



Trinity Catholic School EARLY CHILDHOOD HANDBOOK 2026-2027

ACCREDITED BY
The Florida Catholic Conference
Early Learning Coalition

A MINISTRY OF BLESSED SACRAMENT CHURCH

**MR. TOMMY BRIDGES
PRINCIPAL**

**MRS. STEPHANIE BECHTOL
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL**

IMPORTANT NOTE for Early Childhood (PreK 3 and PreK 4) Parents/Guardians: This handbook is intended to provide you with information and procedures specific to early childhood. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the Trinity Catholic School Parent-Student Handbook as well. It contains additional school- wide policies regarding tardiness, illness, immunizations, tuition, etc. It can be accessed online via the Trinity Catholic School website.



Trinity Catholic School acknowledges that the parents/guardians are the primary educators of their children. The Pre-Kindergarten teachers are committed to supporting and enriching this education.

We extend an enthusiastic welcome as we begin a fruitful year!

PreK₃ & VPK₄ Program

Classes held Monday through Friday.

PreK₃ Half Day: 8:00 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

VPK₄ Half Day: 8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

VPK₄ Wrap-Around: 11:30 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

After School Beyond the Bell Program Available:
3:15 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Tuition and Fees

Refer to Website: www.trinityknights.org

Our Mission Statement

The mission of Trinity Catholic School is to teach the Catholic faith within a challenging academic curriculum, laying the foundation for all students to grow in Christian maturity, integrity and knowledge.

Our Pre-K Philosophy

Our educational philosophy is fundamentally aligned with the Trinity Catholic School mission, believing that true education nurtures the whole child—mind, body, and spirit—to prepare them for a life of virtue, service, and deep faith. Based on current educational research, we implement a challenging academic curriculum through active, inquiry-based learning and differentiated instruction, ensuring students not only gain core knowledge and foundational skills but also develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. We apply a Growth Mindset approach, teaching resilience and perseverance as essential elements of academic success.

Crucially, the Catholic faith serves as the foundational lens through which all subjects are understood, integrating catechesis with academic content. Consistent with best practices in faith formation and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), we foster Christian maturity and integrity by providing opportunities for experiential prayer and explicit instruction in virtues (like forgiveness and empathy). We believe that the partnership between the school, home, and parish is essential to reinforcing these values, laying a complete foundation for our children to thrive in knowledge, character, and faith.

Principal's Statement

Welcome to the Pre-K 3 and Pre-K 4 classrooms! We are looking forward to a wonderful year of learning, love, and faith.

The Trinity Catholic School Parent/Student Handbook remains the foundational document for all school-wide procedures and protocols.

However, we understand that the Pre-kindergarten years are unique and often represent a child's first school experience. This supplementary handbook was developed to provide you with specific, helpful guidance tailored to our youngest learners, ensuring a smooth and joyful transition for your family.

Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Overview

The Pre-K curriculum is intentionally designed to promote holistic development across the following key domains:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Religion
- Language, Literacy, and Communication
- Math
- Science
- Technology
- Social Studies
- Creative Arts

Our curriculum integrates a comprehensive, play-based model with foundational literacy instruction:

- **The *Creative Curriculum* by Teaching Strategies:** This serves as the cornerstone of our education, empowering children to be creative and critical thinkers through hands-on, project-based investigations across all developmental domains.
- **The Science of Reading:** Our teachers are trained in and incorporate best practices from the science of reading, including the *Heggerty Phonemic Awareness* program. This systematic approach builds early literacy skills, phonological awareness, and print concepts, setting a strong groundwork for future reading success.
- **Structured Learning:** Teachers implement a structured scope and sequence that includes Letters and Numbers of the Week to ensure full coverage of VPK standards and prepare children for Kindergarten.
- **Writing and Fine Motor Skills:** We build fine motor strength through practical activities (playdough, stringing beads) and incorporate early writing practice via drawing, inventive spelling, and tracing.
- **Integrated Learning Centers:** Our classrooms utilize various learning centers where children engage in open-ended, hands-on activities that foster development across all domains (cognitive, social, emotional, and physical).
 - **Art Center:** Focuses on the process of creation (painting, modeling, cutting) to encourage self-expression and motor skills.
 - **Dramatic Play/Kitchen Center:** Encourages children to imitate the world around them, use their imagination, practice cooperative play, and experiment with various roles.
 - **Blocks and Legos Center:** Supports small motor development, dramatic play, and learning about spatial concepts (size, shape, balance).
 - **Manipulatives Center:** Enhances small motor skills, eye-hand coordination, finger dexterity, and critical thinking through materials like puzzles, lacing cards, and pegboards.
- **Religion:** The *Allelu!* religion curriculum guides students to become faithful servants of God by focusing on relationships: with God, with family, and with community.

