



Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool

*Where Faith, Fun, and Learning
Come Together*

Parent Handbook
Updated August, 2021

OLVCS Preschool
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(814) 238-6616

www.olvcatholicschool.org/preschool

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Important Phone Numbers

Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool	(814) 238-6616
Our Lady of Victory Catholic School	(814) 238-1592
Our Lady of Victory Rectory	(814) 237-7832

We Love OLV Preschool

We Love OLV Preschool
We've made lots of new friends!
We Learned our letters and numbers too.
Look, I colored a picture for you!
Let us root, root, root for our preschool!
Every day is so cool!
Let us tell our Moms and our Dads
That we love preschool!

Dear OLVCS Preschool Family,

Welcome to another exciting year at OLVCS Preschool! It is a blessing to serve you and your family. At OLVCS Preschool we believe early education founded in Catholic values helps children to know and love God. We are happy you are a part of our preschool family.

Starting school is a big step for children and their parents. Hopefully, this book will help answer some of the questions you may have and be of assistance as the school year progresses.

Thank you for taking the time to read these notes concerning our program. If you have any questions or concerns during the course of the year, do not hesitate to get in touch with your child's teacher or the Preschool Administrator.

OLVCS Preschool Philosophy

At Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool, we recognize that while children develop at somewhat predictable rates, each child is an individual.

The school's staff is committed to providing a secure and nurturing environment where a child can grow socially, physically, emotionally and spiritually. We believe that Preschool should be a time for creative exploration, discovery and learning through activities which are first and foremost fun for the child.

Goals of OLVCS Preschool

1. To encourage the development of self-sufficiency and self-confidence in the child through the participation in age appropriate activities.
2. To encourage the development of social skills such as sharing, behavioral limits, respect for property, and the well-being of others in a group situation.
3. To provide activities which help develop and extend verbalization, language and cognitive skills, such as math, science, and creative problem solving.
4. To provide a caring environment in which the child adjusts to new situations, experiences, and people at his/her own pace.
5. To provide a variety of multi-sensory activities.
6. To foster acceptance of and respect for the differences among cultures, nationalities, and age groups.
7. To encourage the child to accept and respect their own feelings, and to guide the child to express these feelings in ways which do not cause harm to themselves or others.
8. To introduce children to the love of God as it presents itself in the world around them.
9. To introduce children to the teachings of Christ and to show, by example, the ways in which these are integrated into our daily lives.
10. Programs and activities are planned according to developmental level and/or age appropriate skills and interests of the children, upcoming Holidays and special events, available materials, equipment, and community resources, skills and interests of staff and parents, special concerns and goals of staff and parents, and gospel values that instill the teachings of Christ within the hearts of our young children.

General Policies

Admissions

All children must adhere to the following birthdate requirements for each program:

- 2 ½ Year Old –Children must turn three years on or before April 30th of the school year for which they are enrolling. Students therefore, should be at least 2 years 7 months old by August 31st for the school year for which they are enrolling.
- 3 Year Old—Children must turn three years old on or before August 31st of the school year for which they are enrolling.
- 4 Year Old—Children must turn four years old on or before August 31st of the school year for which they are enrolling.
- Pre-K—Children must turn five years old on or before December 31st of the school year for which they are enrolling.

All children are expected to be potty-trained prior to enrollment. This includes the use of both diapers and pull-ups. Children are expected to communicate the need to use the toilet and to have the understanding of the basic functioning of how to use and maneuver within the bathroom setting.

Registration and Enrollment

Priority registration for the following school year is scheduled from the first Monday of February until the second Friday in March. Registrations are accepted and positions are filled based on the following priorities and in the order in which they are received.

- Be a currently-registered preschool student or have a sibling already registered at OLVCS Preschool
- Have a sibling registered at OLV Catholic School
- Be a member of OLV or Good Shepherd Parish
- Be a member of another Catholic parish

After the priority registration period, positions are filled in the order in which the registrations are received. No classes will exceed class size limits.

A one-time non-refundable registration fee will be required upon initial entry into OLVCS Preschool Program.

All classes will be filled on a first-come basis. In the event classes are full children will be placed on a waiting list.

Nondiscrimination Policy

Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan program and other school-administered programs.

Programs shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, and the provision of aides.

