RULES TO BE OBSERVED

- 1.** The arrival and dismissal times at each school vary. Always confirm the daily schedule with your school. Do not send the child before the requested arrival time to ensure proper adult supervision. Please pick up your child promptly at dismissal time.
- 2.** We strive for perfect attendance, but children who show evidence of illness should be kept at home. Report the reason for absence to the secretary at the school every day the child is absent.
- 3.** We require a written explanation each time your child is absent, tardy, or is to be dismissed early for any reason.
- 4.** Accompany your child to school the first day if possible. Meet the teacher, leave the supplies, and check registration. Send the child to school the next day with a cheerful, but firm farewell.
- 5.** If you would like to visit the school, you must first make an appointment in the school office.
- 6.** Do not send money to school with your child unless it is requested. If you do give your child money for lunch or any other reason, put it in an envelope and write your child's name and the purpose for which the money is intended.

SECTION 7: SAFETY EDUCATION IN KINDERGARTEN

Your child should know:

- Their first and last name, parents' names and telephone number.
- The safest and most direct route to school if he/she walks to school.
- About traffic lights, policemen and school patrols.
- The correct way to cross the street. Talk with your child about only crossing the street and corners and to obey safety patrols.
- Not to accept rides with strangers.
- That he/she should come directly home after school unless you give written permission to do otherwise.
- The number of the bus and the route to the bus stop. He or she should obey the bus driver and behave properly.
- What to do if school dismisses early due to bad weather or special events.

SECTION 8: VALUE OF PLAY IN KINDERGARTEN

Play promotes-

Literacy and language development as children:

- Use communication for taking turns, negotiating and planning their play.
- Reconstruct events and sequences in events and stories leading to increased story comprehension.
- Increase speech fluency.
- Practice new vocabulary.

Physical development as children:

- Coordinate their actions with objects and other people.
- Engage in activities that develop stamina, flexibility, strength, coordination and fitness.
- Practice gross and fine motor skills.

Cognitive development as children:

- Pretend to be some object or person.
- Learn new ideas from peers.
- Solve problems and think abstractly about their world.

Social growth as children:

- Learn to consider the perspective of others.
- Participate in turn taking, cooperating and sharing.
- Experiment with leadership skills.
- Learn to tolerate delays.
- Work out stress.
- Increase goal-directed behavior and persistence.
- Use creative imagination.
- Pursue their own ideas.
- Develop friendships.
- Work through conflict.
- Experience sheer fun -- the positive aspect of fun is that it is essential to growth and a strong motivation for every kind of learning.

Observation of children at play guides teachers in planning curriculum to meet the developmental needs of students. Play is a wonderful opportunity for teachers to help students develop their vocabulary and language skills in kindergarten.