- **Pre-K 3 Focus:** Emphasizes God's creation and the self as part of a family. Introductory lessons cover the Mass and the life of Jesus, with practical discussions on making friends and forgiveness.
- **Pre-K 4 Focus:** Focuses on the relational aspects of faith, including the concept of the Church as a family and the relationship between God and His people. Lessons reinforce Christian service, respectful behavior, and responsibility to peers and the larger community.

Catholic Identity

Our commitment to fostering a strong Catholic identity is woven into the daily life and curriculum of our Early Childhood program. We strive to create an environment where children experience the love of God and begin their lifelong journey of faith.

Prayer and Worship

- Daily Devotion: Prayer is central to our day. Children participate in prayer to begin and conclude their day, and are provided numerous opportunities to pray and worship God through song and reflection throughout the day.
- Core Prayers: Students are systematically introduced to fundamental Catholic prayers, including the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, and the Prayer Before Meals, alongside other age-appropriate devotions found at [PK Prayers](#).

Service, Social Justice, and Community

- Active Participation: Pre-Kindergarten students are invited to participate in meaningful, age-appropriate service projects throughout the school year.
- Examples: Our students learn to put their faith into action by contributing to school-wide social justice initiatives, such as collecting non-perishable food, pet supplies, and toys for the Christmas Connection program. These experiences teach empathy and Christian charity.

Parents as Primary Educators in Faith

- Partnership in Faith: Trinity School wholeheartedly believes that parents are the primary educators of their children in the faith. Our role is to assist, support, and reinforce the spiritual foundation established at home.
- Encouraging Practice: We strongly encourage parents to attend Sunday Mass and Mass on Holy Days of Obligation with their children.
- Home-School Connection: To facilitate this partnership, the weekly Allelu handouts include guides and discussion topics to help parents extend classroom lessons and faith-based conversations into the home. We also encourage families to establish a regular routine of praying together at home.

Pre-K Procedures

For all overarching school policies, please refer to the [Trinity Catholic School Parent/Student Handbook](#) found on our website.

Daily Operations

Topic	Procedure
Arrival & Dismissal	Please refer to the school handbook for specific policies, as procedures differ by class location. Students not picked up by the 3:15 dismissal time will automatically be placed in the BTB After-School Care for a fee.
Sign-In/Sign-Out	Teachers keep a daily arrival and dismissal log. If a child is late to school or being picked up early, parents must go to the main office to sign their child in or out.
Attendance (VPK)	Regular attendance is vital for academic success. Pre-K 4 students maintaining a VPK voucher cannot miss more than 20% of the school year per Early Learning Coalition policy. Monthly parent signatures are required to validate attendance.
Daily Schedule	Each teacher creates a schedule that includes morning work, circle time, centers, recess, religion, rest time, and meals.
School Day Options	We offer two options: Half-Day (8:00 AM–11:30 AM) and Full-Day (8:00 AM–2:45 PM). The VPK voucher covers Half-Day tuition. A wrap-around fee applies for Full-Day attendance.
After-School Care	Beyond the Bell (BTB) is available until 6:00 PM for an additional fee. Beyond the Bell registration is on the school website:
Tuition	Tuition is processed through PowerSchool and is due regardless of a student's attendance record. Delinquency will result in a required conference with administration.
Communication	Please contact your child's teacher primarily via email, the class app (if used), or the school office (850-222-0444) . Please limit

	verbal communication during drop-off/pick-up as the teacher's priority is student safety.
Parent Volunteers	On occasion, teachers may request parent volunteers. All volunteers must complete the required Diocesan background check and online courses. Please refer to the school handbook or website for specific details.
Substitute Teachers	All substitutes are selected from our designated list of qualified teachers and have completed required safety courses and background checks.