School Information File

Students' school information file is kept confidential via our online registration and enrollment program, SchoolAdmin. With the exception of the emergency contact card completed at the beginning of school, all student file information will be completed online and accessible only to designated staff.

Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form and Medical Procedures It is vital for us to have a current "Emergency Contact/Parental Consent Form" in your child's school file. Classroom teachers also keep a copy of this form in your child's classroom. Should a child have any type of accident, all attempts will be made to notify the parents. If they cannot be reached, school staff will contact any of the persons listed on the emergency contact/parental consent form. Please keep this list up to date.

Tuition and Payments

Preschool Tuition is a flat monthly rate based on a nine month (Sept-May) pay period. No adjustments are made to child absence from school. Tuition payments are due by the fifth of each month. Late fees of up to 5% per day may be incurred.

Those who would like to pay above the minimum tuition fee may make a voluntary contribution. This contribution is tax deductible. Payments may be mailed to the school or dropped off at the school office. Checks should be made payable to Our Lady of Victory Preschool. Please review the following Tuition Collection Policy.

1. In general, there are two tuition rates for morning programs: Catholic parishioner rate and Non-Catholic parishioner rate. To be eligible for the Catholic parishioner rate parents/guardians must provide documentation of Catholic parish registration.
2. Families who have more than one child enrolled at OLVCS Preschool may receive the following discounts: 25% off tuition for the second child, 35% off tuition for the third child.
3. Late notices are sent to each family approximately two weeks after the due date. A late fee will be assessed on all payments made after the due date.
4. If payment is not received after late notices are sent, phone calls are made approximately two weeks later.
5. All unpaid balances for tuition and fees will be forwarded to the following school year.
6. For families withdrawing students before the end of the school year, families will pay for each month the student is enrolled,
7. If a child is not picked up at the end of his or her scheduled program, hours will be billed separately at the rate of \$20.00/hr. and are due within 10 days within receipt of the invoice.
8. Refunds will not be issued for absences, school closings, or student withdrawal from the

program.

Do not send your payment via the home-to-school folder. Preschool staff cannot accept the responsibility of transferring payments to the office. All questions regarding Preschool tuition or Extended School Program tuition should be directed to the Office Manager or Preschool Administrator.

Student Tuition Assistance Policy

As a faith community, Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool values children and families of all backgrounds regardless of their ability to pay. We create and maintain an inclusive environment by supporting and valuing families.

Families may apply for the Child Care Works program through the Department of Human Services. This subsidized child care program helps low-income families pay their childcare fees. The state and federal governments fund this program, which is managed by the Early Learning Resource Center for Region 8. More information can be obtained by contacting them at elrc@elrc8.org or 814-231-1352.

Tuition assistance funds are available to help qualifying families that need assistance. Funds are replenished through personal and congregational gifts; Educational Improvement Tax Credit program; and/or OLV Preschool fundraising activities. In order to be eligible for financial assistance, your financial application through Simple Tuition Solutions must be completed and verified. You may begin applying through <https://app.simpletuitionsolutions.org/register?sc=20438>.

General Information

Child Abuse

The state of Pennsylvania requires that all members of preschools and child care institutions are mandated reporters of any evidence of child abuse/neglect. We are therefore obligated to report to the State any suspected cases of child neglect or abuse.

Staffing

All teachers are certified in Elementary, Early Childhood Education or a related field. Additionally, all staff are required to participate in ongoing professional development.

All teachers, aides and classroom volunteers complete the Protecting God's Children seminar which aids in the prevention and detection of child abuse and child neglect, and Mandated Reporter training online through the University of Pittsburgh.

All teachers, aides, and classroom volunteers are also required to provide or take the following: PA Child Abuse Clearance (Act 151), PA Criminal History Check (Act 34), Arrest/Conviction Report (Act 24), Fingerprint background check

Any questions regarding employee/staff requirements can be directed to our Youth Protection Program Coordinator at youthprotection@olvcs.org or www.olvcatholicsschool.org/preschool.

In addition, all staff members are required to attend Child Development/Child Care Education In-Service Workshops or Program during the school year.

When appropriate under staff supervision we incorporate local university and high school students into our classroom environment.

Behavior and Discipline

Our philosophy is to work with and guide your child through modeling positive behaviors, giving clear directions, and encouraging and reinforcing positive behaviors.

Through positive social interactions, interventions, and modeling, we help children learn to express emotions in positive, non-violent ways; use words to express feelings and desires; respect others' feelings by developing empathy and compassion; take responsibility for their choices and resulting consequences; learn forgiveness and understand that God loves us no matter what we do.

Behavior concerns are dealt with confidentially and in collaboration with parents, teachers, and the director. If you have questions regarding behavior issues, please address your child's teacher immediately in a private setting. Your child's teacher should always be the first person with whom you discuss any concerns about your child.

At no time does Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool utilize physical or verbal threats or

actions on any child for any reason.

Every situation will be handled on an individual basis. Resources such as counselors and intervention programs or strategies will be willingly explored by Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool staff if deemed appropriate and necessary, temporarily or permanently.

In the event a child repeatedly exhibits a behavior difficulty to the extent that it poses direct harm to other staff or children, causes undue burden on staffing, or fundamentally alters the nature of the program and/or the quality of the care given to other children attending the program, then the administration of Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool reserves the right to have the child removed from the OLVCS Preschool program.

Illness and Medication

Should your child become ill while at school, every effort will be made to contact you. In the event that we are unable to reach either parent, we will contact those people listed on the Emergency Information form. Children who become ill at school are expected to be picked up within 30 minutes. Please keep all names and numbers on this form current.

Children may not attend school if they have any of the following symptoms.:

- A fever of 100.4 or higher within the last 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea within 24 hours prior to school arrival
- Running nose with thick discolored mucus discharge
- Any present cough
- Shortness of breath
- Overly tired, fussy or cranky
- Pink eye, strep throat, chickenpox or any other communicable disease
- Live lice or nits

Please notify the office if your child's absence from school is due to illness so that we can pass on any incidents of communicable illness to other families. We will make every effort to notify parents of any outbreaks of communicable diseases (chicken pox, measles, head lice, strep infections, etc.) on a timely basis. In such cases, confidentiality will be maintained.

For the health and safety of all children and staff members of the Program, any children who exhibit one or more of these symptoms while attending school will be considered ill and their parents will be contacted.

A detailed health and safety plan is available on the OLVCS Preschool website.

Medication and Care Plans

We take precautionary measures to ensure our children's health and safety. Since the number of severely allergic children and children with care plans in our school has increased, we require the following:

1. Upon arrival, children will go to the bathroom and wash their hands.
2. Before and after snack and lunch children will wash their hands.
3. Children who have a chronic illness, allergies, or require a special diet must fill out an Allergy Action Plan or a Care Plan and have it signed by their pediatrician.

Copies of the Allergy Action Plan or Care Plan will be kept in the classroom emergency notebook as well as the child's file in School Admin.

- Staff members are only permitted to dispense physician prescribed medication with parental written permission and a physician permission to dispense medication. All physician prescribed medication must be in the original container – a physician Permission To Dispense Medication form can be obtained at the office.
- Staff members may not administer non-prescription (OTC) medication – Please do not send cough drops, cough syrup, Tylenol, etc. to school.

Program Information

OLVCS Preschool and Extended School Programs

Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool provides an educational, developmentally appropriate Christ-centered environment for children two and one half through five years of age. Several program options are available.

- September – May Preschool Program classes operate 9:00AM until 11:30 AM
- September – May Extended School Program (ESP): ESP operates Monday through Friday – 7:30AM-9:00AM and 11:30AM-5:30PM.
- June – August – Summer Preschool and Extended School Program. A flexible scheduling option for those parents wishing to supplement their child's summer experiences.

Curriculum

The OLVCS Preschool uses Creative Curriculum which is formulated to meet the PA State Dept. of Education Early Learning Standards for the following areas of development:

1. Language and Literacy – the ability to listen, understand and to be understood; to communicate and eventually read and write.
2. Logical Mathematics – the ability to recognize and utilize numbers, shapes and patterns.
3. Science – the ability to explore, demonstrate inquiry and understand the world around them.

4. Social Studies – the ability to understand the workings of the world around them and their role within a community.
5. Creative Arts – the demonstration and appreciation of creative thinking and expression through music, art and dramatic play.
6. Physical Development and Health – self-sufficiency and understanding of health and hygiene practices, self-help needs and safe practices. Use of large muscles for activities such as running and throwing; use of small motor muscles for activities such as drawing-cutting and placement of objects.
7. Personal and Social Development – ability to function within a group setting, ability to solve problems, willingness to explore and adapt to new and different situations.