Health and Safety

Topic	Procedure
Required Forms	Per Department of Children and Families (DCF) and Department of Health requirements, current and dated Health and Immunization forms must be on file for every student to maintain enrollment.
Reporting Illness	Do not send your child to school if any of the following symptoms have been present within the last 24 hours: vomiting, diarrhea, or fever. Also, keep children home with sore/red/watery eyes, rash, excessive greenish-yellow mucus, or contagious conditions (lice, ringworm, impetigo).
Student Illness	If your child becomes ill or has a serious accident at school, you will be notified and expected to pick up your child as quickly as possible .
Safety and Security	Our Pre-K classrooms are included in school-wide safety plans. Classrooms are fully secured with locked doors and outdoor gates, monitored by security cameras , and regularly checked by members of the security team.
Contact Information	Please ensure your information in PowerSchool is current and updated immediately if any contact details change.

Academics and Development

Topic	Procedure
Assessments	Pre-K 4 (VPK): Students complete the STAR Early Literacy Assessment three times per year (beginning, middle, and end). Pre-K 3 & 4: Teachers conduct ongoing assessments throughout the year to track progress in social-emotional, motor, literacy, math, and language skills.
Report Cards	Report cards are sent home two times per year, at the end of the 2nd and 4th quarters .
Parent Conferences	Mandatory Parent-Teacher Conferences are held two times per year, at the end of the 1st and 3rd quarters . Additional conferences may be requested by the parent or teacher at any time.

Classroom Routines

Topic	Procedure
Dress Code	Children must wear comfortable play clothes and tennis shoes/sneakers with socks. Boots, sandals, clogs, Crocs, and platform shoes are not allowed. Girls must wear shorts under dresses/skirts. Trinity plaid skirts/jumpers are not permitted.
Change of Clothes	All students must keep a complete, labeled change of clothes (shirt, shorts, underwear, socks) in their cubby in case of accidents or spills.
Labeling	Please label all items sent to school, including lunchboxes, water bottles, jackets, blankets, towels, and money/forms.
Tote Bags	Trinity provides a machine-washable tote bag that goes home every Friday with completed work and blankets/towels to be laundered, and must be returned every Monday. Tote bags are used in place of a backpack. No backpacks are necessary.

Take-Home Folders	Folders containing student work are inside the tote bags. Please review the work and return the folder to the tote bag every Monday.
Toys	No outside toys or games should be brought to school. The only exception is a designated "letter share" item, which remains in the cubby until share time.
Snack	Pre-K utilizes a community snack system. Parents will be assigned to provide a healthy snack for the entire class. Specific guidelines will be provided by the teacher.
Water Bottles	Students must bring a labeled water bottle to school daily; teachers will refill as needed.
Lunch	Lunch should be sent in a labeled lunchbox . Please adhere to all teacher guidelines regarding allergies. Children are encouraged to eat "grow foods" first. Candy is not permitted , and children are not allowed to share food .
Birthdays	Birthdays are celebrated in the classroom. Parents may send in a healthy snack (no cupcakes, cookies, or brownies) and/or goody bags for the whole class. Invitations may only be passed out at school if all children are invited.
Rest Time	All students are required to participate in a daily rest time. Each student must use their own purchased mat and bring a small blanket or beach towel , which is sent home weekly for laundering.
Potty Training	All students must be fully potty trained (independently manage all needs, recognize the need to go, stay dry during rest time). Pull-ups are not allowed ; students must wear underwear. A child having a poop accident will require the parent to immediately come to clean and change the child, and the child must then be sent home for the day. Frequent accidents will require a parent-teacher meeting to determine a plan (e.g., a break from school to practice, or switching to half-day).
Bug Spray/Sunscreen	Bug spray may be sent in for teachers to apply before recess. Sunscreen must be applied at home before school.

Behavior Struggles	Most behavior struggles can be handled within the classroom environment. However, some behaviors (i.e. refusal to come into the classroom at drop off, biting another student, excessive outbursts that disrupt the learning environment) may require the child to be separated from the classroom. This separation is used as a tool to help the child regain self-regulation and return to the classroom ready to learn. If self regulation is not achieved, parent will be called to pick up the child.
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Parent Signature Agreement

We have read and agree to be governed by this handbook. We understand its policies and procedures, including those regarding discipline, tuition, and medication. Additionally, we acknowledge receipt of the DCF pamphlets, 'The Flu: A Guide for Parents' and 'Distracted Adult,' which we have completed, signed, and returned with this Agreement.

Parent (s)

Name (print):_____

Signature: _____

Name (print):_____

Signature: _____

Child(ren) Names:

Date: _____