Since we believe that all children learn at different rates and within different situations the staff utilizes a wide variety of materials and learning activities.

In addition, the facility and equipment (both indoors and outdoors) are arranged and utilized to act as an integral part of the learning experience.

School-to-Home Folder

All written correspondence will be sent home to you via your child's school-to-home folder at the end of each week. Please check your child's folder at the end of each week. In addition, any communication you wish to send to either your child's teacher and/or the office (with the exception of tuition payments) can be included in your child's folder when they come to school. We ask that the folder be returned at the beginning of each week. To help transport your child's folder and any other important items, each child should bring a backpack or tote bag to school with them.

Developmental Screening

In order to ensure that the needs of each child can be met through our learning program, a developmental screening of each child will be completed and shared with families within days of entry into OLVCS Preschool. Research shows that observation and documentation about development increases the detection of developmental delays or learning difficulties. Initial screening of children will give us a baseline and allow us to individualize instruction to support each child, to identify possible special needs or learning difficulties, and to meet program accountability requirements in our state.

Each lead teacher will conduct a screening for every child new to the program within days of the child's start date using the ASQ 3 and, if needed, the ASQ SE and record results following our reporting procedures. A copy of the screening report will be shared with families at a "Getting to Know You" meeting or family conference and given to the administrator to be placed in the individual child's file.

Parent/Teacher Get-Togethers (Preschool only)

Twice a year parents will have the opportunity to schedule a time to meet with their child's teacher. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss with the parents how their child is acclimating to the school routine, staff and other children in regard to the child's social,

emotional cognitive, small motor, gross motor and self-help skills. In addition, both parents and teachers will have the opportunity to ask and/or answer any questions or concerns on any aspect of the school program or the child's behavior.

For Fall assessments, parents/guardians will receive a written copy of assessment information. Families may choose if they would like to arrange for a conference with their child's teacher. For spring assessments, teachers will create a sign-up indicating open times for conferences.

To document the meeting, teachers will have examples of the child's Preschool work and a written sheet individualizing each child's progress as observed by the Preschool staff.

Of course, any discussion with the staff regarding your child's time with us is certainly not limited to just this scheduled meeting. Should the need arise to meet on an individual basis with your child's teacher at other times during the year, please feel free to make such arrangements as necessary.

Extended School Program

To be eligible to participate in afternoon enrichment or Extended School Program activities after their preschool class time, children should be 3 years or older. Due to the nature of programming and staff availability, we are unable to accommodate 2 ½ year old students in our afternoon offerings.

Enrichment Programs

Enrichment classes approach learning from a liberal arts perspective, introducing students to a wide array of topics. Themes will be introduced by the enrichment teachers, complemented by visiting specialists (including parents of our students) who have expertise related to the theme or area of study. We are unable to accommodate drop ins in the enrichment and Extended School Program.

Quiet Time (Extended School Program Only)

Please indicate on the Family Information Sheet if your child needs to nap/rest during the afternoon. While we cannot fully accommodate everyone, every effort will be made to meet your child's needs in this area. A resting time is scheduled daily between 12:00PM-12:45PM. Any child(ren) who does not sleep will be removed from the resting room after fifteen minutes' quiet time and given the opportunity to engage in other activities. A special blanket/toy marked with your child's name may be brought in and kept with the resting mats. All children who nap will be issued a school blanket if one is not provided from the home. The ESP staff will launder all blankets on site on a regular basis. Please notify the staff if you prefer to launder your child's nap items at home.

Snacks

Each family is asked to provide snacks for their child's class throughout the school year. A snack note detailing requested snack date and items will be sent home on a month-by-month basis. Parents are asked daily to send reusable bottles filled with fresh water.

OLVCS Preschool provides a daily snack to all afternoon enrichment classes. Donations of snack items for afternoon enrichment classes are greatly appreciated. Children with life-threatening allergies must provide their own snack, which is to be brought each day. Your child's teacher may occasionally ask for a certain snack to be brought in. If a class engages in a food-related project, parents of children with allergies **MUST** bring the same or a similar food or ingredient to ensure it is safe for their child/ren.

Field Trips and School Visitors

In order to encourage outside learning experiences classes will take field trips and have speakers come into the school. Please note that on some occasions it may be necessary for us to adjust regular class arrival and dismissal times/locations so that we may accommodate the trip schedule and/or location.

If you or someone you know has a special hobby, skill or occupation and would like to share it with the children, please contact your child's teacher or the Preschool Administrator.

Holidays and Special Events

Throughout the school year we celebrate both secular and religious holidays and events. Parents may be asked to help with some of these events either by providing assistance in the classroom and/or supplies and materials. A note sent home in your child's home-to-school folder and/or a sign-up sheet posted outside the classroom will notify you of these events.

In addition, some of the activities may take place outside the school facility, may involve special projects for others, guest speakers or visitors and/or family "at home" involvement.

OLVCS Connections

As part of our Preschool curriculum your child will visit the OLVCS building several times throughout the school year. Potential activities include library visits, music, gym time, and special events held at OLVCS.

Additional Services and Programs

We are fortunate to have the Central Intermediate Unit #10 as a valuable resource for both our staff and Preschool families.

The CIU staff provides professional evaluation and when appropriate, professional therapy or guidance in the areas of speech, physical, social and emotional development. All services are confidential and free of charge. A parent may request a referral to these services through the Preschool Administrator.

Students with a TSS (therapeutic support staff) or PCA (personal care aide) are expected to be accompanied by them during the entirety of their stay at school, unless or until such time that it is determined that services are no longer required. Parents of children who are supported by a TSS or PCA need to establish a plan for school on days when the child's assistant is absent. This will be created with the help of the agency supporting your child and the preschool administrator. The plan may be revisited and updated during the school year to ensure the best plan is in place for each child at all times.

We also make the effort each school year to provide outside services and program to be held here at the Preschool facility for parent's convenience. These services and programs are at an additional charge and are optional.

Referrals for Additional Services

Throughout interactions with children in our program there may be times when Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool might see an opportunity to support a child/family by sharing information about special services that may be beneficial to them. Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool shall work with parents/guardians to support the child and family in finding special services to meet the child's needs.

Special services may include, but are not limited to support in the following areas:

- Social
- Mental health
- Educational
- Wellness and medical

Support to the family may include:

- Providing Staff training
- Providing families with child development information
- Providing families with documentation of child's development and explanations of why a delay is suspected
- Sharing community resources
- Assisting in data collection as part of an evaluation
- Participating as invited in the development of an intervention plan
- Assisting in monitoring progress
- Working with community service providers to support the child and family

Guidelines below are followed if an enrolled child needs to be referred for social, mental health, educational, wellness, or medical services which Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool cannot provide based upon both formal assessment and/or informal assessment.

- The family shall be notified both verbally (either over the phone or in person) AND in writing,
- Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool shall offer a meeting to discuss the concerns, based upon the formal and informal assessments, of which copies shall be provided to the parents/guardians, and
- Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool shall maintain regular communication with the family regarding the child's progress and shall offer any further assistance in linking the family with outside agencies as deemed appropriate.

The administrator will maintain a list of approved organizations and resources for outside services. If no resources are on the list for the particular need, the director or administrator will make inquiries to find the appropriate resources. If a professional is required, the director will contact the professional and assume responsibility for the referral.

To foster commitment to a positive climate and strong relationships with families, early childhood educators have access to the following resources to address the behavioral and social needs of the children and prevent expulsion and suspension:

1. Collaboration among early childhood and other social service programs serving families with young children including EI, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC), Behavioral Health, Pennsylvania Positive Behavior Support (PAPBS) Network, and other services;
2. Pennsylvania Learning Standards for Early Childhood (including the Partnerships for Learning); and
3. Professional Development and Technical Assistance available through the OCDEL Professional Development Systems.

Attendance

Continuity and routine are important aspects in anyone's life. Since most of our activities are "building blocks" which interlock with each other, it is important that your child comes to school on a regular basis. If your child is absent from Preschool for any reason, we would appreciate as much notification as possible. A note or phone will help us keep your child up to date with our activities.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival

Parents/Guardians will enter from the Westerly Pkwy entrance and circle in front of OLVCS Preschool at their designated drop off times. A staff member will meet your child at your vehicle each morning. The assigned drop off times are as follows.

- Extended School Program: 7:30 AM-8:45 AM (only)
- PreK Program: Arrival 8:45 AM
- 4 yr. Program: Arrival 8:45 AM
- 3 yr. Program: Arrival 8:55 AM

- 2 ½ yr. Program: 8:55 AM

(If you have more than one child at the preschool, please arrive at the younger child's assigned time.)

Before each session, teachers and their assistants prepare that day's activities. Therefore, while promptness is urged, please be considerate as teachers finish their preparations.

All children over 2 years of age and adults entering OLVCS Preschool are required to wear a mask unless they are exempt based on guidelines outlined by the Department of Human Services.

At no time, should a child be permitted to enter the building and/or travel through the building unaccompanied. All personal items must be left in the Coat Room area. Please remember to label with your child's name anything sent to school.

Dismissal

Morning dismissal for all classes is at 11:30AM.

At no time, will we release a child to another parent/adult without permission to do so from the child's parent/guardian. If a child is being picked up by a person not known to the staff, we reserve the right to request identifying information including a photo ID.

We ask that parents respect our opening and dismissal times by arriving promptly to drop off and pick up their child at their designated time. Should you run late for dismissal time PLEASE call the school office to alert us. Any child not picked up within fifteen minutes of dismissal time will be brought to our Extended School Program classrooms where they can be safe until you arrive. You will be charged \$20 per hour for any time your child spends with the Extended School Program.

Please be respectful of our 5:30PM closing time. A late fee of \$20.00 plus \$5.00 for each additional five minutes late will automatically be applied for a child(ren) picked up after 5:30PM except in the case of an emergency.

Dressing for School

While we have smocks and we use washable creative materials sometimes accidents happen. Please keep this in mind when dressing your child for school. Sturdy shoes and play clothes are most appropriate. Sandals or other slip-on type shoes are not recommended for wear while at school.

Please note that we also go outside every day except in the cases of rain and/or extreme cold. Sweaters or jackets in the fall and spring and coats, hats and mittens (sometimes boots) are a necessity.

We also recommend that an extra set of clothing and mask be sent to school should a change be necessary. Please pack extra clothes and masks in a Ziplock bag to be kept in your child's backpack. This is especially important to those children who utilize the Extended School Program.

We expect that children will be potty trained. We are not equipped with diaper or pull-up changing facilities. We reserve the right to contact a parent in the event of a toileting accident.

Health and Safety

Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool is certified by and operates under the rules established by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

Should an emergency arise which requires immediate medical action and treatment (i.e. calling the physician and/or Centre Life Link Emergency Medical Services), such action will be taken, and parents will be notified as soon as possible. Mount Nittany Medical Center is designated as our emergency treatment center.

Accident / Incident report forms must be completed by the school in the event of injury to a child while under school care; they are also completed in the case of toileting accidents. The original report is sent home to the parents and a copy is placed in the child's school file.

It is critical that our records are kept up-to-date – should any information change during the year, especially information regarding emergency contacts, work, home addresses or phone numbers, the office must be notified immediately.

Transitions

Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool will do its best to make your child's transition into preschool a positive and exciting experience. Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool will work with your family to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new faces are introduced.

Prior to your child's first day at Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool, you shall have an opportunity to tour the Center, meet the Staff, meet your child's friends, and communicate your expectations. Orientation sessions will be scheduled by the preschool prior to beginning in our program.

Transitioning to a New Classroom

Transitioning children from one classroom to another is as critical a time as when a child first enrolls in our program. There is a partnership needed between the child's family, the sending teachers, and the receiving teachers that must be in place to afford an effective transition. Children will be transitioned to the next classroom based on a combination of factors; age, developmental readiness, DHS regulations, space availability in other classrooms, and at what age your child will enter grade school.

Children typically transition into new classrooms at the beginning of the school year and must meet the following criteria prior to transitioning into a new classroom:

- All children enrolled in the 3 year program must be potty-trained and turn three on or before August 31, for the school year which they are enrolling.
- All children enrolled in the 4 year program must turn four on or before August 31, for the school year which they are enrolling.
- All children enrolled in the Pre-K program must turn five on or before December 31, for the school year which they are enrolling.

At Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool each program builds consecutively. Throughout the year each class will create opportunities to interact with younger classes to help facilitate future progression through the program. These activities include, but are not limited to, shared specials activities, integrated classroom visit days, and preschool wide-programming.

As a child prepares to transition from one classroom to the next, children and families will be invited to participate in a Meet the Teacher Session and All School Picnic before school begins.

Parents/guardians will complete, on an annual basis, an updated Family Child Form that will be distributed to the child's teacher prior to the start of school. This form will indicate educational goals the family has for the child, concerns the family may have regarding school, and other important information about the child that the parents/guardians believe will be helpful for the teacher in a successful transition.

Teacher Change/Transition

Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool seeks to minimize changes of teachers and caregivers during the school year so that children and families can enjoy the comfort and security of a familiar face and consistent learning environment. If a change in staff is necessary, the program will prepare children and families and ease the transition. The transition process is a team effort which involves everyone at the center, regardless of organizational position.

In the event of a teacher/staff change, a letter will be sent home to the affected children's families to inform them of the upcoming change in staff. If possible, the new teacher will come to the classroom to co-teach lessons, interact with the children a few days prior to the transition. When possible, job openings will be filled from qualified substitutes and part-time personnel who are already familiar with the children.

Parental Involvement

Partnering with Families

At Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool, we create a sense of partnership by inviting parents/guardians to be part of their children's learning experiences and by working with families, without judgment, to best support each child's development.

Each backpack room has a Family Resource Bulletin Board on which important information will be posted about community resources. Additionally, a copy of the Family Resource Manual is also located in each backpack room.

Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool utilizes a Parent Advisory Board and ancillary committees to engage families and support their participation in the education of their children and promote learning events. Educational workshops for families may address topics such as, but not limited to, positive interaction, literacy, cultural awareness, and any other developmental needs based on the interest of enrolled families.

Our Lady of Victory Catholic Preschool supports the language development and academic achievement of all children. Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Using the family's home language while creating defined classroom play centers
2. Using the family's home language in the classroom environment through learning materials and teaching aids (i.e. posters, etc.)
3. Children whose first language isn't English are supported in using home language, gestures, communication devices, sign language, etc. when needed.
4. If necessary, child evaluations and other written communication in the family's home language when possible.
5. Being culturally sensitive to the family's needs during holidays and other classroom celebrations

OLVCS School Council

The purpose of the Council is to assist the Pastor in fulfilling the mission of the Church through the education program of the school. The Council is a consultative body which, in fulfilling this mission, cooperates with and is guided by any legal or Diocesan directives or policies which regulate the conduct of Catholic education on the elementary level.

The Council develops and evaluates the policies by which the school's program is designed, implemented, and evaluated. The Council is responsive to their councils and committees within the parish or school. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to consider serving on the Council.

Parent Advisory Committees

As the need arises, parents are invited to serve on committees to discuss and investigate a particular issue and make recommendations to the administration. The standing committees of the Council are: Executive Committee, Finance/Budget Committee, Fundraising/Special Events

Committee, Staff Relations Committee, Curriculum/Programs Committee, Marketing/Publicity Committee and Community Outreach Committee.

Parent Volunteers

Parent volunteers are an integral part of Our Lady of Victory Catholic School. Any time or talent you can offer is valued and appreciated. All volunteers are required to submit criminal and child abuse clearances to the school office and participate in Protecting God's Children Training sponsored by the Altoona Johnstown Diocese.

Fundraising

The purpose of our fundraisers is to earn money for equipment used in the classrooms, library and playground. Fundraisers also boost our scholarship fund, which helps families attend our school who currently may not be able to afford the full cost of tuition. Our main fundraiser is the OLV Day Walk-a-thon but there are other opportunities throughout the school year to assist with fundraising efforts. Some families choose to contribute lump sum donations (tax deductible) instead.

Facility Information

Drop Off Parents will enter from the Westerly Pkwy entrance and pull around to the main entrance of the preschool. Families will be with their vehicles and an OLVCPS Preschool staff member will greet them and assist with a safe drop off to our school. Parking in front of the school is reserved for OLVCPS staff and teachers. Be aware busses use the front parking area between 7:30 AM-8:00 AM for OLVCPS arrival and between 1:45 PM-2:15 PM for dismissal.

Pick Up Parents will enter from the Westerly Pkwy entrance and pull around to the main entrance of the preschool. OLVCPS Preschool staff will bring your child to the car. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to properly buckle their child prior to pulling out of the parking lot.

Inclement weather

In the event of school cancellation, delayed opening or early dismissals, all announcements will be made via School Messenger automated phone system. Note, that in the event of inclement weather or emergency school closing, calls can come as early as 5:30AM.

Our general policy is as follows:

If/when SCASD public schools and OLVCPS make the decision to cancel or close school early due to inclement weather, we will follow their lead and close or dismiss early both our Preschool and Extended School programs.

If SCASD public school and OLVCS School make the decision to delay school starting time, we will run our Program according to the following schedule:

Morning Extended School Program: 9:30AM-10:00AM
Preschool Program: 10:00AM-12:00PM
Enrichment Program: 12:00PM-3:00PM
Afternoon Extended School Program: 3:00PM-5:30PM

It is also possible that OLVCS Preschool may operate under a closure, delayed-opening/early dismissal schedule separate from those of the OLVCS and SCASD.

We ask that parents closely monitor radio and TV stations and plan accordingly should there be any questions or concerns about the current weather situation.

Due to the number of students involved, we are unable to contact families on an individual basis once a decision to close early, cancel or delay opening has been made.

It is the parent's responsibility to decide if they wish to travel during inclement weather conditions in order to get their child to our facility should we make the decision to open. At no time, would we wish to jeopardize the safety of our families and staff.

Emergency Situation Information:

The Preschool office is equipped with a NOA radio to alert of any impending storms or other weather related emergencies.

Should it become necessary for any reason to relocate the children to another facility parents will be notified utilizing the most efficient means possible – phone or public communication.

During any emergency situation including weather, children will only be released to those individuals listed on the emergency contact form.

It may be determined that the safest response would be to shelter the children within the facility during an emergency situation. The facility is equipped with supplies and equipment to continue providing care for an extended time period.

It is critical that families keep all contact information up-to-date with the school office.

Power Outage

In the event of a power outage the facility emergency exit lighting will activate automatically. All classrooms are equipped with battery operated flashlights and portable lights. The Preschool office is equipped with a battery-operated radio, NOA radio and cell phone to ensure communication lines remain open.

Depending on the nature and extent of the power outage a decision will be made as to the best procedure to ensure the safety of the children. Should evacuation and/or closure of the facility be necessary parents will be notified through the most efficient means possible – phone or public communication (TV-radio).

Fire Drills

In the event of a fire on the premises the facility security system is set to automatically trigger the audible alarm system within the facility as well as alert the local fire department.

In the event the system does not automatically trigger these responses the system can be manually activated within the facility which will then activate the signal to the local fire department. Once the audible signal has been activated staff will follow posted evacuation procedures.

Fire Drills will be held monthly with the timing of the drills to be varied.

Lockdown/Lockout/Evacuation/Shelter Drills

OLVCS Preschool has adopted the Standard Response Protocol—a nationwide emergency plan that has been developed to provide consistency in emergency situations among schools, police and first responders.

Signs outlining the system are displayed throughout the facility, including every classroom, to help serve as reference points in the event of emergency for the benefit of students, staff, and visitors to the school.

Students are introduced to the terminology and procedures as part of school safety practices during regular classroom instruction.

Standard Response Protocol drills are held every 60 days with the timing of the drills to be varied.

Safety Procedures

In an effort to make sure students and staff understand and know what to do in the case of emergencies, our facility will conduct several practice drills during the year. Some of these drills will be practiced monthly, such as fire drills, while others will be practiced only a few times during the year. Among those items we practice are fire drills, tornado drills, fire-safety drills, lockdown drills, and evacuation drills. We wanted you to be aware of the various drills so that you can be prepared to discuss them with your child if the topic arises at home.

Safety Training

All preschool staff will receive yearly in-service training with local police personnel in emergency preparedness. As part of that training, they will discuss and practice possible strategies for emergency situations for the safety of all students and staff in the facility.

In addition, all staff will receive yearly training in the areas of fire safety first-aid and Child First Aid and CPR.

Keeping Up-To-Date and Informed

At the beginning of the school year, you will receive an overall listing of upcoming important dates for the entire year. These listings will include special events, programs and school holiday and vacation days and any changes in the regular school routine.

Our website is also a valuable source of information for both school as well as program specific activities and announcements. The website address is <http://www.olvcatholicschool.org/preschool>.

Each month Preschool staff will send home a classroom calendar and newsletter which will include important dates, events plus any specific announcement and/or requests.

The OLVCS Principal sends out a Weekly Update via email each week with important dates, reminders, and information on what's happening at OLVCS Preschool-8. Please make sure your current email is on file.